

**Primary school teachers' experiences of violence towards them
perpetrated by learners**

by

KOMASHNI GOVENDER

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

**Master of Education
(Educational Psychology)**

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Edgewood Campus

December 2015

DECLARATION

I, Komashni Govender declare that this dissertation entitled:

Primary school teachers' experiences of violence towards them perpetrated by learners,

is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. This research has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

Komashni Govender - 214581961
December 2015

Dr. Henry Muribwathoho (Supervisor)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the following individuals who have assisted with the completion of this research study. This study would not have been possible without their support, motivation, and contribution, for which I will forever be grateful.

- To my Higher Power, for granting me the strength and motivation to persevere.
- To my husband, for all his assistance, love, and support.
- To my supervisor Dr. Henry Muribwathoho, for his professional guidance, patience and recommendations.
- To my family, friends, and colleagues for their help and words of encouragement.
- And lastly, to the participants of this study – without whom this study would not have been possible – thank you for your time, patience, and sincerity.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of primary school teachers' who were victims of learner-perpetrated violence. The teachers' experiences were examined to gain insight and understanding of the types of violence, the contributing factors towards learner perpetrated violence, and the effects of said violence on the well-being and professional performance of teachers. The study also sought to highlight intervention strategies to decrease or curb future incidences.

A qualitative research underpinned by an interpretive paradigm was employed with the use of semi-structured interviews and an observation checklist. Three schools were selected and a sample group of two teachers per school were selected according to their responses on the pre questionnaire that was distributed. Data was then analysed utilising thematic content analysis. The findings suggested that primary school teachers experienced a higher incidence of verbal aggression viz. back chatting and swearing than physical aggression.

Although this study did not show a trend towards physical violence targeted at teachers, it was found that teachers were still affected. The effects varied, for e.g. poor performance in the classroom, fear for safety, a rethink of careers and so on. The use of ecological systems theory (helped conclude that violent behaviour from young learners was as a result of the interplay between individual, familial, school, community, and societal factors. Inter-sectoral collaboration was found to be an essential intervention strategy as a way forward. Involvement and the collaborative action of parents, community, school management, and Department of Education was outlined as a strategy to curb violence against teachers and thus, affect change with regards to the behaviour and attitude of learners towards their teachers. In addition, implementing skills training within classrooms would prove to be an effective strategy that would enable both teacher and learner to react to possible threatening situations in the appropriate manner.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

i.	Declaration	i
ii.	Acknowledgements	ii
iii.	Abstract	iii
CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY		1
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Focus and purpose of the study	1
1.3	Rationale for the study	2
1.4	Objectives of the study	5
1.5	Key research questions	5
1.6	Literature review	
1.6.1	Definition of school violence	6
1.6.2	Causes of school violence	6
1.6.3	Prevalence of school violence	7
1.6.4	School-based intervention strategies	8
1.7	The research design	10
1.7.1	Qualitative field of research	10
1.7.2	Case study	10
1.7.3	Sampling Procedures	10
1.7.4	Data collection tools	11
1.7.5	Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness issues	11
1.7.6	Data generation and production plan	12
1.7.7	Data analysis: thematic analysis	13
1.7.8	Ethical issues	13
1.7.9	Anticipated limitations of the study	13
1.8	Theoretical framework	14
1.9	Outline of the chapters	15
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW		17
2.1	Introduction	17

2.2	Definition of the concepts	17
2.3	Defining violence in the school context	18
2.4	Prevalence and experiences of violence against teachers	19
2.4.1	Internationally	19
2.4.2	History and prevalence of violence in South African schools	22
2.4.3	Impact of violence on the teachers well-being and professional performance	25
2.5	Contributing factors of violence in schools and against teachers	27
2.6	Intervention strategies	30
2.6.1	Professional development, teacher training and workshops	31
2.6.2	Social and behavioural programmes	32
2.6.3	School policies and discipline committees	33
2.6.4	Counselling and life skills teaching	34
2.7	Theoretical framework	35
a.	The Micro-system	37
b.	The Meso-system	38
c.	The Exo-system	39
d.	The Macro-system	39
e.	The Chrono-system	40
2.8	Conclusion	40
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY		42
3.1	Introduction	42
3.2	Research questions	42
3.3	Research design	42
3.3.1	Interpretivism as a paradigm	42
3.3.2	Qualitative field of research	43
3.3.3	Case study	44
3.4	Methodology	44
3.4.1	Sampling procedures	44
3.4.2	Data collection procedures	45
3.4.3	Data collection tools	46
3.5	Validity, reliability and trustworthiness	47

3.6	Data generation and production plan	49
3.7	Data analysis	49
3.8	Ethical issues	50
3.9	Conclusion	51
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA		52
4.1	Introduction	52
4.2	Thematic analysis	52
4.2.1	Types of aggression/ violence experienced by the teacher from the learner	52
4.2.2	Teachers' perspective on the factors contributing to the learners' aggressive behaviour	58
4.2.2.1	Family, home and community life	58
4.2.2.2	Media	63
4.2.2.3	Peer pressure	64
4.2.2.4	Domestic abuse	65
4.2.2.5	Chemical imbalances	66
4.2.3	Effects of aggression on the teachers' wellbeing and professional performance	67
4.2.4	Challenges outlined with regard to inter-sectoral collaboration	71
4.2.4.1	Involvement of parents	71
4.2.4.2	School management	76
4.2.4.3	Department of Education and the need for school counsellors	80
4.2.4.4	Effectiveness of school policies	82
4.3	Intervention strategies	84
4.4	Observation checklist	89
4.5	Conclusion	90

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	91
5.1 Introduction	91
5.2 Synopsis of findings	92
5.2.1 Types of aggression/ violence experienced by the teacher	92
5.2.2 Factors contributing to aggressive and violent behaviour in learners	92
5.2.3 Effects of aggression on teachers wellbeing and professional performance	93
5.2.4 Challenges and intervention strategies with regard to inter-sectoral collaboration	95
5.2.4.1 Parental involvement	96
5.2.4.2 Management	97
5.2.4.3 The Department of Education and the need for counsellors	97
5.2.5 Effectiveness of school policies	98
5.2.6 School-based intervention strategies	99
5.3 Strengths and limitations of the study	101
5.4 Recommendations for future research	102
5.5 Conclusion	103
REFERENCES	104
APPENDICES	120
Appendix 1: Ethical clearance: Department of Education	120
Appendix 2: Ethical clearance: University of KwaZulu-Natal	121
Appendix 3: Informed consent given to participants	124
Appendix 4: Pre-questionnaires	125
Appendix 5: Observational checklist	126
Appendix 6: Semi- structured interview schedule	127
Appendix 7: Language clearance certificate	130
Appendix 8: Turnitin Report	131

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
APA	American Psychological Association
BTS	Battered Teachers Syndrome
CJCP	Centre of Juvenile Crime Prevention
DoE	Department of Education
DJJDP	Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
DSM-IV TR	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4 th edition) Text Revision
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EAP	Educators Assistance Program
HOD	Head of Department
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
IJCRSEE	International Journal of Cognitive Research in Science, Engineering and Education
NASUWT	National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers
NSVS	National School Violence Study
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RCL	Representative Council for Learners
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SEED	Scottish Executive Education Department
SGB	School Governing Body
TRSV	Teacher's Reaction to School Violence
UKZN	University of Kwa Zulu Natal
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WHO	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This research explored the experiences of primary school teachers who were victims of learner perpetrated violence and examined the impact this aggression has on the teachers' wellbeing. In recent years, violence and violent behaviour in South African schools has garnered considerable media attention and was found to be not just limited to incidents between learners but included acts perpetrated by learners against educators (Burton & Leoschut, 2012). Violence against teachers is becoming more predominant in schools and although locally, not much research has been done on this matter, the consequences are regrettably affecting the education system.

The scourge of violence in South African schools is a cause for concern; daily reports appear in the written media about high levels of violence, physical, sexual abuse, and gang related activities in our schools (Mncube & Madikizela-Madiya, 2014). This is supported by Joyce (2013), who indicates that media reports attest to school violence being a concern in South African schools. Violence in schools is a national, as well as global phenomenon and teachers are becoming helpless victims, as they are unable to meet the challenge of controlling violent behaviour within classrooms. It can be said that teachers are not guaranteed safety in their profession.

1.2 Focus and purpose of the study

This report focused on the experiences of six teachers from three schools where the learner population ranged from children from low income to middle class communities. This study explored the experiences of educators that were exposed to violent behaviour and the reasons that contributed to children and youth displaying aggressive behaviour towards their teachers. More importantly, this research outlined the impact learner aggression has on the teacher and the undue stress it may result in.

An integral motivation for undertaking this research study was that the information gained would assist the Department of Education to make schools a safe environment for teachers

as safe schools can serve as important mechanisms for mediating wider exposure to violence and anti-social behaviour among children and youth (Burton, 2008). Teaching and learning will be more effective if the school environment is a safe one, as teachers cannot focus on the job at hand if pre-occupied with the thought, or threat of becoming victims of learner-perpetrated violence. The quality of teaching will improve drastically if teachers are not victimised and learners are assisted with their aggressive behaviour.

1.3 Rationale for the study

The study was undertaken due to a personal interest in violence against teachers, more especially in the South African context, prompted by the fact that there is an increasing concern that primary, and secondary schools are the site of widespread violence (Burton, 2008). I have been teaching at a high school for 15 years and noticed how learners have changed in their attitudes towards their teachers. Their moral and value system has declined drastically. I found through experience, that learners have become more aggressive towards their teachers for various reasons, mostly due to underlying factors like poverty, drug abuse, and dysfunctional families to name a few. Many learners turn to violence in response to their circumstances. Aggression amongst young children is becoming a growing phenomenon due to these factors.

Martin, Mackenzie and Healy (2013) mention that the violence is so endemic that exclusions for assaulting teachers are now more common in primary schools than in secondary schools. As many teachers continue to teach in unsafe situations, it can be said that many have reached a point of teaching fatigue, which could be attributed to the lack of support from the Department of Education. It is imperative that the Department of Education strive to create a supportive climate that will give teachers a sense of safety. Teacher unions are also facing the growing concern of aggression towards teachers and the South African Democratic Educators Union (SADTU) emphasised the urgent need to address and prevent this problem of school violence and its underlying causes (Mohlala, 2006). According to Trackman (2008), a culture of violence exists in South Africa, which historians have related to Apartheid. Some learners believe that the only way to solve issues is through violence. Prior to 1994, violence was used as means to an end and South African youth have yet to be rid of the combat mentality perpetrated by Apartheid.

I have on many occasions been confronted with, and observed some kind of violence against teachers. What is truly startling is that offenders seem to be getting younger as the years go by, thus fuelling my interest in such a study.

Although incidents of extreme violence towards teachers are rare, the fact remains that in the UK, 29% of teachers report having been physically assaulted by a pupil (Association of Teachers and Lecturers: ATL, 2008) while educators and principals at primary and secondary schools throughout South Africa report growing levels of violence, both learner on learner and learner-on-educator violence (Burton, 2008). Research shows that primary schools are becoming a common place for learner violence and the availability of alcohol and drugs is seemingly the most common cause for the increase in blatant violence levelled against authority (Burton, 2008).

According to Joyce (2013), principals have indicated that teacher-targeted bullying disrupts classrooms and that educators face difficulties when it comes to controlling their classrooms. This type of environment is not conducive to teaching and learning, as teachers need to feel safe when teaching i.e. productive learning can only take place if the teacher does not feel threatened. According to Reckson and Becker (2005), studies have shown that improved teaching efforts will make no difference to learners because of violence. It is certainly clear that pupils with violent tendencies have no interest in education. The teacher is then, more at risk trying to improve the classroom situation without any sort of intervention for disruptive pupils.

It is the beliefs, practices, and behaviours within schools that sanction violence - either directly or by omission - that is of real significance (Mncube & Netshitangani, 2014). Learners seem to lack tolerance, which then results in negative and disruptive behaviour. In a report on school-based violence in South Africa, The South African Council for Educators (SACE, 2011) noted a shift from conventional learning space to a space of widespread violence. Madikizela-Madiya and Mncube's research (2014) shows that schools are not places of learning but have become an unsafe environment for learning.

Effective learning and teaching is being undermined by a growing culture of violence in schools (Mncube & Netshitangani, 2014). If the learner perceives the teacher as a threat, this will directly influence his/her learning and behaviour. I was highly interested in

investigating if primary school learners also show aggressive and violent behaviour towards their teachers as this will make many role players involved in education aware of where the problem stems from. Violence against teachers whether physical, verbal, emotional, direct, or indirect, leaves a deep mark on the self-confidence and self-esteem of teachers. This consequently hinders their work; affecting job satisfaction and performance, and ultimately contributes to difficulties when attempting to create a healthy atmosphere in the classroom, and all this combined has an impact on final development and success of students (Opic, Lokmic, & Bilic, 2013).

While research has been conducted on children being the victims, there was found to be limited research around teachers being on the receiving end. It was interesting to note that the group (educators) that spend the most time with children have been relatively understudied (Fisher & Kettl, 2003), highlighting the significant potential of the present study on how teachers are affected by aggression displayed towards them by their learners. There was most definitely a need for this type of research because the creation of safer schools leads to quality education.

Research has shown that educators often leave their profession due to this abuse. This affects the functioning of the teacher at many levels (American Psychological Association, 2013). According to the American Psychological Institution (2013), 80% of US teachers have been victims of threats or physical violence. Novotney (2009) states that the psychological distress and injury that teachers face are significant, often resulting in them being less productive in class or leaving the profession altogether. Due to violence, the trauma induced needs to be dealt with and addressed as the safety and security of a teacher is of utmost importance. It is imperative that the DoE create an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning.

As mentioned by Joyce (2013), building a safe school requires teaching non-violent and conflict resolution skills to teachers, principals, and learners. A school needs to hold workshops and counselling and teach learners as well as teachers how to deal with violence. A lack of security will ultimately lead to learners being disadvantaged, as teachers are unable to cope with the stress of feeling threatened on a daily basis. Teachers are becoming

de-motivated and burn out much faster than they should and aspiring educators choose not to pursue careers in teaching due to the experiences of educators within the school system.

As mentioned by Van de Merwe (2009), in order to address and curb violence of this type, one needs to acquire a better understanding of how negative or violence filled climates are perpetuated in schools. Recognition that the bully-abuse of teachers by their pupils may contribute to the levels of stress experienced by teachers is a crucial first step (Terry, 1998) and this research sought to understand why even primary school learners displayed such high levels of physical and verbal abuse towards their teachers. Various studies have been conducted on closely related topics but none has explored the nature of truth surrounding violence against primary school teachers and the causes and correlates of teacher victimisation.

According to UNESCO, there is a global lack of research on educators' experiences of violence at schools (Burton, 2008). Pahad (2011) concurs as he states that limited research has been undertaken that investigates the phenomenon of educator experiences of school violence. This study explored the experiences of teachers who are the victims of violence and explore the causes of this victimisation as well as the effects on the teacher.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- To investigate primary school teachers' experiences of violence towards them perpetrated by learners.
- To investigate primary school learners teachers' perceptions of the causes of learner violence.
- To examine the impact of primary school teachers' experiences of violence on their general wellbeing and professional performance.

1.5 Key research questions

- What are the primary school teachers' experiences of violence towards them perpetrated by learners?
- What are primary school teachers' perceptions of the causes of learner violence?

- What is the impact of primary school teachers' experiences on their general well-being and professional performance?

1.6 Literature review

1.6.1 Definition of school violence

According to Furlong and Morrison (2000), the concept of school violence is regarded as more comprehensive because it includes illegal and violent acts that hamper development and performance and undermine the school environment. South African schools are no longer safe places for teaching and learning; it has become a haven for violence and crime. In South African law "violent acts involve both physical and non-physical harm" that may end in damage, pain or terror (De Wet, 2007a, p.12).

In recent years, violence against teachers by their learners has substantially increased and teachers are no longer safe, even amongst their learners. According to Thompson (2013), little has been done to gain an understanding of, or prevent such incidences despite the potential implications on teacher retention and student performance.

1.6.2 Causes of school violence

The cause of violence against teachers is multi-faceted and thus raising awareness towards these may prevent future violent acts by learners. It is the nature of humanity to engage in violence and children are no different, violence is inherent and children can be influenced by a myriad of factors in their day-to-day experience. As explained by Huston and Ripke (2006), environmental contexts in middle childhood make modest but significant contributions to long-term developmental patterns beyond genetic heritage and early childhood experiences. Primary school children face many challenges in the last decade than 30 years ago, for example, poverty plays an important role in this equation.

Due to many changes in society, children are becoming more violent and aggressive because of circumstances in their lives; abuse by parents, rape, substance abuse, and neglect are some of the causes. As mentioned in the National School Violence Study (Burton & Leoschut, 2012) the risk for school violence is often compounded by community level

factors, such as alcohol and drug availability as well as access to weapons. Pahad (2011) highlights the importance of healthy parenting styles when raising children and parental involvement was found to be crucial in preventing acts of violence perpetrated by learners.

It was also suggested by Pahad (2011) that individuals who were exposed to domestic violence were also at a risk of enacting violence themselves. Parental involvement is a vital factor as seen in aggression of young children. Many children are brought up in homes with single parents or no parent at all and such circumstances impact drastically on the child's wellbeing and behavioural development. Dysfunctional families and poverty are common trends in South Africa. Children are maturing quicker now than in the past leading to hormonal changes which also plays a significant role in aggression in primary school learners.

1.6.3 Prevalence of school violence

Statistics are limited on the experiences of violence against teachers however there are some cases reported in various studies done on general school violence. According to a study done by Walker (2013, p.2), "Violence directed against teachers is a national crisis with far-reaching implications and deserves inclusion in the school violence equation". Walker's study brought to light, incidents of learners' violent acts towards their teachers and mentioned the case of a suicidal 12 year old who shot and killed his maths teacher. This indicated that even primary school learners are capable of such violence.

According to Thompson (2013), about 4% of American public school teachers reported, they had been attacked physically during the 2007-08 school year and in 2011 a survey found that 80% of teachers reported being intimidated, harassed, assaulted, or otherwise victimised at least once during the previous year. When teachers experience violent behaviour directed towards them they become traumatised, for their purpose is to educate learners.

In South Africa, the situation is similar, if not worse and most teachers do not report incidents so it goes unheard of. In light of a study conducted by De Wet (2007b), females and younger educators were more prone to violence than their male and older colleagues were. A National School Violence study done by Burton and Leoschut (2012) indicated that

educators were victims of verbal abuse (52.1%), physical violence (12.4%), and sexual violence (3.3%) perpetrated by learners. Only 70% of teachers indicated they felt safe when teaching. Fearing for one's safety as mentioned in the study may have negative implications such as lack of commitment to school and poor attendance thereby influencing the quality of teaching.

Other incidents reported around South Africa were that of a male learner at Sasolberg High School in Grade 9, who shot his teacher (eNCA News, 2013) and Glenvista High reported a pupil kicking his teacher to retrieve his school bag from her (Molosankwe, 2014). The pupil was in Grade 8, which re-iterates that children are getting aggressive at a very young age. SADTU's (2014) general secretary Mugwena Malukele adds that teachers are not safe at schools, and calls for more security at schools. SADTU has also called for the creation of a national violence against teachers registry and for research to be conducted at schools. It is evident that even the teacher unions are acknowledging this phenomenon (2014).

1.6.4 School-based intervention strategies

It is obviously clear that some sort of intervention strategy is required in this situation of violent behaviour towards teachers. It is vital to identify the factors that lead to violence against teachers. Several studies indicate that managing the classroom or lack of it may ultimately lead to this violence (Espelage, Anderman, Brown, Jones, Lane, McMahon, & Reynolds, 2013). "Communication between learner and teacher plays a significant role in aggression" as stated by Novotney (2009).

Research suggests that teachers should engage in deliberate evidence-based practices to reduce the likelihood of violence in the classroom. Teachers can build on students strengths, such as ethnic identity rather than focusing on weaknesses or using punitive methods (McMahon & Watts, 2002). These efforts play a pivotal role in preventing school violence. Teachers may implement social/behavioural programmes (such as violence prevention, anti-bullying, conflict resolution and classroom management programmes) to provide students with clear expectations and appropriate social and behavioural skills to manage anger, resolve conflict and improve classroom norms and environment (Henry, Guerra, Huesmann, & Tolan, 2000). As research reveals that classroom management is one of the key players in reducing aggressive behaviour amongst learners, programmes that facilitate

effective classroom management, as well as social and emotional learning, can enhance academic engagement and achievement and reduce violence in the classroom (Wilson & Lipsey, 2007).

According to the South African Department of Basic Education (2013), a framework for a whole school approach has been established i.e. the Safety Framework and in line with this framework, recommendations are made to ensure that principals and educators are held accountable for school safety and schools need to develop and maintain safe, welcoming, violence-free learning environments. The whole school approach and safety framework also deals with establishing a positive ethos and environment involving caregivers and community and developing integrated teaching materials into existing curricula to support the achievement of a safe and respectful environment.

A study done by SACE (2011) highlights the importance of providing support and assistance to educators. Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) should be explored and sourced to provide teachers with such services. Debriefing of teachers following some of the violent incidents is important to help teachers express and deal with PTSD- related difficulties. Teachers require support from such teaching bodies in order to deal with incidents of violence as this will help teachers realise that they are not alone and that they have the support of various educational organisations. The South African Department of Basic Education (2014) emphasises the importance of creating safe schools that encourage respect for human rights.

The South African Department of Education (2011) clearly stated the responsibility of pupils is to respect education and their teachers, co-operate fully with teachers, and adhere to rules and the code of conduct. There are many documents that support teachers engaging in teaching in safe and secure environments but what is good on paper may not necessarily be practiced in reality. The plight of teacher abuse is ongoing and no matter what is documented, has not changed the fact that it continues to be a serious issue in education. The American Psychological Association (2013) mentions that violence prevention also requires community leaders and organisers to engage youth in positive activities. Parents play a vital role in this equation of violence and need to be part of their children's lives so that they are aware of what is happening. Their involvement in the child's performance and

behaviour at school level is necessary to make sure their child is not engaging in violent behaviour.

As seen in the literature, several studies have been conducted on this research topic, mostly related to high school aggression but none has addressed the issues of the teachers experiences in the classroom at primary school level especially at intermediate levels. Most studies have spoken about violence in school on a general level but have not isolated it to the teachers experiences of how he/she is affected by aggressive behaviour towards him/her. This study explored the issue at hand.

1.7 The research design

1.7.1 *Qualitative field of research*

Drew, Hardman and Hosp (2008) claim that the purpose of research is to obtain knowledge or information that pertains to particular questions. Qualitative research was most appropriate for my study that involved experiences of people. As stated by Creswell (1998, p.14) one undertakes qualitative research in a natural setting where the researcher is an instrument of data collection who gathers words or pictures, analyses them inductively, focuses on the meaning of participants, and describes a process that is expressive and persuasive in language.

This research aimed to achieve an in-depth understanding of experiences of teachers and aggression against them by learners. The use of an interpretivist paradigm in this study was useful to relate peoples experiences in their day-to-day natural environment. As Creswell (1998, p.15) put it “qualitative research is multi method in focus, involving an interpretive naturalistic approach to its subject matter”. Interpretivism deals with peoples experiences and interpretation of these experiences, which was quite relevant to this study.

1.7.2 *Case study*

The ethnographic design involves a case study approach, which was most suitable for this type of research. I chose this design because it helped me answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions where behaviour of individuals cannot be manipulated. “Case studies focus on one instance (or a few instances) of a particular phenomenon with a view to providing an in-

depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in that particular instance” (Denscombe, 2003, p.41).

The purpose of such observation is to probe deeply and to analyse intensely the multi-faceted phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit. This case study allowed for in-depth analysis and exploration including interaction between participants.

1.7.3 Sampling procedures

I selected a non-probability purposive sampling method that is frequently used in qualitative research. As stated by Cresswell (1998, p.118), “the purposeful selection of participants represents a key decision point in qualitative study”. The context of the study was undertaken at three different primary schools in the area where I teach. Teachers were chosen from three different schools after a pre- questionnaire is given to identify those that have experienced aggressive behaviour by towards them by learners. Six participants including both genders were chosen after analysis of pre- questionnaire. Participants are teachers who have had first- hand experience of violence (i.e. direct victims). Choosing this specific group of people ensured that results of the research were not generalised, but generated solutions for this specific group.

1.7.4 Data collection tools

To determine the sample group as mentioned previously, structured qualitative pre-questionnaires were given to Grade 6 and 7 teachers. Once the participants were chosen, semi-structured interviews was employed to engage participants in the study. Interviews enable participants be they interviewers or interviewees to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). The purpose of an interview is to assess and gather data of participants’ experiences of aggression against them by learners. An observation checklist also used as a data collection tool, which enabled the researcher to enhance the quality of research, by using different methods to support findings.

1.7.5 Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness issues

Validity means that the measure you are recording actually assesses what it supposes to measure” (Drew et al., 2008, p.16). “Reliability refers to the consistency with which a

measure reflects a given performance level” (Drew et al., 2008, p.133). To determine the trustworthiness of the research there are several types of validity that can be sought. These include internal validity, external validity, and content validity and construct validity (Tariq, 2009). Internal validity is a measure of how accurate the research is, that may produce a causal relationship between the variables being studied.

When demonstrating content validity “the instrument must show that it fairly and comprehensively covers the domain or items it purports to cover” (Cohen, et al., 2000, p.126). Construct validity occurs when the theoretical constructs of cause and effect accurately represent the realistic situations they intend to model (Christiansen, Bertram, & Land, 2010). It is imperative to examine different types of validity to enhance the truthfulness of a research however; measure is not an issue in qualitative research, descriptive of this study. Since case study style of research has been adopted in this study, the aim is to describe (Christiansen, et al., 2010). According to Cohen et al. (2002), reliability is essentially a synonym for consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents. Reliability in interviews were ensured by the participants being given the same sequence of words. To ensure a degree of reliability an examination of trustworthiness is essential.

Triangulation may be defined as “the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour” (Cohen et al., 2000, p.130). The use of different data collection tools informed the process of triangulation and established a sense of validity to convince trustworthiness in this research study.

Using interviews as well as an observation checklist in my study added depth to the results and increased the validity and reliability as well as ensured confidence in the findings. Once the findings were written they were taken to the six participants to confirm that the findings were a true reflection of their experiences.

1.7.6 Data generation and production plan

Qualitative pre-questionnaires were given to generate data from all Grade six and seven teachers of the three primary schools selected. The use of an observational checklist allowed the results to be more reliable and consistent. It confirmed the authenticity of data

generated by interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the chosen six teachers from the pre-questionnaire. As stated by Cohen et al. (2000) the qualitative interview tends to move away from pre-structured, standardised form and towards the open-ended or semi-structured interview, as this enables respondents to project their own ways of defining the world.

The interview session lasted about thirty minutes. Prior to the interview process, I observed and had informal unstructured interviews to help create questions for my semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview involved an interview guide with list of questions, which was not restricted and could deviate from the questions prepared. This allowed participants to feel free and express their views. Participants will be asked of preferable methods to be used and of convenient times to be interviewed, so not to inconvenience them in any way. A classroom observation also took place with the permission of the participants and a checklist was filled. This observation checklist was analysed for any patterns that arose from the semi-structured interviews. This helped me in making sure that my research was valid and trustworthy.

1.7.7 Data analysis: thematic analysis

This study implemented a content analysis, which was linked to both the Ecologic systems theory, interpretivism, and the data collected. Themes that arose from the data and theory were then identified and related to the literature. “Emerging theories and existing literature will enhance the internal validity and theoretical level of theory in a case study research” (Kohlbacher, 2006). Data indicating the identified theories were reported.

1.7.8 Ethical issues

An application for ethical clearance from UKZN and DoE was made, seeking permission to access schools. As mentioned by Currie and De Waal (2013) in ‘The bill of rights handbook’, no person should be discriminated against therefore it was best to ensure that the rights of the participants are not violated in any form or way and permission was sought from the school’s principal and Department of Education in order to do this research. Participants were given a letter of consent to participate in the research and they could withdraw at any

given time of the research as “information of the identity of participants and any information gained from them is confidential” (Woods, 1995).

1.7.9 *Anticipated limitations of the study*

Since this study was based on experiences, it was not possible to measure this variable directly but the study does incorporate reliability and validity checks. Wary that participants could fear victimisation. There is also the aspect of small sample versus generalisation. The sample group may not necessarily represent schoolteachers’ experiences of violence against them in all schools but further research is warranted in more schools to make this type of research more valid. Children may behave differently when there is an observer in the classroom, which will impact on my findings, which can be related to the ‘halo effect’.

1.8 Theoretical framework

The theory chosen for this study was the Ecological Systems Approach researched by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979). His theory very aptly places into context how a child’s environment affects how a child grows. According to the World Health Organisation (2014), the ecological framework is based on evidence that no single factor can explain why some people or groups are at a higher risk of interpersonal violence, while others are more protected from it. This framework looks at varied factors at the different levels as outcomes to aggressive behaviour.

Violence by pupils towards their teachers was better understood in light of this theory, understanding that multiple factors contribute towards and influence a child’s behaviour. There is a scourge in school violence and various studies have been undertaken to highlight the cause for concern in schools however, this study delved into how and why pre-teens engaged in violent behaviour from the perspective of the teacher.

The Centre for Disease Control (2013) believes prevention of violence requires understanding the factors that influence violence. The first level deals with personal history and biological factors. As the World Health Organisation (2014) states this level influences how individuals behave and increase their likelihood of becoming a victim or a perpetrator. The factors that are known include in this level are age, education, income, substance

abuse, or history of abuse. In view of these factors, life skills training would play a vital role at this stage.

The second level looks at personal relationships. Oswalt (2008) looks at a child's caregivers taking an active role in his/her life, which will ensure overall growth. A child's relationship with his/her parents influences the child's behaviour either negatively or positively. The third stage according to Bronfenbrenner (1994) is about the communities involvement like schools, workplaces, and neighbourhoods. The social relationships that occur in this stage are associated with either being the victim or the perpetrator of violence. Promoting healthy relationships and having policies in place is an important strategy at this level. The last level deals with society, which includes social and cultural norms. We find that in some cultures it is acceptable to use violence to solve conflict. On evaluating the four levels, we realise that various factors contribute towards a child's behaviour. If a child experiences abuse or is exposed to abuse it can severely influence the development of the child.

Maturity levels and the values and morals the child receives can impact on the decisions made by that child. If the child does not receive support nor has he/she been exposed to positive role models, this can be detrimental to his/her behavioural development (Gouws, Krug, & Burger, 2000). A neglected child tends to show aggressive tendencies to attract attention as I have seen and experienced in my many years of teaching.

During his crucial years of development, the type of environment a child is exposed to will also affect his behaviour (Gouws et al., 2000). For example, many young children who are living in violent neighbourhoods tend to join gangs, which lead them into a life of violence and crime. Many children are taught that violence is the best way to resolve conflict and ignoring cultural norms would be a great mistake when dealing with aggressive children. As we can clearly see, a child's environment and the people he/she is exposed to in everyday life has an enormous role to play in behavioural development. Bronfenbrenner's theory does integrate multiple influences on the child's development but it also does not provide detailed mechanisms for development (1979; 1994).

As my research unfolded, I uncovered what the other mechanisms were that are related to the influence of a child's behaviour. Although Bronfenbrenner seeks to understand an individual solely by the environment, we understand that from the standpoint of many

theorists that many other factors play a pivotal role in the development of an individual. For example, cognitive development, however for the purposes of the nature of this study Bronfenbrenner's theory is relevant in understanding how the child's environment influences their behaviour.

1.9 Outline of the chapters

Chapter 1 provides a general overview into the study conducted. The purpose, background, rationale, and significance of the research study are outlined.

Chapter 2 focuses on the literature reviewed on the aspects of aggression of pupils against teachers. Various literature has been appraised to show research that has been undertaken worldwide, however limited in South Africa. The literature review focuses on prevalence of pupils' aggression, causes, and effects on teachers. The theoretical framework is introduced, which this study is based. The chapter concluded with possible solutions to the problem.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology, including research design, sampling procedures, data collection techniques, procedures and method of data analysis. The chapter concludes with the ethical considerations and reflections of the research process.

Chapter 4 discussed the findings of the research. The data was been divided into themes and sub themes. This is then presented into broad themes, guided by critical questions.

Chapter 5 is the concluding chapter, presenting findings of the study and associating the findings with literature reviewed in chapter 2. The chapter ends with the strengths, weaknesses, and limitations in addition to recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an investigation of existing literature on violence in schools both globally, and locally. The focus of this review is specifically geared towards teachers in primary schools; the contributory factors for this type of violence and proposed intervention strategies suggested by many scholars. The emphasis is on schools within the South African context. The literature review also introduces the theory upon which this study is based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979; 1994).

As stated by De Wet (2007c), educators have the right to work in an environment in which they feel valued and respected, where they may actively support learners development and learning and where they are free from fear, threat, and harm, which is entrenched in the South African Bill of Rights, Chapter Two of the South African Constitution (RSA 1996). Section 12 (RSA, 1996, p. 30) states that everyone has the right "to be free from all forms of violence... not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhumane, or degrading way". Limited research exists around the notion of educators as victims and in South Africa, the victimisation of educators has shown to be a real problem (De Wet, 2007b); which has been understood as being associated with unbalanced power relations. Consequently, the lack of research inhibits an understanding of such atrocities and the creation of interventions (Pahad, 2011).

2.2 Definition of the concepts

It is imperative that concepts related to this research report are expressed succinctly thus, definitions are provided.

Violence: According to The World Health Organisation (2014), violence is defined as a deliberate use of physical force - threatened or actual against oneself, another person, or against a group or community - that either results in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, or dispossession. The definition is understood to include physical, sexual, and psychological abuse (such as the significant use of power arising from a dependant relationship, threats, intimidation, and neglect).

Teacher: As mentioned in the MacMillan English Dictionary (2007), a teacher is defined as one whose occupation is to instruct and impart knowledge. This however, is not an adequate definition, as the teacher of today is a highly complicated individual - personally and professionally - a fact that makes any simple description literally impossible. However, it is noted that the participants use educator and teacher interchangeably.

Learner: The term learner is defined, according to the South African Schools Act of 1996, as any person receiving education, or obliged to receive education in terms of the Act.

Primary School: As defined within the McMillan English Dictionary (2007), this is an institute that provides education for children between the ages of five and 12 years old.

2.3 Defining violence within the school context

The definition of school violence has caused much controversy in that one cannot pinpoint a specific designation. Various scholars have defined this type of violence but the characteristics differ with most explanations reflecting an author bias (Furlong & Morrison, 2000). Defined by South African law as acts that involve both physical and nonphysical harm, violence may end in damage, pain, or terror (De Wet, 2007b). This is in accordance with Hamburg and Williams (1998) who defined violence as the use of physical force with the intention of causing physical injury, damage, or intimidation of another person.

MacNeil and Stewart (2000) viewed school violence as an intentional act resulting in the receiver feeling pain while under the management of the school and Kondrasuk, Greene, Waggoner, Edwards and Nayak-Rhodes (2005) argued that violence against school employees is no different. The Centre for the Prevention of School Violence (2002, p.1), advocates that school violence is understood as “any behaviour that violates a school’s educational mission or climate of respect or jeopardises the intent of the school to be free of aggression against persons or property, drugs, weapons, disruptions and disorder”. Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe and Van der Walt (2004) define violence as any behaviour that attempts to inflict injury on another person or to damage school property. Neser (2005) explained that schools and researchers have often adopted a narrow view when describing school violence as it was not inclusive enough as some researchers are of the opinion that the traditional definition of violence lacks the understanding of the pervasiveness of the problem of violence within the school context.

While the victims referred to in many of the above definitions tend to be learners, the current study however, focuses on violence against the teacher. Attempts of defining violence in school have varied extensively as is evident in preceding paragraphs. Thus, the term violence for the purpose of this study will be defined as all forms of physical and emotional abuse, as well as violence (World Health Organisation, 2014). A broader approach is required to define violence and Bronfenbrenner's theory considers this as it proposes that violence operates on five different levels viz. the micro, meso, exo, macro, endo, and chrono levels (1979; 1994). These levels will be discussed in depth, in sub sections to follow.

2.4 Prevalence and experiences of violence against teachers

2.4.1 Internationally

School violence is indeed a global phenomenon and a national study in 1995 by the US National Educational Association's Research Division recorded two particularly undesirable issues: violence committed against educators, and the increased use of drugs by learners (De Wet, 2007b).

Years later, violence against educators is still a common occurrence and according to a survey in Ontario, 38% of educators have been bullied by their learners (Tait, 2004). In New Zealand, a survey found that more than a third of secondary school educators experienced some form of bullying or harassment on a weekly basis. 12% of the 583 respondents suffered abuse daily, 97% of educators experienced bullying at least once a year, 80% at least once a term, and 52% at least once a month (De Wet & Jacobs, 2006).

Benfield (2004) established that during a study among New Zealand educators that 28% of educators experience minor forms of bullying on a daily or weekly basis from learners. Of those bullied, 82% have been subject to repeated class disruptions or repeated disrespectful behaviour, 40% had their personal belongings or property vandalised and 27% had been threatened or physically assaulted on more than one occasion and 11% received repeated racial, sexual or religious slurs (De Wet & Jacobs, 2006). In 2001, in New South Wales, school violence resulted in 42 educators requiring medical attention after being assaulted by learners (Australian Education Union, 2003). Researchers at the University of South Australia (Youth Studies Australia, 2005) found that learners were responsible for 33% of violent

attacks on educators and physical assaults made up 42% of incidents of abuse. Likewise, a Jamaican study by Gardener, as cited by De Wet (2007b), revealed that 30% of respondents indicated that educators were often threatened. Countries such as the USA, Holland, and Japan also face numerous challenges in ensuring school safety during the past two decades (Orr, 2003). Both the UK and the US have recorded incidences of violence in schools that have become a matter for concern. A 2002 report by NASUWT (Ahmed, 2002) revealed that educators in 71 schools had threatened to take action during the preceding 18 months because "...pupils have proved too difficult to teach". The educators said they were often spat at, kicked, and punched by learners.

An online survey conducted in Britain during March 2005 by the Teacher Support Network (2005) found that learners have verbally abused 84% of respondents – from swearing and backchat, to threats of violence, or comments of sexual nature, 20% of responding educators have been physically assaulted, and 38% of responding educators have had their personal property vandalised. Additionally, in the UK, a survey of teachers in 304 schools revealed a total of 964 incidents ranging from verbal to physical abuse against teachers over a two-week period (National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers: NASUWT, 2003). Similarly, 234000 teachers are victims of school related violence each year in the US (Daniels, Bradley, & Hays, 2007).

Walker (2013) mentioned that according to a recent article published by the American Psychological Association (APA), 80% of teachers surveyed were victimised at school at least once in the current school year or prior year. About half of the teachers who reported being victimised experienced harassment and about one quarter of these teachers experienced physical attacks. Walker (2013) also stated that only 14 studies were conducted internationally at that time and it was a very under reported problem. Espelage et al. (2013) mentioned that each year 7% of teachers are threatened by injury and students physically attacked 3% of teachers.

Novotney (2009) stated that while tragedies like the shootings at Virginia Tech and Columbine High School in the US typically make headlines; one finds that there is a more persistent violence trend in American schools. According to Thompson (2013), reported incidents have included a teacher being struck by a computer keyboard, a school principal

wrestling a 16 year old for a loaded shotgun and a teacher being hit on the head with a metal trash can. Teachers across the US reported alarming high rates of personally experienced student violence and harassment as indicated by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2013). In the face of the scarcity of research on the victimisation of educators, the US National Institution of Education conducted its first survey on the victimisation of educators as early as 1956 (De Wet, 2007a). A follow up survey done in 1978 showed a gradual increase in significant violence against educators, with the study revealing that some 3% of American educators reported significant violence against them (Twemlow, Fonagy, Sacco, & Brethour, 2002).

In the same year ie.1978 Bloch (in Schonfeld, 2006) observed that, 250 Los Angeles educators were referred for psychiatric evaluation after showing symptoms of “combat neurosis” stemming from victimisation. Using data from a national survey, the US Department of Justice estimated that between 1997 and 2001, educators were the victims of more than 1.3 million non-fatal crimes, ranging from theft to battery and rape (de Wet, 2007a). The estimated rate of violent victimisation was 21 violent crimes per 1000 educators, per year (Schonfeld 2006). Using data from the US National Centre for Education Statistics, Kondrasuk et al. (2005) found that American educators are three times more likely to be victims of violent crimes at school than learners are.

In a study conducted in Turkey (Mehmet, 2012), found that 24.1% of teachers experienced emotional abuse while 14.7% experienced verbal abuse, and 6.3% were victims of physical abuse. A report released by SEED – Scottish Executive Education Department (2001), showed that teachers in Scotland have reported 6899 violent acts perpetrated by students, which have happened inside, and outside of schools, during the 2002/2003 academic year. Of that number, 25% was verbal, 45% physical, 29% - multiple, verbal and physical violence, and 0.8% of the violent acts property damage.

In a study conducted in Slovakia (Dzuka & Dalbert, 2007), which profiled the experiences of 364 teachers, it was discovered that teachers experienced violence from students during very recent periods. The results of the study showed a 34.5% of violence verbal, 12.4 % personal property damage, and 4.9% physical violence. Overall 49% of the teachers surveyed have had negative experiences.

Kaupii and Porhola's (2012) study in Finland explored the prevalence of violence against teachers by students and included 175 teachers from five primary and five secondary schools. It was found that 25.6% of teachers have experienced violence; 3.3% experience it every week and 3.7% almost every day while 67.4% have almost never experienced violence from students. In a comprehensive study among 1521 Israeli educators, Zeira, Astor and Benbenishty (2004) found for example, that educators were more likely to be victims of non-physical violence, such as being cursed, insulted, humiliated, or threatened. In the same study, 17% of the respondents indicated that they were victims of verbal abuse, 5.9% were threatened with injury, 3.6% had personal belongings destroyed by learners.

Fewer educators though, were the victims of physical violence; 1.4% were punched, kicked, or bitten while 0.3% were threatened with a knife, and 0.2% were cut or hurt (Zeira et al., 2004). In accord with Zeira et al. (2004), a study by Walker, Ramsey and Gresham (2004), found that 42% of educators reported having obscene gestures and remarks directed at them by a learner, 28% experienced damage to personal property of less than 10 dollars, 24% had property less than 10 dollars stolen from them, and 3% were physically attacked.

It is an obvious conclusion that violence against teachers is present in many countries and across different cultures though not equally as frequent. From the above statistics, it can be concluded that violence against teachers by their learners is definitely a global phenomenon.

2.4.2 History and prevalence of violence in South African schools

Given the tumultuous history of South Africa i.e. Apartheid, the country has a long standing link to violence in that the Apartheid systems of control undeniably encouraged violence in schools. Apartheid was both "a violent repression in itself and spawned violent resistance" (Mnyaka, 2006, p.8). Young people were used by the Apartheid government to maintain its oppressive policies while other young people were actively involved in the liberation struggle, as both perpetrators and victims (Seekings, 1996). For this reason, present day violence within the education system in South Africa must be understood within the context of this history of political and economic disadvantage patterns of inequality in society (Vally, Dolombisa & Porteus, 1999).

Hambe (1999) expands on this sentiment as he explains that South Africans have a long history of sanctioning violence to solve problems within social contexts. Schools in South Africa have in the past, frequently been disrupted by violence and unrest, chiefly in reaction to the political situation in the country (Zulu et al., 2004). From 1976 onwards, education became an instrument of political reform (Le Roux, 1994) and since then, students and learners have been active in demonstrating, often violently, for example, burning down schools due to the mismanagement of government regarding education (Zulu et al., 2004). The role the past plays in present day situations can be clearly seen, and as retaliation to Apartheid education, students organised widespread boycotts, strikes and rallies, damaged many schools, and attacked learners and educators who tried to attend school (Zulu et al., 2004).

A new social democratic political dispensation was introduced in South Africa in 1994, creating expectations among parents and communities that rest and calm would be returned to education (Zulu et al., 2004). Unfortunately, the disruptive and violent behaviour has not ended and as cited by Zulu et al. (2004) it seems as if, because of the historical culture of violence and disruption within South African education systems, children have become socialised to deal with their problems in aggressive and violent ways.

Research by Frankel (1993) and Klaasen (1990) suggested that many children emerge from violent experiences with preference for violence themselves and current violent acts in schools and society could be seen as a result of continued exposure to role models during political conflict (such as Apartheid) as well as discipline from parents and other authority figures. The general acceptance of violent conduct is seen as a means to an end (Ward, 2007). Ward (2007) further simplifies the concept with his insight that the behaviour of children shapes the appearance of the social environments to which they are exposed and in turn, those environments alter the children's behaviour. It could therefore be hypothesised that the continued unmet basic needs and democratic promises stemming from the Apartheid legacy of violence that lends credence to violence as a socially sanctioned mechanism for resolving conflict, and for attaining change, have created the perfect recipe for increased levels of violence in schools (Mogano, 1993).

Based on findings, a child's development of violent behaviour can only be understood by exploring the ecology of the context in which the child grows up and according to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory; violence is recognised as a result of the collaboration between the different interrelated environments that influence human development and behaviour (Astor, Pitner, & Duncan, 1996).

Previous research done on violence in schools have recorded a high rate of violent acts amongst learners and the South African Institute of Race Relations concluded that South African schools are the most dangerous in the world after they found that only 23% of South African learners felt safe at school (Blaser, 2008). In the past few years, these violent acts have taken media by storm of reported cases of shootings, rapes, stabbings, and robberies throughout South African schools suggesting an increase in school violence. Nevertheless, it can be said that one of the challenges regarding school violence is the lack of adequate data and statistics within South Africa hence reliance on media reports for information (Pahad, 2011).

In a study conducted with principals and educators, Burton (2008) shows that up to three in five secondary schools have received reports of learner-on-educator verbal abuse, one in four secondary schools have received reports of learner-on-educator physical violence and 2.4% of schools have received reports of learners sexually assaulting educators. Mdletshe's (2007) study reports that 23 of the 25 educators at a Kwa Zulu Natal secondary school refused to return to their classrooms because they feared for their safety and some of the 800 learners vandalised classrooms and educators' cars, while several educators were assaulted by the learners. In March 2007, a Grade 8 pupil stabbed a 28-year-old female educator to death during teaching and learning times at Thornwood Primary School in Pinetown (De Wet, 2007a).

A study on educator targeted bullying in South Africa (De Wet & Jacobs, 2006) found that 48.3% and 14.3% of the educator-respondents were the victims of verbal and physical bullying, respectively. According to the results of the 2012 National School Violence Study, violence in schools remained relatively constant over the past few years. According to Burton and Leoschut (2012), teachers interviewed in the study substantiated findings that 29.3% had been insulted, sworn at, or shouted at by a learner, 9.6% had been threatened by

a learner, 4.6% had been sexually harassed by a learner, and 4.2% had an object thrown at them. In addition, 4.2% had a weapon pointed at them while at school, 4.2% had been robbed and 2.1% had been physically hurt while at school. In addition to the preceding statistics, the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (1998) listed a number of incidents where educators in the Gauteng Province of South Africa were murdered between January and July 1999. Sewsunker (1999) listed a number of incidences of violent actions that took place in Kwazulu-Natal schools; these incidences included the beating-up of educators by learners.

2.4.3 Impact of violence on the teachers well-being and professional performance

When teachers are exposed to violent behaviour by their pupils, this often leads to a negative impact on the quality of teaching that occurs within their classrooms and on examining current literature, scholars have shown the myriad of effects. For example, in 1978, Bloch (cited in Buck, 2006) became one of the first researchers to investigate this issue and through observing the reactions of educators who sought treatment following physical assaults; he developed the idea of 'Battered Teacher Syndrome' (BTS). This syndrome described educators constant exposure to violence in schools as resulting in symptoms akin to the DSM-IV TR criteria for post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) (APA, 2000).

A recent study by Steffgren and Ewen (2007) characterised BTS as a combination of anxiety, disturbed sleep, depression, headaches, elevated blood pressure, and eating disorders. With the hope of addressing some of the many limitations in existing literature, Ting, Sanders and Smith (2002) developed a Teacher's Reactions to School Violence (TRSV) scale. Preliminary findings deduced that individuals who experience direct exposure to violence might display psychological distress, numbing, or dissociation, but due to small sample the study, the researchers could not differentiate between direct and indirect experiences (Ting et al., 2002).

This professional numbing is often related to educators' experiences of stress or burnout. Kyriacou (1987) defined educator stress by revealing the distressing emotions, such as tension, frustration, anxiety, anger, and depression, experienced by educators due to conditions experienced at work. This ultimately leads to burnout, primarily characterised by

physical, emotional, and attitudinal fatigue. This results in teachers being unable to give off their best in the classroom and consequently, develop negative attitudes towards teaching and their learners.

Criticism, threats, intimidation, and sexual harassment have also been linked to educator burnout as psychological forms of violence often result in the educator feeling a reduced sense of control; which if threatened can lead to the educators own identity being challenged resulting in stress and thus, potential burnout (Buck, 2006). Maslach and Jackson (1981) suggest that stressful experiences in the work environment can result in altered emotional responses; a change in how one views the world, and a change in one's feelings of accomplishment and worth.

However, Buck (2006) suggests that the shattering of basic conventions about the world changes one's view of oneself as well as one's ability to cope after experience to trauma. Crawage (2005) substantiates Buck's view by stating that the alteration in behaviour and outlook may then develop into trauma response such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and that there are serious psychological repercussions when teachers are victimised.

Neely (2003) maintains that educators who have been involved in, or witnessed school violence can exhibit symptoms of PTSD, the symptoms of which include fatigue, head and stomach pains , and hypertension to name a few. According to the APA (2000), this clinical syndrome also displays other psychological symptoms of anxiety, depression, loss of control, guilt, sleep disturbance, and obsessive dwelling on the crime. As stated by Kadel (1999), some educators even bring weapons to school to protect themselves and on reviewing literature on related topics, we can deduce that the impact of violence on the teacher both physical and psychological, leads to teachers performing poorly in their classrooms and leading to them leaving the profession and ultimately resulting in teacher shortage.

A recent survey in the UK found that 47% of educators admitted to experiencing sleep loss when stressed, 45% turned to comfort eating to deal with it, and 42% said they cried. 29% said they turned to drink, 16% admitted to turn to smoking to cope while 13% said they took exercise to deal with stress and 2% said they turned to drugs (Willey, 2008).

Researchers agreed that most teachers find some sort of coping mechanism to deal with their stress as according to Hoffman (1996), violence or the threat of violence has a direct impact on the way educators and learners work together in the classroom. For instance, if an educator is stressed or experiencing burnout then he or she is unlikely to engage the class or provide motivation for a child who is struggling (Buck, 2006) thus, the quality of teaching is seriously affected due to teachers' experiences of violence.

Many educators in South African township schools admitted to feeling fearful to attend school, often resulting in demotivation and the inability to focus on performing their job (Crawage, 2005). According to Espelage et al. (2013), teachers cannot perform their job effectively if they feel threatened. This is consistent with what most researchers warn about teachers being affected by workplace violence, in terms of teacher retention, their performance at school and absenteeism.

In a Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) survey, most teachers revealed that they would leave the profession if they could (Kollapen, 2006). Psychologists indicated that a growing number of teachers suffer from psychological social stress due to antagonistic and uncertain environment in schools, and Gold (1996) mentions that newly graduated teachers tend to leave the profession earlier than other professionals; some 40% leave within the first five years. According to Hansen and Sullivan (2003), stress can result in mental and physical effects such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, or depression while Vettenburg (2002) found that educators feeling unsafe in front of their classes tend to show a reduced commitment to their educational tasks. Recently, many teachers have elected to leave the profession before retirement due to exposure to violence.

In South Africa, the current rate of teacher attrition is 20000 per year, for a variety of reasons, including discipline problems and violence at schools (Department of Education, 2005). These rates are even higher in low-income areas where educators are more likely to leave inferior working conditions (Smith & Smith, 2006). Recent calls for more educators by the Department of Education reiterate this finding (HSRC, 2005).

2.5 Contributing factors of violence in schools and against teachers

School violence is a multi-faceted problem, making it difficult for researchers and practitioners to pinpoint its causes. Many school violence statistics do not match the norms in our larger society and various school-based studies have revealed that in the recent years, the perpetrator is getting younger. As mentioned by the American Psychological Association (2013), it was found that the current generation are more likely to hail from backgrounds where drugs, criminal activities, abandonment, and familial instability are abound. Poverty, disownment, and dysfunctional adults are by far the biggest problems children and youth face however, only a relatively small fraction of modern children and youth act dangerously (APA, 2013).

Zulu et al. (2004) found that communal living, where large families or groups of people live together in a house could lead to abject poverty and abnormal competition for whatever resources come to hand. Also mentioned is that this competition can deteriorate into physical violence, which can spill over into schools. The findings by Zulu et al.(2004) supported Le Roux's (1994) observation that overcrowding and inadequate housing are some of the conditions that can lead to aggressive, violent and destructive behaviour in children.

According to Espelage et al. (2013), circumstances or situations that can trigger disruption, violent outbursts, and such, are death/suicide in a family, arrest of a parent, parent separation, peer humiliation, exposure to violence, abuse, and economic stress. According to National School Violence Study (Burton & Leoschut, 2012), school level risk factors include truancy and high dropout rates, poor educator-learner bonds and relationships, disorderly school environments, association with delinquent peers, and a negative or harmful school climate. In light of research done in the NSVS (Burton & Leoschut, 2012), it was found that the risk for school violence is often compounded by community-level factors, such the availability of alcohol and drugs, as well as access to firearms and other weapons, poverty and unemployment, high levels of neighbourhood crime, gang activity, poor housing and neighbourhood adults involved in crime. A number of recent reports highlight the increased abuse of alcohol and drugs by younger children, with media reports

putting increased number of addicts at as low an age as eight within certain districts in, for example, the Western Cape (Burton, 2008).

In the study done by Burton and Leoschut (2012), children brought up in single parent homes are at an increased risk for violence compared to those raised in two-parent homes. Family criminality was found to be a cause for violence amongst children. Exposure to, and direct experience of violence within the home, as well as outside of the home in the wider community, are common (Burton, 2008). It was also suggested that individuals who are exposed to domestic violence were at risk of enacting violence themselves, which is akin to the idea of 'abuse breeding abuse' (Cooper, 2006).

Learners are also bombarded with violence in the ongoing report of violence in the media, on interactive media such as personal computers and electronic games, discussions on violence, and the experiences of those around them Burton (2008). Researchers continue to share concerns around the link between aggressive behaviour and exposure to violent media (Bushman & Anderson, 2001). Children are often exposed to violent content on television, absorbing, in a sense, characteristics of violence and aggression as those who grew up watching violence on television have tendencies or more frequent violence behaviour in later childhood and adolescence (Bushman & Huesmann, 2001).

Prior exposure to violence is a significant predictor of future victimisation and delinquent behaviour (Burton & Leoschut, 2012). As mentioned by Burton and Leoschut (2012), an exposure to violence also affects the learner's risk for violence owing to the negative impact that violence has on their emotional and behavioural development. This leads to poor self-image, depression, poor impulse control, poor cognitive abilities, fighting, cruelty, lying, and destruction of property; factors that not only interfere with a healthy development trajectory but also put young people at risk for bullying and other forms of violent victimisation at school (Burton & Leoschut, 2012).

The impact of exposure to violence at a young age is well documented, with a number of longitudinal studies in other countries pointing to television viewing habits as long-term predictors of child aggression, as well as interpersonal violence leading to arrest and conviction later in life (Burton, 2008). Burton (2008) also stated that the most fundamental levels of violence reflect the very basic socio-economic conditions in which a significant

proportion of South African children live. The study emphasised the high levels of overcrowding in their homes, as well as their frequently unmet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter (Burton, 2008).

Various research shows that a healthy child is more likely to thrive than a child who is hungry and tired. Most teachers believe that a child's violent behaviour is influenced by family issues and conflict within the family viz. dysfunctional families that do not develop a child's empathy, lack of commitment of family members, and a sense of inferiority and resentment within families resulting in children wanting to stand out and dominate outside their home lives (Burton, 2008).

As mentioned by Opic, Lokmic and Bilic (2013), other possible reasons for violent behaviour are indulgent parents who do not set boundaries for their children's behaviour and tolerate violent behaviour or parents who themselves are abusers. Children develop the impression that any negative behaviour or attitude displayed by significant adults is acceptable behaviour and that they should emulate such behaviour when confronted with certain situations. It is the responsibility of parents and caregivers to develop and nurture a child's sense of wrong and right.

Ngakane, Muthukrishna and Ngcobo (2012) stated that in most cases, exposure to violence occurs while children are young and going through the developmental stages. The importance of healthy parenting styles when rearing children and parental involvement was found to be crucial in preventing acts of violence perpetrated by learners (Pahad, 2011). In other words, human behaviour is pivotally influenced by one's relationships, often causing them to adapt to their situation (Benbenishty & Astor, 2005). Inappropriate rearing could contribute to violent and aggressive behaviour and parents who exhibit violent styles of parenting are most likely to raise children who have violent tendencies (Crawage, 2005).

Scholars researching youth violence have confirmed a strong link between violence in adolescents and poor attachment between parents and children (Krug et al., 2002) and family structure and level of cohesion were also considered factors for later aggression and violence (Farrington, 1998). Krug et al. (2002) also found that the absence of parental support could affect children's social and emotional functioning and behaviour. Some children expect to be treated with attention in school, just like at home. Engaging in certain

behaviours, for example, if a student engages in verbal aggression against a teacher, it gives a child a sense of belonging. Attitudes of anger, negativity towards school, lack of options, and irresponsibility were also found to make an individual more susceptible to violent behaviour (Pahad, 2011).

Research has implied a close link between irritability, depression, and aggressive behaviours; suggesting that depression predisposes one to violent behaviours (Paul, 2005). Krug et al. (2002) suggested that excessive or uncontrolled anger is a risk factor for violent or aggressive behaviour and according to Rojek and Jensen (1996), single-parent families characterised by inadequate supervision and discipline, and economic difficulties result in a lack of control in children. Research by Mkhondo (2005) found that the absence of a father figure could play a significant role in the future behaviour of a juvenile. It is well known that one's mental state influences judgement, causing one to react with abnormal behaviours (Barlow & Durand, 2009) and according to Paul (2005), certain mental disorders are characteristically associated with violent behaviour; specifically conduct disorder, ADHD, and depression.

2.6 Intervention strategies

Due to complex factors that lead to violence against teachers, the multi-faceted system of strategies to follow are research-based recommendations that can be used to deal with violence against teachers. These interventions are discussed below.

2.6.1 Professional development, teacher training and workshops

The APA (2013) mentions that implementing effective classroom instructional and management strategies allow the teacher to have direct control at instructor level by ensuring that the teacher is in a position to control the classroom. Students' academic engagement can serve as a protective factor against engagement in risky behaviours (O' Farrell & Morrison, 2003). Through professional development and in-service programming, teachers could learn strategies to diffuse conflicts in order to prevent escalation, such as techniques for interrupting the acting out cycle (Colvin, 2004). It is suggested by Tintswalo (2014) that the police, parents, and community leaders become involved in assisting schools

to deal with violence and that teachers be re-skilled to deal with the issues of violence in schools and to assist parents with good parenting skills.

According to APA (2013), the use of effective classroom management practices are important, for example, clearly stating rules, being consistent, model and reward positive behaviour, show students you care about them, and notice any variations in students mood or behaviour. As argued by Walker (2013), many pre-service teachers are not necessarily equipped with the skills to manage their classrooms, so it starts with pre-service education, which is priority in special education where teachers are really taught how to de-escalate conflict. One of the top recommendations made by Walkers' study (2013) urged teacher preparation programmes to provide the next generation of teachers with a better skill-set that can at least help manage conflicts before they escalate.

Burton (2008) also mentioned that steps should be taken to provide educators with the appropriate skills to address potential and current incidents of violence in schools. Training teachers on managing their classrooms must be incorporated into a skills development plan and teachers need to be taught how to deal with a situation of violence that may arise in their classroom and most importantly how to identify and prevent potential violent situations (Burton, 2008).

2.6.2 Social and behavioural programmes

Students can participate in proven interventions that reduce or eliminate individual youth aggressive behaviour patterns directed towards teachers and other personnel as explained by APA (2013). The APA task force on classroom violence directed against teachers (2011) recommended functional assessment – based interventions as a promising practice for addressing behaviours that may lead to aggression against educators. Teachers may implement social/behavioural programmes (such as violence prevention, anti-bullying, conflict resolution, and classroom management programmes) to provide students with clear expectations and appropriate social and behavioural skills to manage anger, resolve conflict and improve classroom norms and environment (Henry, Guerra, Huesmann, Tolan, Van Acker, & Eron , 2000). Research suggests that the more students know about violence prevention, the less likely they are to be aggressive over time (MacMohan, Todd, Martinez, Coker, Sheu, Washburn, & Shah, 2012). Programmes that facilitate effective classroom

management, as well as social and emotional learning, can enhance academic engagement and achievement (Weissberg & O'Brien, 2004), and reduce violence and aggression in the classroom (Wilson & Lipsey, 2007).

Professional development that focuses on pedagogy and how instruction can be designed to engage students may encourage students to become more engaged with academics and to be less likely to engage in violent behaviours (Scott, Nelson, & Liaupsen, 2001). Bennett and Fraser (2000) agree that community leaders should build coalitions and institute social networks that address structural disadvantages – such as poverty, unemployment, and homelessness – through community-supported initiatives that strengthen the social organisation of the community and improve neighbourhood and family environments. Community economic development, employment programmes, and parent training may strengthen communities and reduce violence amongst youth (APA, 2013).

The APA (2013) posits that key players i.e. psychologists and other researchers, play important roles in cooperating and consulting with community youth-focused organisations and instituting partnerships with such organisations may also benefit victimised teachers by creating social support networks, alliances, and a collaborate mission to promote positive youth development. Although schools are affected by violence within the communities in which they are situated, both social and human capital within the school's environments could be effectively used to buffer the effects of community's violence (Tinstwalo, 2014).

Burton (2008) also maintains that besides these intervention programmes, children need to be targeted at an early age; early childhood developmental (ECD) programmes should incorporate teaching a child about how to behave as children tend to model the behaviour around them. Empathy, self-esteem, self-control, morality, an appropriate sense of right, and wrong and interpersonal skills have all been identified as key factors in building resiliency to crime and violence through the teen years and later life. He continues to mention that where schools and educators are involved in after-school programmes for young learners in particular, these activities need to reflect and integrate positive life skills. Furthermore, ECD programmes provide the opportunity to address issues during family-based interventions by the Health and Social Development, which target positive parenting skills as well as positive forms of discipline and reinforcement. Individualized interventions

must take place with those students who are displaying behaviour of significant concern (Burton, 2008).

2.6.3 School policies and discipline committees

Primary prevention of violence against teachers calls for faculty and staff to expect their students to show respect, responsibility, and their best effort throughout schools; whether it is in the classrooms, hallways, cafeterias, or playgrounds (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Schools need to have clear plans for responding to students who show signs of behavioural issues as well as a plan for students who have violated behavioural expectations (APA, 2013). School board members as well as community leaders and organisers should use their influence to engage youth in positive activities (APA, 2013).

Many researchers have mentioned that strong administration skills are needed to create a positive and violent free climate. De Wet (2007a) emphasises that it is thus, important that a school follow a school-wide or universal intervention programme, which attempts to create school and classroom climates that promote social and academic growth and a sense of community for all educators and learners. According to De Wet (2007a, p. 257), “these interventions should endeavour to create a culture within the school in which respect for the individual, predictability and respect for fair play shape the behaviour of educators, learners and administrators”.

Burton and Leoschut (2012) maintained that school-based interventions should place additional emphasis on generating awareness that violence and bullying is not the norm; it is unacceptable, and will not be tolerated. Rather than focussing on individual aspects of the school or environment, a whole school approach is suggested to deal with violence at schools. The school as an entity consists of several interdependent ‘components’, namely - learners, educators, principals, school management teams, school governing bodies (SGB’s), and parents or caregivers - together these components interact and exist within the greater system of the home and community (Burton 2008).

Burton (2008) continued to mention that only by dealing with all aspects of the system, will violence be reduced and ultimately eradicated and this calls for a carefully targeted, coherent system of programmes and interventions that complement rather than duplicate

each other. Policies and procedures should be clearly displayed for both learners and staff to see on a daily basis, serving as a constant reinforcement (Burton, 2008) and the management system within the school has to be effective in order to maintain discipline and control.

Shafii and Shafii (2001) agreed with the idea that schools - where management and educators work together have lower rates of violence because they have clearly enforced rules - are able to manage behaviour in their classrooms and are engaged enthusiastically in their roles. The Department of Education needs to implement minimum safety standards for all schools, which needs to be disseminated to all educational institutions in the country.

2.6.4 Counselling and life skills teaching

School-level protective factors include positive educator-learner bonds, academic motivation and success, school, discipline and clear rules, non-deviant friends and peers, and involvement in structured pro-social activities, as described by Burton and Leoschut (2012). Planned and co-ordinated and, most importantly, consistent extramural activities are needed at all schools to involve learners in positive activities and reduce their exposure to gangs, violence or criminal opportunities (Burton, 2008). In Burton's (2008) study, it is mentioned instead of children returning to homes where they are confronted with violence, conflict and contradictory messages, learners should return to homes and families that nourish, protect, and reinforce them in a consistent manner therefore interventions targeting the homes need to manipulate and challenge to the child's benefit, these often hostile and unhealthy environments.

International experience shows that joint interventions by welfare or social development departments, together with education, in targeting for example, pregnant (single) mothers and sustaining support through the early years of the child's education, are among the most successful in preventing delinquency and violence in children. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (2010) states that policy-makers should focus on developing and implementing preventative and rehabilitative programmes that use social learning variables to change behaviour in a positive direction. Examples of programmes guided by social learning principles include mentoring, behavioural modification, delinquency prevention, peer counselling and gang interventions. The idea behind these type of programmes is that

providing positive experiences and role models for young people serves to expose them to conventional norms and values that might diminish future delinquent or criminal acts. “Clearly in order to promote a healthy and supportive environment the issue of violence within educational settings need to be identified and addressed through rehabilitation and preventative measures” (Moore, Jones, & Broadbent, 2008, p. 4).

2.7 Theoretical framework

Research has shown that no single factor contributes to violence, various factors play a role in aggressive behaviour especially in South Africa, and there are many contributory factors that encourage violence amongst the youth. The recent xenophobic attacks perpetrated by South Africans indicate how people resort to violence when there is conflict. Based on this thinking, an individual’s violent reaction should be considered relative to their personal, familial, school, community and societal experiences to avoid misleading and incorrect interpretations (Krug et al., 2002).

In this study, the holistic environment was considered to understand individual development, experiences, and probable causes of violent behaviour. Therefore, using Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems approach (1979) benefitted this study. This theory looks at the development within the context of a system of relationships that form an individual’s environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The approach evolved largely in response to the inadequacies of the individual perspective of human development and the need to consider multiple factors at different ecological levels (Dalton, Elias, & Wandersman, 2001).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) identified four environmental systems that frame all human transactions and influence human development: the micro-system, the meso-system, the exo-system, and the macro-system, which describes influences as intercultural, community, organisational and interpersonal or individual. Bronfenbrenner (1979) added another system- the chrono-system, which takes into account history and time, which shapes one’s development. It is therefore understood from the theory that multiple factors contribute to an individual’s behaviour, depending on the type of environment he/she is exposed to.

According to Kelly (1996), Bronfenbrenner’s approach is based on four different principles: the interdependence of systems, adaptations, the distribution of resources and succession.

Each system influences the other and has an impact on the individual, hence, the correlation; a change in one part will influence others (Visser, 2007). As environments are not static but continuously shifting (succession), individuals often engage in (adaptation) a process to cope with the available and changing resources of the environment as all communities have different sets of resources (Hawe & McClaren, 2005).

Research over the years have found that violence is a particularly complex phenomenon that has roots in the interactions of many factors (Krug et al., 2002). Astor et al. (1996) maintained that ecological issues are at the core of concerns about violence, particularly those in low-income urban communities. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory will help gain insight on the violent behaviour of individuals within the school context due to the complex interactions between many factors and this is fundamental to the study (1979).

a. The Micro-system

The micro-system is the immediate context that directly affects the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). It is the complex of relations between the developing person and important figures such as caregivers, parents, siblings, friends, classmates and teachers (Watts, Cockcroft, & Duncan, 2009). Bronfenbrenner (1979) asserts that the presence and participation of third parties, such as relatives, friends, neighbours, or work colleagues can influence the child's immediate setting.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979, p.22) a micro-system is "a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics". In the interpersonal sphere, there are many components of the individual, including psychological and cognitive factors, like personality, knowledge and beliefs (Gregson, 2004). The individual is shaped by the environment they are exposed to as well as by the encounters and other individuals they interact with.

Personal history and biological factors influence how individuals behave and increase their likelihood of becoming a victim or a perpetrator. Some of the factors that influence behaviour are abuse and maltreatment of the individual, abusing alcohol or drugs and psychological issues. There is a bi-directional influence when it comes to relationships at this

level where for example, the school may influence the behaviour of the child but the school is in turn affected by the behaviour of the child.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) illustrated how bi-directional influences occur amongst all levels of the environment. With regard to violence, research has shown that an individual's personality and acquired biological deficits may contribute to their violent tendencies (Krug et al., 2002). Hamburg and Williams (1998) identified anti-social personality disorders, conduct disorder, ADHD, impulsiveness, neurotoxin exposures, and serious head injuries as some of the factors that predispose individuals to violent behaviour. Many young children display hyperactive behaviour in the classroom and many have self-esteem issues along with very low tolerance levels to certain situations. Other characteristics include age, gender, education, and income.

Van den Aardweg (1987) found that poor parental involvement, lack of supervision and absenteeism might result in violent tendencies in learners. The influence of a parent and upbringing of a child makes a tremendous difference to how children react to situations. In fact, research has shown that children who come from homes where parental discipline is inconsistent and extreme, which lack communication, contain domestic violence, are unstable and do not operate as a family unit show marked deviance in their behaviour (De Wet, 2007b).

b. The Meso-system

The meso-system is a system of micro-systems, which is formed whenever the developing person moves into a new setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The bi-directional interactions of the micro-system are now enlarged to the extent that we are now looking at slightly higher-order environments, such as the school as a whole, the home taken to the level of the neighbourhood, the extended family, and social relationships on the level of peer groups (Watts et al., 2009). A case in point here is how parents and teachers may collaborate in educational planning for the child (Graig, 1998). Personal relationships will dictate whether an individual engages in violent behaviour or not.

Pertaining to school violence, the meso-system explores how close relationships (with family, friends, intimate partners, and colleagues) increase the risk of an individual being a

victim or perpetrator of school violence (Krug et al., 2002). Research suggests that individuals in stressful environments with little support often are at greater risk of committing or experiencing school violence (Astor et al., 1996). Peer relations as a determinant for violent behaviours have also been extensively studied, suggesting that associations with delinquents or drug users increased the risk of violent behaviours, most notably in the form of gang culture or sub-culture (Farrington, 1998).

The lack of communication between the two micro-systems also increase the child's chances of violence, in that the parents do not inform educators of new stresses in the child's life that could explain her/his troublesome behaviour or educators don't expect parents to monitor learner's homework or support their discipline techniques (Sexton-Radek, 2005).

c. The Exo-system

This system refers to the social setting or organisation beyond the individual's immediate experience that nevertheless affects him or her (Watts et al., 2009). Examples that this system falls into are parent's workplace, the community, welfare health systems, or the activities of the local school board. They encompass, among other structures, the world of work, the neighbourhood, the mass media, agencies of government, the distribution of goods and services, communication and transportation facilities and informal social networks (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The influence of the community has far-reaching effects on the individual. An example here that may bring about violent tendencies could be stress in a parent's workplace that spills over to the home and even unemployment. De Wet (2007c) found that the most frequent community causes for school violence were living conditions due to poverty, unemployment, too many different racial and ethnic cultures, and overcrowding. Researchers concur with the finding that this system has been known to exert influence on impoverished settings (Gabarino & Dubrow, 1992).

In fact, Astor et al. (1996) found parental unemployment, conflictual school board policies, high rates of educator burnout and attrition and the lack of resources to have a negative

effect on a child's development. The presence of gangs, easy access to dangerous weapons, as well as the use and distribution of substances were also found to lead to school violence (De Wet, 2007b). These factors have a direct impact on the child's socialisation and identity formation, which ultimately could lead to aggressive behaviour. The behaviour, attitudes, and examples of parents, community, and caregivers in the home and community all have a profound impact on the learner's academic development and performance, as well as on their social attitudes, behaviour, and responses at school as mentioned by Burton (2008).

d. The Macro-system

This system according to Bronfenbrenner (1979) refers to the overarching institutional patterns of the culture or the sub-culture (such as the economic, social, educational, legal and political systems) of which the macro-, meso-, and exo system are the concrete manifestations. The laws, values, traditions, and customs are to be found at this level. This represents the larger societal factors that help create a climate in which particular behaviours are encouraged or inhibited (Krug et al., 2002).

Many researchers believe that the culture of violence is brought directly into people's homes on a daily basis through the depiction and glorification of violence in the media, fostering a general acceptance of violence in schools (De Wet, 2007b). Media plays a pivotal role in this level as it creates expectations for individuals. The belief that violent actions are synonymous with masculinity among males has seen the increase in violence among male learners and educators (De Wet, 2007a). Violent behaviour in education is further aggravated by South Africa's history of violence as mentioned in previous sub sections.

e. The Chrono-system

This system has a fundamental influence on the psychosocial development and refers to the unique socio-historical placement of the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). An example of this level is the effect of divorce on the child, especially in the first year of the divorce or even the death of a loved one. It also includes changes in family size, place of residence, employment, dominant socio-political values (such as the current importance of democracy as a political system in most 'first world' Western countries, as opposed to 300 or 400 years ago) (Santrock, 2008).

A chrono-system includes change and consistency over time, in both person and the environment in which that person lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Elements within this system can be either external, such as the socio-historical circumstances of Apartheid, or internal such as the psychological that occur with the ageing of an individual (Santrock, 2008). The social conditions of inequality in all areas of South African life caused much violence within schools and society, and fashioned the use of violence as acceptable and perhaps, today, even inevitable in the absence of clear anti-violence standards and norms (Pahad, 2011).

2.8 Conclusion

When learners engage in violent behaviour at school, it affects the culture of teaching and learning and is symptomatic of deeper underlying issues. This includes lack of respect for others, being brought up in a country where violence was seen as a method to solve conflict and the lack of understanding that a good education is what will build a strong and flourishing nation. Both internationally, and here in South Africa, violence amongst learners is a common phenomenon in schools. South African learners have been caught in a vicious cycle of violence that breeds a new culture that ultimately will lead to the chaos in education. If it is not nipped in the bud soon in the younger generation then society as a whole will suffer. Children need be raised with different views than that of their parents; they need to have a vision of creating a better future for our country and then only can this culture of violence be stamped away.

The literature reviewed shows the degradation of society and how the younger generation are taking much for granted. Change can only come about if the education system makes some drastic changes to policies and better equip teachers to deal with aggressive children. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological systems theory (1979) is very useful because it helps identify intervention strategies with regard to aggressive children in the classroom. This theory can help make a change to how schools deal with violence and eventually eradicate it as far as possible.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the relevant literature and theoretical framework pertaining to this study. This chapter entails the detailed research methodology and design that was utilised in this study. It described the data collection methods, data analysis, ethical issues, and limitations of this study.

3.2 Research questions

The research questions that guided this study are as follows:

- What are primary school teachers' experiences of violence towards them perpetrated by their learners?
- What are primary school teachers' perceptions of the causes of learner violence?
- What are the impacts of primary school teachers' experiences on their well-being and professional performance?

3.3 Research design

The nature of this study is determined by the following aspects.

3.3.1 Interpretivism as a paradigm

Interactive qualitative research is inquiry in which the researcher collects data in a face –to–face situation by interacting with selected persons in their settings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). According to Neuman (1997), research should explore socially meaningful action through the observation of people in natural settings so as to gain an understanding of, and interpret how people create and maintain their social spaces. Hence, my reason for electing to use an interpretive paradigm; I wished to understand, and make sense of primary school teachers' experience of violence against them by their learners.

As Lyons and Coyle (2007) view the social world as a process that is created by individuals, the interpretive paradigm is able to focus meanings that particular experiences, events, and

states hold for participants. Interpretive designs highlight the meaningfulness of human action and thinking (Ladbrook, 2009). According to Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991), interpretive studies assume that people create, and associate their own subjective and intersubjective meanings as they interact with the world around them. Interpretive researchers thus attempt to understand phenomena through retrieving the meaning participants assigned to them (Terre Blanche, Kelly, & Durrheim, 2006a).

In this specific study, teachers make sense of their experiences in their everyday teaching; of violence directed towards them by their learners. As stated by Paudel (2005), the interpretive approach is also committed to studying meaning and human phenomena in context. Huberman and Miles (2002) deemed this an advantage of the interpretive approach as it allows the researcher to gather information directly from the participants as they reflect on the actual events in a manner that makes it possible for the researcher to document.

Therefore, a 'rich description' of the participants' experience can be obtained (Merriam, 2002). When research has an interpretive nature, the analysis of the data is influenced by both personal and theoretical thinking (Cresswell, 2003). For this reason, according to Boonzaier and Shefer (2006), qualitative research insists on a reflective process so as to allow the researcher to examine his or her own biases.

3.3.2 Qualitative field of research

Most appropriate to this study, a qualitative field of research was employed to collect data. Cresswell (2003) stated that qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. Merriam (2002) interestingly states that a qualitative research approach is often undertaken when there is a lack of theory, or an existing theory fails to explain a phenomenon adequately, much like violence against teachers by their learners. Qualitative method allows for personal views of participants therefore it was more beneficial to use. Babbie and Mouton (2001) further explained that with the goal of describing and understanding rather than precise explanation and prediction of human behaviour, the qualitative researcher collects in data face-to-face situations by interacting with the

participants in their natural setting. Therefore, this qualitative study was interactive due to the researcher personally interviewing the participants at their respective primary schools.

Merriam (2002) aptly stated, because qualitative research holds that meaning is socially constructed by individuals during interaction with their world and that there are multiple constructions and interpretations of reality that are in flux; semi-structured interviews should be used to allow the exact experiences and perceptions of educators to be examined. According to Merriam (2002), researchers often undertake a qualitative study when it is found that there insufficient qualitative data available on the phenomenon as in the case of the current study i.e. violence against teachers in primary schools. Although limited quantitative data does exist it does not provide the real experiences and causes felt personally by the teacher.

With this study, I was guided by both existing literature on closely related topics and the theory of violence against teachers. The interpretive paradigm based on the above explanations was understandably most appropriate for the researcher to strive to understand the experiences of the teachers with regard to violence towards them.

3.3.3 Case study

The type of research method chosen for the purpose of this study that allowed me to become directly involved in the teaching lives of my participants and their settings was ethnographic research. Ethnographic research involves the researcher immersing his or herself in a social setting for an extended period, observing behaviour, listening, and asking questions (Bryman, 2012). This ethnographic research involves a case study approach. As Slake (1995) observes, case study research is concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question. As in this particular research, a group of teachers were interviewed and observed. Detailed and intensive analyses of the participants' experiences were probed.

3.4 Methodology

The aspects discussed to follow shaped the research methodology.

3.4.1 Sampling procedures

As mentioned by Paton (2010) quantitative sampling aims at representativeness, while qualitative research demands that the data collected is rich and descriptive. It was therefore due to this reason that sampling techniques were chosen to give a rich source of experience of teachers' experiences of violence against them by their learners. Due to the nature of the current research, non-probability and purposive sampling techniques were chosen. The goal of purposive sampling is to sample participants in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed (Bryman, 2012).

According to De Vos, Strydom and Delpont (2005), purposive sampling is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher in that the sample should be composed of elements that contain the most characteristic, representative, or typical attributes of the population. For this reason, the logic and power of purposive sampling lies in the selecting of information-rich cases for in-depth study (Mertens, 2005).

Teachers were chosen from three different schools close to where the researcher teaches and a pre questionnaire were given to all Grade six and seven teachers. These teachers were the best sample chosen because of the age group they teach, the pre-teens. Six participants were chosen based on the pre questionnaire and only those teachers who experienced violence against them by learners first hand were chosen to be part of this study. The study was not gender, age or experience specific therefore all educators in Grades six and seven were given a chance to answer a pre questionnaire.

Babbie and Mouton (2001) assert that there are no rules for sample size in qualitative research and the number of participants should be guided by the purpose of the research. According to Mertens (2005), the advantage of using purposive sampling is that it allows the researcher to hone in on people or events, which they believe will be critical for the research. It also aids the aim of this study to explore the quality of the data not the quantity because this research process is one of 'discovery' rather than testing of hypotheses (Lyon & Coyle, 2007).

3.4.2 Data collection procedures

The University of KwaZulu-Natal was contacted for ethical clearance whereas the Department of Education was contacted for permission to access schools. Once ethical clearance was granted both from the DoE and from the University, the researcher chose schools within close proximity of where she teaches. Principals of the various schools were approached and the nature of the study and the procedure that will be followed in order to collect data was explained to them. I then went ahead and gave out pre questionnaires first. After about three days, the pre questionnaires were collected from the various schools and then analysed to find a sample group.

Only two teachers each were chosen from the three different schools. These teachers had first-hand experience with learners engaging in violent behaviour towards them. The teachers were then approached to determine if they would be willing to participate in the study, as voluntary participation was a necessity. Convenient times and place were chosen for the interviews with the permission of the participant and most of the interviews took place at the school either in the classroom of the participant or the staffroom. An informed consent letter was given (see Appendix 2) and after consent was obtained; a 30-minute semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant.

The semi-structured interviews were audio recorded for accuracy purposes so as to facilitate an easier analysis process. Participants were also asked permission to observe lessons with their senior classes for about 10 minutes to complete an observation checklist (see Appendix 5) which was shown to them prior to the observation. It was explained to the participants that the observational checklist would help to corroborate my findings.

3.4.3 Data collection tools

A pre-questionnaire (Appendix 4) was used for the purpose of selecting participants that had first- hand experience of violence towards them by learners, then only could semi-structured interviews be conducted. Semi-structure interviewing is a data collection method that is known for its capacity to gather rich body of information through its flexible structure and interactive nature. The use of semi-structured interviews is meant to establish “a human- to- human relation with the respondent” (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p.57) and

reiterated the study's desire to understand rather than explain teachers' experiences of violence towards them by their learners.

According to Lyons and Coyle (2007), with semi-structured interviews, "a set of questions is designed to guide the schedule of the interview rather than dictate it". This then enables the researcher to uncover data from pre-determined subject matter, to have spontaneous discussions, probe, and clarify subject matter with the participants within this guided process. In other words, according to Lyons and Coyle (2007), the interviewer is free to probe interesting areas that may arise and can follow the participant's interest or concerns. This type of data collection method makes the process more flexible. As mentioned by Bryman (2012) questions that are not included in the guide may be asked as the interviewer notices things said by interviewees.

According to Longhurst (2003) this form of interviewing has, some degree of predetermined order but still ensures flexibility in the way issues are addressed by the informer. The data collection method also was chosen due to it being compatible with the thematic analysis of the data. Each teacher was initially asked the same questions (see Appendix 5) to help gain full experience of all participants. It also helped to build rapport by keeping to the initial set of questions. New questions were formed depending on the response of each participant. This is due to the fact that each participant is an individual and may have unique responses to the questions asked.

The first two questions asked in the interview confirmed what was said in the pre questionnaire about having had first- hand experience of violence directed towards them by learners, and also states the types of violence, re-iterating that violence as defined in the previous chapter is not necessarily physical. The third question asked gives the participant a chance to clarify the type of experience he or she has had.

The questions that followed help to gauge the reason for the behaviour of the learner, the feeling felt by the teacher during this encounter and after, probable causes for learner aggression, and how the school and community played a role to prevent this behaviour and support the teacher. Once interviews were conducted, on a separate occasion, I then observed the teachers lesson for about ten to fifteen minutes and ticked an observational checklist (see Appendix 5). This checklist was also employed as a data collection tool to help

support the findings of the study. The classroom behaviour, control of the teacher in class, attentiveness of learners, classroom management skills, and disruptive pupils were observed.

3.5 Validity, reliability and trustworthiness

“Validity is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research” (Bryman, 2012, p.168). Also mentioned by the pre questionnaires Van Jaarsveld (2011), validity is the accuracy with which the information is gathered, asked, and interpreted. Schools were randomly chosen in the area close to where I teach and the same set of questions were used in the interviews making the research more valid. In this specific study, external validity is important because it is about whether the results of the study can be generalised beyond this specific research context. Any research done must be consistent if repeated, therefore making it more reliable.

As mentioned by Bryman (2012, p.169), “reliability is concerned with the question of whether the results of the study are repeatable”. De Vos et al., (2009, p.162-163) agreed that reliability refers to the consistency of the measurement that every time the same variable is measured under different conditions, it will still provide you with the same or similar results.

In this specific study in order to ensure reliability, triangulation was utilised, i.e. semi-structured interviews were conducted, and an observation checklist was used. Thereafter, transcripts were shown to the participants for verification purposes. “Triangulation is the use of more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomenon so that findings can be crossed checked” (Bryman, 2012, p.390).

Trustworthiness of a study depends on how good the research is. Taking into account the factors of trustworthiness viz. credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, all play an imperative role that will constitute a trustworthy study. The study needs to be believable, apply to other contexts and other times. It should also take into consideration whether the researcher has been influenced by his or her values (Bryman, 2012). Trustworthiness “increases the confidence of the reader that the findings are worthy of attention” (Law, Stewart, Letts, Pollock, Bosch, & Westmorland, 1998, p.8). In their

research, Sinkovics, Penz and Ghauri (2008) point out that credibility focuses on establishing a match between what the respondents say to the views presented by the researcher.

In this study, the participants were full of rich experience on the research topic and were carefully selected by their responses to the pre-questionnaire. The full transcripts are included in this research report. Govender (2013) mentioned that transferring the findings of qualitative research involve the researcher having to refer to the original theoretical framework in order to show how data collection and analysis were guided by concepts and models. One can ensure transferability by using more than one data collection method (De Vos et al., 2009, p.346). as mentioned, data was collected using semi-structured interviews and an observational checklist, the excerpts of the interviews in this report may help other researchers decide if the research is transferable or not.

De Vos et al. (2009) noted that dependability refers to whether the same findings will be consistent if the same study was to be replicated, with the same participants within the same context. A clear explanation of the data collection process and well as the analysis was provided and the participants were given a chance to verify what they said once the interviews are transcribed. Confirmability was ensured by checking if participants agreed with the conclusions drawn about the research topic.

3.6 Data generation and production plan

The qualitative pre-questionnaires given to participants helped to generate data about which teachers had first-hand experience of violence towards them by learners. The semi-structured interviews were then held with the chosen participants as explained previously. The questions were guided by a schedule of questions prepared by the interviewer and as it is a semi-structured interview, I was able to deviate from the prepared questions depending on participants and their responses to the prepared questions. This enabled the participants to feel comfortable and not restricted to the questions prepared by the researcher thus allowing free, and flowing discussions. The interviews lasted from 30 to 45 minutes, depending on time constraints and the responses of participants. Participants scheduled the time and venue of the interviews, as I did not wish to restrict them with my availability. With permission from the participant, the use of the observational checklist to compile data,

confirmed the authenticity of the data generated from the semi-structured interviews. This checklist enhanced the validity and trustworthiness of the study.

3.7 Data analysis

This study employed thematic content analysis, which helped identify the themes that emerged from the interviews conducted about the teachers' experiences of violence towards them by learners. Thematic content analysis usually summarises key themes of a large body of data to offer an in depth description of its similarities and differences (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Kelly, 2006b). As explained by Braun and Clarke (2006), this qualitative analytic method frequently goes further by interpreting various aspects of the research topic. According to Lyons and Coyle (2007), there is no clear point when data collection stops and analysis begins with qualitative research, however the process of analysis comes into being when the researcher starts to become aware of patterns and issues of potential interest in the data. Both inductive and deductive coding was used, guided by the literature review and as the codes emerge from the data collected.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001, p.461) stated, "qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising the data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among the categories, most of which emerge from the data". De Vos et al., (2009) agree that data analysis further brings order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data.

3.8 Ethical issues

Ethics are moral principles and rules of conduct that deals with what is right and wrong (De Vos et al., 2005). Protocol was followed in order to conduct this research by making sure permission was granted by Department of Education and by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Ethical clearance was obtained before I embarked with the data collection, principals of the various schools involved were informed about the research, and teachers were asked permission to conduct research with them.

The participants were informed about their role in the study and were given the opportunity to volunteer to take part in the interviews and observation. Informed consent letters were distributed to the participant, as participants must be fully informed about the research in

order to provide informed consent (Henning, 2004). All participants were assured of their anonymity and that they could withdraw from the study at any time (Terre Blanche et al., 2006b). Participants were also informed that confidentiality will be maintained and no gender or grade level and so on will be mentioned in the transcript. In ensuring autonomy and anonymity, any items researched that participants did not wish to include in the study were excluded (Blasé & Blasé, 2003).

It was mentioned though that direct quotations will be used in the report but only the researcher would transcribe and process the audiotapes. The audiotapes and transcripts were kept in a secure location and destroyed on completion of the research as stated by the UKZN Ethics Committee. Participants were debriefed once the interviewing process was completed and informed that they could gain access to the research report once it was completed.

3.9 Conclusion

This study made use of the interpretivist paradigm and qualitative field of research to explore the experiences of teacher's experiences of violence towards them by their learners. This included a non- probability purposive sampling method which allowed the researcher to choose the criteria needed to conduct this research. The use of pre-questionnaires, semi structured interviews and observational checklists helped the researcher to gain insight into the study. It helped to collect data befitting to the study and made sense of the teachers' experiences. Thematic content analysis helped to make sense of the findings and analyse the data. The next chapter focuses on the presentation and the analysis of the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data and the discussion thereof. Both observational checklists and semi-structured interviews were employed as explained in the previous chapter. These tools have helped to provide suitable themes in keeping with the initial research questions. It was noted that the findings were very closely related to the literature reviewed in chapter two. Several themes emerged from the findings and explained under specific headings. For each theme, direct quotations from the interviews will be used to support the findings. Findings from the observational checklist will also be discussed later on in this chapter.

4.2 Thematic analysis

Undoubtedly, all the educators who participated in this study had to some extent, experienced violence, and aggression from learners. Hence, they were purposively selected to participate in the study. The following themes were used in the presentation and analysis of data.

4.2.1 Types of aggression/ violence experienced by the teacher from the learner

In chapter two of this research report, the definition of violence was reviewed and no single and clear definition that can explain violence was found. Burton (2008) states that to assume a homogenous or uniform understanding of school violence is to exclude those forms of violence that are tacitly concealed. When analysing the transcripts it was evident that the participants found that even body language and swearing a type of aggressive and violent behaviour. It is only through their experiences and understanding that different meanings emerged. The violent and aggressive behaviour that each participant was confronted with was mostly verbal abuse. There were threats of physical abuse but none of the participants had experienced such types of violence.

Colloquially verbal abuse is a catchall term for emotional abuse; however, it consists of name-calling, racial slurs, swearing, and gossiping (Booren, 2007). As explained by Pahad (2011), the identification and consequences of verbal abuse has always been a contentious

issue since trying to measure the effects of verbal abuse or evidence of its use is virtually impossible. As a result, verbal abuse has merely been frowned upon and is generally discounted as human nature (Eliasson, 2007). Verbal abuse generally consists of two practices: “the intent to harm and the target’s interpretation” (Eliasson, 2007). However, Infante (1995) refers to verbal abuse as “verbal aggression” characterising it as a behaviour with a message and intention to attack a person’s self-concept in order to deliver them psychological pain. In keeping with this idea, verbal abuse requires the speaker to use language consciously, rather than merely as a habit or how one talks on certain occasions (Eliasson, 2007). In the findings, verbal abuse was more predominant.

Participant A said:

A Grade 7 learner a boy, was verbally aggressive, he didn’t stand up, didn’t touch me, he was in his place shouting at me, pointing and raising his voice, it sounded very scary...he raised his voice saying a lot of things, why am I only talking to him, aren’t I listening to the other children...”.

“Oh you are friends with them that’s why you not scolding them, you only...” He directed his anger towards me because I was delivering the punishment that he was taking... I just stayed and listened to him as he shouted across the class.

I stood at my desk listening to whatever he was saying to me and just breathing and didn’t want to react too much.

This clearly shows the lack of respect on the part of the child towards his teacher. Teachers are faced with verbal abuse on a daily basis. This child, although a Grade 7 learner, clearly had no respect for an adult or authoritative figure. It is evident that the teacher felt scared and could say nothing at that point. He showed no respect towards her by talking in such a manner thereby showing he lacked some important values as a young child. This boils down to emotional violence, which is unacceptable behaviour from a primary school learner. The term ‘verbal aggression’ is closely tied to theories of personality within aggression research (Burr, 2003).

According to **Participant B**:

There was a girl, she was home schooled and she came to our school in Grade 7 and I think because of the environment or whatever it was extreme change. She came from Kenya and it was her first time in a multicultural classroom. She got up one day, I reprimanded her for some reason, I think homework or something, she got up and swore, I asked her to repeat what she said, and she repeated it. There were underlying circumstances, she had lots of aggression, and her aggression was towards women in general.

Participants C and E when asked about the type of abuse they experienced shared similar stories:

... Anger and because this child was reprimanded for not doing his homework...

...Verbal abuse. At primary school level, they want to back chat to you...So they become aggressive and verbalise this aggression, they back chat and mumble. (Participant C)

...the type aggression I experienced was verbal abuse... He must have said something in his language and the whole class laughed and became unruly. When I asked him what he said he just clicked his tongue and said nothing. When I called him to the front of the class, he was very rude and his body language showed me that he was being disrespectful.

(Participant E)

Participant B, D, and E all had similar experiences of verbal aggression. It is not gender specific as seen in the case of **Participant B**, where a female learner swore at the teacher. Lack of respect emerged from these incidences towards the educators. This leads to emotional violence towards the teacher and the participants felt victimised. Verbal abuse is increasingly recognized as a form of interpersonal violence and included in definitions of violence (Eliasson, 2007). The participants felt shocked and outrage at this type of behaviour at primary school level. It was evident that these educators were disappointed in these children and felt a sense of defeat or helplessness.

As mentioned by Eliasson (2007), verbal abuse can have both short and long-term negative effects on the person that is targeted. People exposed to verbally aggressive messages may feel embarrassed, inadequate, humiliated, hopeless, desperate or depressed (Infante, 1987). Although the violence was not physical, most participants were affected negatively by such behaviour from a minor.

Participant E felt that even the body language of the child made her uncomfortable. The impression received from her statements made it seem like she felt insignificant and belittled especially that the child spoke in his mother tongue and she could not understand. Verbal abuse has been correlated with low self-esteem, cynicism, and unhappiness, higher levels of depression and anxiety, hypertension and increased heart rate (Sachs-Ericson, Verona, Joiner & Preacher, 2006).

Responding to the same question, **Participants D** and **F**'s responses were not unique as shown below:

... He is extremely disruptive and does not take instruction regarding work. He stood up to attack the other children as well as educators including me. They always speak in isiZulu when they are unhappy they will mumble in isiZulu and they will walk out. When we do confront them, they are always sulky and they have and show that type of aggression. (Participant D)

The type of aggression that I get is that they talk back, they deliberately don't do any assessments, they don't complete tasks. They look at you in a menacing way as if 'what can you do?' and they walk out of the classroom. This is the type of aggression I get from them... Sometimes; like in the case of the 19 year old, he physically pushes the teachers and learners... (Participant F)

Participant D also found verbal abuse a problem but more so, when students spoke in isiZulu to him, a language he did not understand, this made him feel uneasy and not respected. Being a male teacher he expected more respect from younger children but this was not the case, especially that he had an over-age learner. As explained by this

participant, the 'menacing way' in which they looked at him also made him feel threatened. He felt threatened by this 19 year old who when confronted about not doing work, pushed him around. This would be considered physical violence by the fact that he touched the teacher although he was not hurt.

As mentioned by Pahad (2011) the use of the learner's hands to inflict harm is quite easily identifiable as a form of physical violence against the educator. Pahad (2011) found that violence towards female educators were verbal whereas violence towards male educators was more physical in nature. This however does not mean that female teachers are not physically assaulted or that male teachers are not victims of emotional violence.

When **Participant F** was asked about her experience of the type of violence directed towards her, she responded by stating the following:

It was more anger where they did not want to take kindly to punishment of uniform or class work that was not being done on time where the learner was very upset about what I asked... ..the learner stood up like literally stood up in my face and was ready to fight...children are lot more outspoken, they have no respect it's sad to say. They feel they have lots of rights but they don't know how to use...

Participant F had a similar experience to **Participant D**, but although she was not physically touched she felt as though the child seemed like he wanted to fight with her. She felt a certain amount of embarrassment by being victimised by a learner. As stated by Pahad (2011), learner-on-educator violence seems to contradict the traditional power dynamics between learners and educators and these unbalanced power relations could be a reflection of changing times and conditions in which educators are now operating. Many feel that the increased rights of children have somehow given them an increased sense of power and teachers feel helpless.

This is so obviously seen as **Participant A** made the following comments:

When I was in school, we used to be hit every day. The teacher never had to shout. They never had to raise their voices at any point. Can't remember high school or primary school teachers losing their voice. They

never had to shout they just hit the children. I am not saying we should allow corporal punishment but then there should be a loophole somewhere. Government should revise the whole rights thing. I heard somewhere recently that shouting is considered as corporal punishment. I am not touching the child why is it corporal punishment? With the whole rights thing they know their rights, they end up throwing it at your face, and you as a teacher don't have any rights. The child's rights trump all of ours.

Teachers feel a sense of disappointment; of being let down by the system from what was gathered. They did not agree that corporal punishment was the way but felt something needed to be done about how children treated them in the classroom. Although none of the participants were injured physically, they are emotionally taunted. These are but a few incidences they were faced with but this is what they go through every day, which eventually has a serious impact on their quality of teaching.

Verbal aggression made them feel disrespected and utterly shocked that children have changed so much that they display this type of behaviour. The issue of children's rights within the school causes much controversy in African culture because children grow up thinking they have no rights of their own (Shumba, 2003). However according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations (1948) all human beings, including children, have rights and these rights should be respected (Shumba, 2003). Participants unanimously agreed that the 'newfound rights' of this generation creates a culture of disrespect for education and educators.

The idea of a new generation suggests that a developmental change from previous generation has occurred, thus drawing on the chrono-system (Pahad, 2011). According to Ward (2007), the chrono-system reflects the passage of time and accompanying developmental changes in both the children and the system in which they have contact. Previously, discipline was maintained largely through fear of physical punishment, without this option educators feel that learners have no reason to behave responsibly within the classroom (Burton, 2008).

4.2.2 Teachers' perspective on the factors contributing to the learners' aggressive behaviour

For one to gain an understanding as to why children display such aggressive and violent tendencies at school level especially towards the teacher, we need to understand the many factors play a role in such type of behaviour. Research has shown that violence is often a result of multiple factors that are interconnected (Krug et al., 2002) and these factors contribute to violent behaviour which was explored with regards to participant's experiences and considered in relation with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979; 1994) as explained in chapter 2. These factors will be discussed in the context of family, home and community life, for example poverty, socio-economic factors, single parenting, dysfunctional families, and lack of parental involvement. Other factors include media, peer pressure, abuse, and exposure to violence, and chemical imbalances such as ADHD. These factors emerged from the data as exacerbating the likelihood of being a victim or a perpetrator of school violence.

4.2.2.1 Family, home, and community life

Family factors, parental involvement and so on should be a primary undertaking when trying to understand aggressive behaviour. **Participant A**, who was a fairly new teacher and new at being a classroom manager, got the lash out from the 13 year old boy because he was going through difficult times with his family. Her age, in this instance for the teacher as she is below 30 years old played a role in predisposing her to this type of behaviour from her learner. Quantitative research has found that younger educators were more prone to reporting school violence than their older colleagues (De Wet, 2007a). In addition, being female, he took advantage of this fact.

Unfortunately, for **Participant A**, she had to withstand the worst of the child's anger as he had been insulted and accused during the course of the day by other educators and by the time he got to her class, he was frustrated by the situation. Teachers may have not known what the factors were to the child's behaviour that contributed to his unruliness, therefore they made assumptions that he was on drugs etc. It is important that teachers are made aware, especially by parents about changes in a child's life that would cause deviant

behaviour. The child may need to speak to someone about his issues and that is why counsellors are important. This aspect will be dealt with later in the chapter.

As **Participant A** rationalises:

They summarise the whole thing, they say hormones, he just turned 13, he is nervous about Grade 8, he does not know what is happening in his body, but I do not believe those things. I think he is old enough to be responsible for his own feelings. So it was not anything I did, it was things piling. When I asked at a certain point what was wrong or is there anything we need to know and then he tells me , that 'every teacher is against me', they think he is taking drugs, those kind of things, so when I did that I just added. It was last period of the day and maybe I added to everything everyone else said so I got the lash out and others didn't. So it was a piling up of everything. (Participant A)

Participant A also acknowledged that she was not to blame for his outrage but it was just merely his frustration with his situation at home. With regard to violent and aggressive behaviour, Allen (2005) claims that individuals at risk of such behaviour tend to over-generalise, take one negative aspect as the truth, and make global judgements of their self-worth. This is referred to as maladaptive thinking (Beck, 1995).

Some of the statements made by **Participant B** justifying learners' behaviour were:

...his parents were divorcing ...parents separated and where living in different places. So now, he was affected by all that. We can't really help what his parents are doing at home. I do not know where the problem lay because he was doing the same thing to his mother and father and father can't do anything because he lives with his mother.

A contributing factor, as explained by above, was that the parents were divorcing and they did not live together anymore and this is what has led to his aggressive tendencies. It is clear that single parenting and dysfunctional families have a role to play in how the child behaves at school; it makes them aggressive and unpredictable. Boys especially tend to take advantage of their mothers if the father figure is not there all the time, as mentioned by

Participant A. As she mentioned, we as teachers cannot do anything about the situation at home and it is beyond our control if the problem is the family situation. This then spills over into our classes and brings disruption to our day. Negative environmental influences may block the ability to continue with the teaching of prepared lessons for the day.

Participant B had similar responses in terms of dysfunctional families and single parent families playing a role in aggression in primary school learners. The aggression she received from a young girl shocked her but she realised that the circumstances of the child moulded her into an aggressive individual. This particular child had no mother figure in her life and probably felt resentment towards older females in general. In a study conducted by Burton (2008), data shows that a significant portion of learners are living without their mothers, depriving many children of the nurture and love traditionally associated with a mother.

As **Participant B** put it:

From dealing with the kids here, I would say there is a lot of neglect that happens in some of the homes, parents are divorced and single parent homes, that's another problem. The two boys that had the fight one was living in an informal settlement. You can make out it is not from aggression that stemmed in Grade 7 only, its inbuilt and stemmed from something that has happened at home.

According to Allen (2005), maladaptive beliefs that lead to violent or aggressive behaviour are often a result of negative early experiences that have become established and influence one's thoughts and behaviours on a daily basis. This is shown in the excerpts to follow.

...lack of a mother figure during her formative years because she was staying with her dad. (Participant B)

Probably...I know he comes from a dysfunctional family, He doesn't have a father so single parenting can be a problem. Poverty as well because I know his uniform...he is not dressed properly when he comes to school. His uniform is dirty... so he lives in an informal settlement and poverty plays a big role. Its poverty because...same problem with him at home because there is no father figure (Participant E)

Mkhondo (2005) found that the absence of a father figure could play a significant role in the future behaviour of juvenile. **Participant C** felt that their home problems were brought into school and their only outlet to vent their frustration is at the teacher. She also felt that children have changed due to socio-economic factors; their parental figures may not be good role models, conditions of poverty and lack of discipline due to all of the above factors. APA (2011) declared poverty to be a significant factor for increased violence exposure.

De Wet (2007c) corroborated the findings of the participants, when she maintained that the most frequently cited community causes of school violence were the deterioration of living conditions because of poverty. **Participant D** also felt the same about home background and socio-economic factors being the cause for violence. He felt that children behave just like what they are exposed to in their homes, like substance abuse, domestic violence, and abuse.

This particular child did have family problems and he was not getting time to do his work at home but he didn't want us to...

They were having domestic problems, know he was trying to cover it. When children have problems at home, they have to find an outlet. By asking for work, you become that outlet for them. They have to let go of the aggression somewhere. Previously children were different, now we got a new kind of child. There is many socio- economic factors that affect children... Situations at home, upbringing, lack of discipline at home.

(Participant C)

It is definitely the home background. Most of the children behave the way they see the adults behaving in front of them. There are some children who when they are scolded and reprimanded they will not show any disrespect but you will have others without doing anything they show disrespect. So this is purely because they are exposed to aggressive behaviour from their respective backgrounds...the environment from which they come from, generally if you look at how their involvement in the community and homes many of them are exposed to aggression so

they tend to display this at other levels. It also a lot to do with the socio-economic background. (Participant D)

Participant D also mentions in his excerpt that the community plays a role in aggressive behaviour; it is the environment in which children live. It could be an environment with gang activity, poverty and criminal behaviour and bad role models for a young child to be exposed to. **Participant C** reinforces the ideas mentioned initially of contributory factors to aggressive behaviour by making the following comments:

Socio-economic situations at home, lifestyles are changed. We had family support now its nuclear families and children don't have grandparents there and uncles and aunts to confide in, it's only their parents. If they having issues with parents then they bring it to school and let it out in school. It is important to have family support. And I think parents are not spending quality time with their children. Getting a child to watch television is not spending quality time with them. You need to talk to your children, there is no communication, and there is a breakdown in communication. Sometimes you can't blame the parent they have to work they come late .There is so many factors. As a parent, you should make the time to spend with your child. Like re-organizing your time. The child needs you now at primary school level, parents need to give them support.

She felt that parents need to spend more time with children and not neglect them. They need to support and nurture them from a young age to prevent delinquent behaviour. Not spending quality time with a growing child has disastrous consequences on their attitudes and behaviour in their teenage years. Trackman (2008) confirmed this in her earlier study when she found that educators emphasised that a lack of interest in parents rearing their children was contributing to lack of respect for others.

Participant B mentions neglect and it is obvious from what is mentioned to follow in her excerpt that parents sometimes do not take responsibility for their children. They expect their children to take on some of their responsibilities and this puts the child in a stressful situation. The child then comes to school and displays his frustration as means of aggressive

behaviour towards adults, which is then the teacher. Developmentally the nature and style of the parenting model is understood to be significant as the child's physical environment (Burton, 2008).

... One case in my class, twins they are aggressive, both boys are very naughty and aggressive towards other children. Supposedly good home, mother is a nurse and dad works for Metro. Kids have a baby brother and they are left to babysit child while parents are not there. Can two ten year olds look after a one year old? Parents need to catch a real wake up and see what they are doing. Our parents took their responsibility seriously, here are two minors taking care of another minor but can't look after themselves. Too much to deal with, we as adults scream and shout when we have too much to deal with.

From the comments made by the different participants it is undoubtedly that family, home, and community life affects one's behaviour. As mentioned by Krug et al., (2002) the community environment in which the individual resides along with other factors (individual, familial, school, and societal) systematically exposes them to situations that may lead to school violence. Exposure to good role models is vital in the developmental stages of a child and poor role models have an adverse effect on their values and morals. Van Der Merwe (2009) stated that next to the family, the community serves as a major role player in the lives of youth, as such the characteristics of a neighbourhood are crucial when predicting and attempting to curb anti-social behaviour amongst youth. The community they live in and the poverty they come from can possibly lead to some kind of unacceptable social behaviour. This confirmed Hirschi and Gottfredson's (1994) theory that the largest correlates of school disorder are attributes of the school population and the community context.

4.2.2.2 Media

Besides the family situation, **Participants A** and **F** added that a multitude of factors play a role in aggressive behaviour amongst primary school children. They indicated that media plays an important part in their social skills and behaviour. Research over the years has found a link between violence in the media and violent behaviours (UNESCO, 2007).

According to Krug et al. (2002), most evidence to date indicates that exposure to violence on television increases the likelihood of immediate aggressive behaviour and in the longer term, contributes to serious violence. Violence in movies is frequently depicted as a way of sorting differences as learners emulate the behaviour of film heroes in their efforts of settling their own differences with others, at home and at school (Miller, 1996).

*Whatever TV programmes they are watching we end up hearing all about it. They tell us about music videos they watch whatever hip-hop that has a swear word. I have heard so many songs being sung in my class and its shocking because you know that in the lyrics every sentence has a swear word... the movies they watch...
You just shocked that they listen to those things or watch those things...*

(Participant A)

According to **Participant F**:

...watching a lot of TV because TV has lots of violence even if the story is good there is lots of violence in the movie or TV show. It just influences them to be bullied at school or join the bullies at school and that's when the aggressive behaviour tends to come out.

Primary school children are quite impressionable, they tend to emulate what they see and hear from adults as well as what the media to which they are exposed to. **Participant A** stated that they use swear words because it is what they watch and listen to at home. She feels parents should have more control over what young children watch and listen to. She is shocked by this behaviour. "Public concern over the content of television programmes has focused on the effects of violence and aggression on children" (Gouws et al., 2000, p.111).

4.2.2.3 Peer pressure

The participants also mentioned that people children interact with influence aggressive behaviour; this is either bullies or children facing similar problems in their lives or learners who get into trouble. Children are constantly battling with peer pressure, the need to conform to a group of so called 'cool learners'. Some of these children take drugs as mentioned by one participant and parents do not have control over this since they maybe

single parents and working. Children then start to associate with the wrong crowd without much supervision. Even young children abuse substances due to hanging out with older children and peer pressure.

Research over the years has confirmed a link between substance abuse and violent behaviour (Bennet & Holloway, 2005). In Leoschut's (2009) recent study she found the young age at which learners initiated substance use to be of great concern, suggesting substance induced violence was often found among young learners. Easy accessibility of these substances has increased their use, as indicated by Burton and Mutonyizwa (2009) in the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention. It was also found that substance abuse in low-income areas is greater due to issues of poverty or lack of resources (Burton, 2008).

Participant E explains that:

His mother is single and she works all the time so it gives him an advantage to join other bad people. Peer pressure in the informal settlement...peer pressure can cause a problem and parents can't really control that especially if you are a single parent and your child is out with other unruly children, drug addicts probably or whatever.

Participant F agrees with **Participant E** by mentioning the following:-

Learners don't come from a stable home because it's a single parent that's running the house, so the children are not being monitored when they get home from school so they tend to join the wrong company that's when they go astray, drugs, drinking, thinking they are cool so when they come to school they tend to project that kind of image and others just take advantage because they living with their grandparents not with parents so the they tend to be their own boss and overrule their parents.

4.2.2.4 Domestic abuse

The aggression children are faced with at home also is a contributing factor as mentioned by **Participants A** and **F**. The context or the environment also seems to influence rearing practices as Roberts and Morotti (2000) discovered harsh and punitive methods of discipline were more often employed by low-income parents with increased stress levels. Burton (2008) found that learners who had been exposed to violence within their home also reported having aggressive behaviour at school. This shows that there is a relationship between abuse experienced at home and aggressive behaviour at school. Research has also suggested that constant exposure to violence, victimisation, and criminal behaviour can predispose one to delinquency (Krug et al., 2002).

The following excerpts from **Participants A** and **F** capture the effects of family violence on children:-

Aggression they see at home .When mum says something, dad doesn't say anything, then they know they can say anything to us and we wouldn't say anything because we are not allowed to talk anyhow to a child. (Participant A)

Sometimes violence at home where the children are being mistreated also maybe the child has some sort of learning problem which can add to the aggressive behaviour because they don't take punishment kindly and don't want to be the laughing stock. (Participant F)

4.2.2.5 Chemical imbalances

Participant B feels that even hyperactive children can become aggressive if not monitored or even properly diagnosed. This chemical imbalance brings about disruptive and unruly behaviour and sometimes the teacher is at the receiving end. It is well known that one's mental state influences one's judgement causing one to react with abnormal behaviour (Barlow & Durand, 2009). According to Paul (2005), certain mental disorders are characteristically associated with violent behaviour; specifically conduct disorder, ADHD, and depression. This type of behaviour merely predisposes a child to aggressive behaviour but not necessarily a definite cause.

In my class, I have a child on Ritalin who is very naughty and I spoke to the parents. If he does not take his Ritalin, he is very bad. Too much of stimuli for him, he can't sit still. Doesn't think before he reacts, hits others for no reason. Chemical imbalance...

Many of the factors outlined by participants for being contributory factors towards aggressive and violent behaviour have been discussed in chapter two, in the theoretical framework. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979; 1994) explains that the environment has much to do with the child's behaviour and that all parts of the environment are interlinked thus, one affects the other. It is clearly seen from the participant's statements how the environment affects the child.

4.2.3 Effects of aggression on the teachers' wellbeing and professional performance

Ultimately, no matter what type of violence a teacher is exposed to, he/she is affected by it, physically, either emotionally or psychologically. Popular discourse has claimed that school violence is limitless (Burton, 2008). Identifying the factors that lead to violence towards teachers will tremendously help to prevent and change the perception that violence by youth is irreparable. It is important to bear in mind that these consequences are inevitable (Pineiro, 2006). As apparent in the comments made by **Participant C** on how this does not affect her.

It doesn't affect me because it's all part of my job. In a Grade Seven class with my years of experience with Grade Seven learners, you expect children to behave differently because they going through that adolescent stage in their life and in Grade Seven they are the senior learners so they are the big children of the school. So it doesn't affect me. I was angry with the child....

Participant A was most definitely affected by the learners' aggressive behaviour. She was a new teacher and found the experience to be scary. She felt that if the child was older he could have stabbed her and made the following comments:-

Yes... I did because it was scary... I was scared that if I were at a high school I would have been stabbed at this point...

This incident stressed her out. Stress is defined as a situation, event, or amalgamation of situations in which the individual perceives the demands as exceeding his or her capacity to respond in a comfortable manner (Smith & Carlson, 1997). According to Hansen and Sullivan (2003), stress can result in mental and physical effects such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, or depression. **Participant A** found herself in a situation where she had to shout at the learner because she was frustrated. She also felt confined to her reaction towards him and found no other solution but shouting back and made the following comments:

I could have not shouted at him, I could have called him outside. I could have avoided that shouting but then you can't avoid disciplining some one or stopping them from whatever he was going to do wrong...

Consistent with the participant's experience, Smith and Carlson (1997) have found a link between stress and unfavourable individual outcome and my research has shown a link between stress and psychological problems in an individual's life. Other than the physical effects, psychological outcomes such as depression, anxiety, suicide attempts, and PTSD have featured as consequences of stress induced by school violence (Crawage, 2005). Gwaintley (1987) purports that an individual does not need to endure physical injury or pain in order to be traumatised or develop PTSD like symptoms.

It made me think of my whole teaching career, how will I be...made me think if I want to do this for the rest of my life. I calmed myself down, you see you have to decide... (Participant A)

From the comments above it shows that this participant felt a lack of motivation to perform her job, and for educators, school violence has almost guaranteed this. This is in accordance with McPherson's (2005) view that failure or a sense thereof can occur among educators working with emotionally and/or economically deprived children thus leading to 'educator dissatisfaction'. Research by Vettenburg (2002) found that educators feeling unsafe in front of their classes tended to show a reduced commitment to their educational task.

Participant A questioned if this was a job she wants to stay in especially that she is new and young to the profession. This teacher was not sure how this would affect her if she continued teaching. Attrition is experienced in all professions. In recent years the rates of attrition has suggested a crisis in the education sector. The HSRC (2005) found educator attrition rates in South Africa to be as high as 13%.

Participant B mentions the following:-

I was surprised and shocked did not expect children in Grade 7 level to behave in such a violent manner. You expect this type of behaviour in a high school. Reality hits home when you come out of college you think every things going to be nice and rosy and then you come here and it's not what you expected or even been trained for. It's a reality of what's happening in South Africa as well. It's shocking. You tend to understand there are other issues underlying what's happening and look holistically from where they coming from...

Participant B also had similar feelings as **Participant A**; she was shocked and could not believe that primary school children could display violent behaviour. Although she was a more experienced teacher, she felt she was not sufficiently trained for this type of behaviour at college. In a way it made her feel powerless and that she had no control over the situation. According to Donovan (2000), one of the primary reasons educators request to move to another school is stress caused by the lack of training in classroom discipline.

Participant B also mentioned that schools are reflective of the state of the country. The rise in violence in South African communities pervades our schools, as she pointed out this:

I feel for them more emotionally now because if I look at my own class today I see the emotional baggage that these children are carrying and then you can't not feel for what they are going through. If you look at today's society there is lots of stuff that is happening and these children are neglected at the end of the day. I still like to work with children and give off my best. Made me a stronger person...

Participant B also felt that her experiences of violence towards her has made her more sensitive and she has a better understanding of what children are going through. It has in a way 'opened her eyes to the world'. She feels a sense of sadness in her job to know that children are this way because of what they are experiencing at home. She also mentions that although this may have been a shocking experience it also has made her stronger and she still has the passion to teach children. It is noted that not all teachers who are exposed to negative behaviour from children would like to leave the profession, if anything it makes them better able to cope probably their own coping mechanism to deal with the changing generation.

I wasn't physically scared from it but I was very dismayed. I knew I could not try to reason with this aggressive child and management did not assist because when it was reported to them nothing that was seriously done and this has got me very dismayed. (Participant D)

Participant D agreed with **Participant B** in that the incident disappointed him. He was dismayed and felt a sense of defeat knowing he could not reason with the aggressive child. Being a male, I somehow felt he was ashamed and felt like a failure, that he felt powerless against a child especially that the learner was much older and could have physically harmed him. He also felt let down because management had not done anything serious and he was not supported. Trackman (2008) implied that authorities, due to their inability to address this problem, often silenced school violence against educators. This breeds helplessness amongst teachers.

It upset me, it upset my day, and when I got home, I was frustrated and upset... (Participant E)

I was taken aback because this is not what supposed to happen in a class setting. But when I realized that the child was ready to resort to violence I asked the class RCL to take him to the HoD. It was safer to have him removed from the class than to have him be in the class. (Participant F)

Both the above participants felt upset and frustrated by their experiences. **Participant E** commented that it upset her day implying this set a ripple effect on the rest of her teaching

day. She could not have given off her best to other learners because of this incident. She also took her frustration home and this affected her family. She mentioned she has two little children and this affected her behaviour towards them. She was angry and upset with them for no apparent reason. **Participant F** felt scared that her life was being threatened. As a female up against a male learner, she felt helpless. She felt unsafe in her own class, which eventually influences your teaching and brings about feelings of tension and anxiety and can lead to PTSD as mentioned earlier.

It also affects their performance in the classroom and lack of motivation to give off their best. From the comment made by **Participant F** below its obvious, that lots of tension and anxiety, is felt in the classroom:

Well it's scary because you know your life is then threatened as well as you also consider the other learners in the class so you also worried about them. Therefore, it's possible if you turn your back on the child yet the issue might have been sorted out in the class they may still attack you. So sometimes, I think the way they react towards you is their way of asking for attention also.

4.2.4 Challenges outlined with regard to inter- sectoral collaboration

4.2.4.1 Involvement of parents

Parents have a crucial role to play in their children's lives, what they do from the beginning of the young child's life impacts on how the child behaves in a social setting. It is imperative that parents support and monitor their children when it comes to their education. Many parents fail to do this for various reasons thus negatively influencing the child and his or her education. It is seen in the statements made by the different participants that parents are very influential in the child's life from a young age in this violence equation. The National Education Policy stressed parental involvement when they recognised parents as official partners in governance of their children's schools (DoE, 1996). Irrespective of the nature of the family unit, parents still need to guide and support their young children and take responsibility for their needs as an adult figure.

Almost all of the participants agreed that parents lacked in their commitment of raising, and nurturing a young child. They also felt that parents were to blame for the aggressive behaviours displayed by their children. Each child had their own family issues and parents did nothing to help the child. Neglect by parents was a common idea from the participants. They felt parents did not play an active role in their lives and that is one of the reasons they go astray and join the wrong company. Trackman (2008) confirmed this view in her study when she found that educators emphasised that a lack of interest in parents rearing their children contributing to lack of respect for others. In fact, developmentally the nature and style of the parenting model is understood to be as significant as the child's physical environment (Burton, 2008).

Participants also felt that because parents are not with their children for whatever reason, they are not being taught proper values from a young age where moulding takes place. Behaviours learnt at home are displayed at school and this could be aggressive tendencies if their values and morals are compromised. If a child is exposed to vulgar language at home he/she might think it is the norm to speak in that manner, therefore they do not see anything wrong when they say it at school even to the teacher. Children should be taught right from wrong in their developmental years and participants feel that it is not happening.

All participants suggested the need for parental involvement in their child's life as a strategy to address the issue:

Parents should be blamed for children's behaviour... (Participant A)

... Some parents don't see their children at all because you come back at 7 o' clock the child is then sent to bed because it's bedtime. They should be blamed because we teach a child things like please and thank you, so when you don't say to your child then they don't say at school. So whatever you do at home reflects here at school. (Participant F)

They shout at home and swear, they do that with other children, and it ends up affecting the whole class. If you hear one person swearing and I don't say anything about it because I know at their house they do that, that's how they live it ends up affecting other children. They think it is

normal behaviour and you can't even discipline them because you can't do anything.... (Participant B)

They need to come to every school meeting... (Participant C)

Be the bad cop so we don't have to. When we scare the child and say we going to tell your mother they should actually be scared not that when we tell them that they say go tell her we will see what she will do because some actually say that. They need to be the bad cop.

(Participant D)

Due to peer pressure, they behave differently but parents need to play an active role in their children's lives. They need to know what their child is doing at school. They need to monitor their homework; they need to be supervising them constantly. These are still children and need to be guided by their parents. They need to be put on the right path.

(Participant E)

It is clear from what the participants revealed that parents should adopt a disciplinary role and not leave it for the teacher to do. Learning first takes place at home and if there is a lack of discipline at home then the teacher endures the worst of it. The above comments made show how parents lack interest in what their children are doing at school. Some do not even know whether the child is doing their homework. No monitoring takes place and so the child does whatever they please. If parents were more active in their role and supervised the child from the beginning some of these issues could have been avoided. Primary school learners need guidance so they develop a better sense of worth. They need to feel love and care from their parents as mentioned by the participants. Parents should attend school meetings and check up on their children, building relationship with the school and teacher is what the participants felt was imperative. According to Elliot (1994), a strong bond with parents is a protective factor.

Monitor child's work and behaviour, get to know the friends they keeping, monitor his programmes he watches on television, all that as a parent you have to see to. You have to make sure you have structures in

place, as a parent get involved in the school. Come to the school, check what's happening, if child is not doing homework, have a relationship with the teacher ... (Participant C)

Participant D made the following comments when asked about parental involvement:

Parental involvement is essential. Parents can be involved in all aspects of their children's development. Everyone works to support his or her family. Parents can drop notes occasionally and comment on the performance and in this way; the child knows he is answerable to someone who matters. This will make a great difference to curb poor behaviour. Once the child knows this behaviour and performance is being monitored by the family the child will then want to work to get good results.

This child has no parents, the school has tried even I have tried to call parents but there is no correct addresses, invalid addresses ,no details or phone numbers so I am not sure whether he has parents or what because every time we tried there is no response...Those days they were much more interested in learning and greater parent involvement and nowadays parents are not really interested...

The parent should definitely take an interest in the child by monitoring the child's work. Making regular visits to the school. Parents should also give correct details, they should come and verify details and most of the children we get the details from them. They have wrong addresses and wrong phone numbers and don't even take notes home. So I think the parent has to show some initiative....parents are the role model. A child is exposed to parent in initial stage of development, learning occurs at home. If a child is learning respect and discipline this will be evident in the child's behaviour at all stages, at schoolwork, in a social environment and emotionally.

Epstein (2001) argues that educators who work with their parents understand their learner better, generate distinctive rather than routine solutions to classroom problems, and reach a shared understanding with parents and learners. Greater parental involvement is a point emphasised by many participants, which will have a substantial positive effect on the child's behaviour as well as assist in decreasing violent behaviour by working together with teachers in guiding their children.

Participants felt that if parents made a concerted effort to come to meetings then maybe there would be a difference in the child's behaviour and attitude towards school and work. It was also indicated that parents should not expect the teacher to do their job of instilling discipline and thereafter become defensive when the child is in trouble at school. Parents should let the child know that their aggressive behaviour is unacceptable and avoid being defensive especially in front of the child. According to Van Jaarsveld (2011), discipline should start at home and parents should teach their children from a young age to respect educators and people in general.

Participants E and F shared their sentiments about parental involvement especially how parents 'pass the buck':

The parent should not neglect their child. I think we should have a book that sends in notes to the parent, so we can communicate, parents should always be checking up on their children, they should be checking up to see if there is any complaints and sign the book at the end of the day. ...parents should play a more active role and know what they children are up to in school and out of school... (Participant E)

...parents are very defensive like it's the teachers problem and they must deal with it and they must try to sort the child out, or be more accommodating. (Participant F)

I think the parents should take a little bit time out to pay attention to what their child is doing. Sometimes it is not easy for them to know what their child is doing in terms of their homework maybe they don't speak English or didn't do those subjects but at least make a visit to the school

at least once in the term to check how they doing. That will let the child know that mum or dad is trying to take an interest in me they are worried in what's happening in my life and that would make a very big difference to these learners because in my experience even when it comes to issuing reports, parents are supposed to come and collect it the parents don't show up. At parents meeting you only get a handful of parent coming and that is the parents of learners we don't really need to see (Participant F)

Participants agreed that parents need to play a more active role in their child's education. They should be supportive and teach children, right from wrong. They also felt that if the parent had a better relationship with the school and teachers, many unpleasant issues could be avoided. Instituting supportive home environments for healthy child development allows families to help children define themselves as valued (Mncube, 2010).

Aggressive behaviour displayed by the child was mostly due to parents not taking responsibility for their children, a breakdown in communication and neglect, although it is known that some children do not have parents and their situation is slightly different. Pahad (2011) mentioned that living with other family members, the lack of parents, and the unavailability of parents due to work commitments need to be considered as the explanations for lack of parental involvement.

4.2.4.2 School management

Management plays an integral part in dealing with situations that teachers are confronted with. How they handle the aggression towards them by the learner influences how the child's behaviour is modified, and the teacher is supported. Poor management skills can lead to the failure of any policies drawn up and place strain and stress on the teacher. This will eventually take a toll on the discipline of the school.

According to **Participant A**, the school management team can play a role thus:

I have read it as a new teacher, they give it to you, this is what we are following, this is what the children do, and this is what you allowed to do

to punish them. Then when you punish them like make them sweep all of that they end up enjoying it. We need to now do the next step, which is expel or suspend, call parents or community service. That needs to be done to one or two, three people to set a completely new thing like the children need to know this really actually happens, they don't. I have been here for almost two years and already know that. That doesn't happen because when you ask the children whose ever been sent for community service? "No one mam, is that even allowed?" "Yes that's in the code of conduct." "But we don't do that." We just need to practice all of it or remove it if we not going to do it... (Participant A)

Participant A thinks that management can be more effective by keeping to what is stipulated in the code of conduct. If the punishment is not carried out, then children feel they can get away with their aggressive behaviour. They tend to take advantage of the lack of commitment on the part of management. She also mentions that children seem to enjoy the punishment they receive. When children know they can take advantage of the situation, they can become manipulative. She also suggested that if management took firm decisions and stood by it, learners will feel more sanctioned by this and avoid being aggressive towards the teacher.

Participants D and **E** also strongly agreed that management need to take a stand and be steadfast in their decision-making as this can deter children from reacting violently towards their teachers. **Participant E** found that management was not effective when dealing with the situation and that left her feeling alone without any support from the management team. These participants felt that management had failed them and therefore they have been placed in circumstances beyond their control.

Everything has been followed, we have been following protocol, but management does not deal with this. Management should have expelled him for physically assaulting learners. (Participant D)

Management should get more involved. I feel teachers are left on their own to deal with issues and sometime issues get out of hand and sometimes management or HoD is not available when they get out of

hand. There has been an incident prior to this where I had to wait two days for an incident to be sorted out. (Participant E)

As the participants were from different schools, some did not share the sentiments about management as **Participants D** and **E**. **Participants B** and **C** believed that their management had good skills in dealing with problematic behaviour and they followed protocol and managed to diffuse situations. They also found a change in attitude and behaviour of the aggressive learners. Their SGB also played an important role in helping with the more problematic and violent children. They also mentioned that a strong and supportive management is vital in bringing discipline to a school.

Participant C mentioned that the principal had a 'tight reign' on discipline in the school as shown below:

We inform the principal, call the parent or we send a letter to parent. We have a school code of conduct. We inform parents, need be we call our disciplinary committee. We have a code of conduct and if the situation is getting out of control then we take it to the discipline committee (SGB)... Experience helps when it comes to discipline and strong management, principal has tight rein on all aspects and she gives support. (Participant C)

...took the boys to the principal's office and explained and she called parents etc. ...parents called in and management handled it. Personally, in my class if there is any issue parents are called in, so in that way we are tightening up together. (Participant B)

Participants E and **F** mention that protocol needs to be followed according to the code of conduct, verbal warnings, then written warnings need to be issued by management and there must be a follow up in order for it to be effective. There also must be proper records kept of the offenses children have committed previously. If management cannot handle the child then the next step is the SGB who will then decide what happens with the child. With regard to discipline, the school governing body also has a duty to ensure that the code of

conduct includes policies and procedures that are appropriate for dealing with matters and these policies are implemented and revised on an ongoing basis (Prinsloo, 2005).

The first protocol was obviously calling the HoD and the HoD will call the learner in and give a verbal warning first and second would be a written warning. In this case, this child has been a problem previously so the HoD gave him a written warning immediately. (Participant E)

Well, the HoD removes the child from the class or we send them to HoD. He will then speak to the child and find out what has happened and what had caused them to feel aggressive in the class and from there take it up with the parent or try to get someone else involved. Yes, we do have a discipline committee in place. We have the governing body. It depends on the incident we have a hearing with the governing body and the necessary teachers and principal who are part of the governing body. To look into the incident and make a decision to whether the child should remain in the school or the class or should they be taken out or maybe be evaluated for aggression. (Participant F)

Without proper management, discipline becomes hard to maintain in a school and teachers need to have support of such structures and bodies so they can feel safe and continue to teach. If a teacher is not given support in this respect they will not feel the need to be at school and sometimes take the situation into their own hands for example, assaulting the child. The teacher gets into trouble because corporal punishment is not allowed.

4.2.4.3 Department of Education and the need for school counsellors

The DoE is the link between all role players, without their input and support discipline in schools will crumble. Their policies, changes, revisions, and any decisions they make with regard to this violence in schools affects both the learners and teachers and the end result could have a negative or positive impact on the school and its discipline. As re-iterated by the participants, the DoE can make changes that are out of the schools hands, which can eventually lead to calm in the situation. If the DoE does not take cognisance of the fact that violence against teachers is a serious situation then there is likely to be an increase in the

rate of teacher attrition, teacher absenteeism, and poor academic results due to stressed and unmotivated teachers. The participants all were of the same opinion, that the DoE should re-introduce counsellors to the school setting. They felt that counsellors could make a substantial difference when it came to violent children.

Participant A mentions that these children need someone to talk to and that teachers neither have the time due to curriculum constraints nor the experience and training for it. These counsellors can also help diagnose ADHD early in the child's life and prevent violent behaviour later on. **Participant B** is of the same opinion that these children need help. **Participant C** also mentions that the DoE made a big mistake doing away with guidance counsellors. She also strongly felt that even social workers could be brought in to speak to these aggressive and problematic children. It was also mentioned in her comments that remedial programmes and remedial teachers should also be re-introduced to the system as we had previously. The DoE is the only structure that has this power to make these necessary but vital changes and play a more active role in bringing about change not only for the child but also for the teacher who suffers from abuse by these learners.

Participant B also mentions that security guards are important at schools to help curb children from carrying weapons or drugs and so on. She feels that because they have a security guard at their school, which the school pays for, this makes a big difference in discipline.

There is a need to diagnose if children have ADD or ADHD. We could have like these school counsellors, have one in every school because some of them aren't really learning problems, it's a family problem. They need someone to talk to, we don't have time for that, they don't provide us with time to be sitting down with a child because we are either in our class or break. Or on duty during break. We don't have time to talk to learners. (Participant A)

The department needs to get security guards at schools we have security guards and kids know they checked...Lots of children need help...
(Participant B)

The biggest mistake was to do away with guidance counsellors, every school should have one DoE should employ counsellors, should have social workers to come to school that is employed by DoE like the one we had previously. We also need remedial programmes and remedial teachers. You see the children who don't do their work and become aggressive are children who need that extra bit of work as well. DoE needs to play a more active role in that aspect because we don't have counsellors. **(Participant C)**

The DoE must visit schools that have reported cases of learner aggression. Even if your report has not been filed the DoE must make regular visits to areas or schools that enrol learners from poor socio-economic backgrounds. They should have some structures in place to assist learners with psychological defects. At one stage, every school had a school counsellor or guidance teacher, learners could be referred to the educators who are equipped to deal with these misdemeanours. So the DoE should be looking at these kind of structures in place. Not really, it will be appropriate but we don't have proper guidance counsellors or proper people to assist. The syllabus is so vast there is so much to do. You can't spend much time dealing with these issues. Some of the children have very serious problems ... **(Participant D)**

Participant D reiterates what has been said by the previous participants, that the DoE should be more active in their role of supporting schools and teachers against aggressive behaviour from learners. He feels structures should be in place to help learners from poor socio-economic backgrounds and those with psychological problems. This then brings in the idea of school counsellors again and the need for them at schools. He mentions, as **Participant A** did, that teachers do not have the time to deal with children's psychological issues because teaching takes up their day and they not equipped for it. Some issues are serious and a trained person needs to be there to counsel them.

Participants E and **F** share the same thoughts regarding counsellors and the necessity of their presence in schools. **Participant E** brings about a good point of teachers being trained

better to handle behavioural problems by stating that young teachers who are newly graduated should be given training on how to deal with aggressive learners i.e. what to expect and how to react. Pillay (2012) reaffirms this by stating that teachers who instruct Life Orientation need to be effective counsellors in order to help learners with the many problems that exist in society. Older teachers should also be trained because they are not used to this new generation of children and find it hard to cope.

The DoE can have workshops for educators to be more trained in a situation like this especially younger teachers, they should know how to deal with these situations. And we should definitely have guidance counsellors in schools. (Participant E)

I think the department needs to bring back guidance counsellors in all schools to curb these issues of violence of learners with the teachers and also make the environment safe. Guidance counsellors should definitely be brought back into the system to help these learners and help the teachers so that we have a conducive learning environment.

(Participant F)

Clearly, from the participant's comments the Department of Education should have a more active role to play in this equation of violence against teachers as it the DoE that can make changes to the curriculum, or provide counsellors to improve the situation schools face.

4.2.4.4 Effectiveness of school policies

School policies ensure the effective functioning of the school. If teachers, management, and learners do not take these policies seriously then it loses its effectiveness. Discipline policies should be followed at all times and not brushed aside to suite the situation which would then lead to teachers losing faith in the system and learners taking advantage of the lack of support by management. Participants have noted in their interviews that this is exactly what happens if the rules are not enforced on a daily basis and it becomes a mockery. Children then feel they can do whatever they please without serious consequences. The teacher, because of lack of support, feels a sense of disappointment.

Participant A explained how education policies can create a conducive environment thus:-

We have a code of conduct. It is very specific it tells us everything. It tells us if they do this, we should do that. As for is it sufficient? No, we don't follow it because we end up feeling sorry for the children who come in with their family problems and then we can't even practice what we preach in the code of conduct. Revise the code of conduct. Rewrite some of the things or remove some and add some. We really need to practice what is being written there... For example, it says when a child has done three wrong things, broke three rules, we go to level 2, it's like a point system. When you break level 1 three times, you go to level 2, and when you break level 2 three times you go to level 3 and then its community service or call the parents. But if you doing that the whole year like what he was doing, you get suspended but we don't do that here. I don't know why we don't do it, we should. (Participant A)

Participant A felt strongly about changing the code of conduct if it is not being implemented. She felt the child was never punished according to the code of conduct as stipulated by the levels as she mentions. She felt the learner was not suspended according to what the rules say but continued with his misdemeanours. If the code of conduct was strictly adhered to, then learners will be afraid and realise that there are consequences to their aggressive behaviour. It was noted that this participant felt disappointed and let down by the school and its policy.

Concurring with her colleague, **Participant B** said:

But if we look at it, some children enjoy the punishment so we actually got to review the policy. To pull out weeds and sweep is where they getting the attention and these children crave attention even the negative attention has become a good thing for them... (Participant B)

As **Participant B** acknowledges that parts of the policy is not working because children seem to like the punishment they are receiving and enjoy the attention it gives them. Attention is

what they crave at the end of the day so whether it is negative or positive they enjoy it according to this participant.

There is no effective policy there is a discipline letter calls parents for misdemeanours and this is not followed up by management as a result learners don't show the letter to the parent. There is a discipline committee, which is the school governing body that too is not much joy from that. (Participant D)

We have a school code of conduct that the learner is issued when they enter school. (Participant F)

Although mentioned by participants that the school code of conduct is issued to the learners when they come to the school, it is not effective due to management not following up on the levels of punishment. **Participant D** also felt that there was no joy from the SGB because the pupil who was aggressive towards him was still in school and not expelled for his violent and aggressive behaviour. Without effective school management, policies in place schools cannot handle discipline efficiently and effectively. Policies need to be implemented as well as revised if something in the policy is found lacking.

4.3 Intervention strategies

Intervention strategies are imperative to change what teachers face in their classrooms. These interventions should start at primary school level as it becomes apparent that young children are becoming more aggressive as the years are progressing. Management and the DoE is centre to these strategies, because without their input and changes even to the curriculum, all will be in vain.

There are a multitude of intervention strategies that can be implemented to ensure that discipline is maintained and that teachers are not faced with being humiliated in their classrooms especially by the younger children. Primary, secondary, and tertiary intervention strategies need to be considered. Primary intervention strategies should be aimed at preventing incidences of aggression and seek to enhance personal and social skills of

children, creating positive social behaviour. This type of intervention should include ECD programmes, training workshops for teachers to better equip themselves for violent situations and any training creating awareness for both learners and teachers involving violent behaviour. Petersen, Pietrzak and Speaker (1998) emphasised the importance of interpersonal skills in the curbing of school violence and recommends learners should receive training in conflict resolution, effective communication, crisis management strategies and peer mediation.

Participant A raised an important issue, which is in-service training workshops for teachers. She felt this workshop helped her deal with the situation of the aggressive learner. Teacher workshops are crucial for them to be able to deal with violent children. The DoE should organise more of these workshops to better equip the teacher to deal with aggressive children. Training on classroom management should be incorporated into school and skills development plans, also educators need to know what to do in response to a violent incident, as well as how to identify a potential for violence and prevent it (Burton, 2008).

I was fresh from a workshop where they told us if this kind of thing happens, you can't touch the learner, you can't do anything you can't shout much because it must not be a screaming match, you have to be the better person, and you can't leave the class because the other children have a right to learn. Because you as the teacher can't be the one running... (Participant A)

A teacher may act against the rights of the child if not properly trained or informed and this can lead to the teacher losing their job. Professionals who can educate teachers on how to diffuse potentially violent situations should hold these workshops. An educator who is trained will be more effective in dealing with problematic children and in so doing prevent injury physically and psychologically to themselves.

Participant F felt that life skills training was an essential requirement for prevention of violent behaviour and made the following comments:-

We should have some kind of test during the LO period to try and find the learners that are having problems so that they can be given the

necessary attention that they need. Sometimes for the teacher it is difficult because of the large numbers. Some learners are introverts so we don't pick up on their issues. So the only time it comes out is when they feel they are being picked on so they decide to get aggressive. Life skills program definitely, it teaches the children about their values...it teaches them how to carry themselves out and also if they are put in different situations how they should react or where they can possibly get assistance to help them with their situation. (Participant F)

Life skills training plays an important role in teaching children skills at an early age. The groundwork for pro-social behaviour and positive interpersonal relationships with peers and adults can all be incorporated into ECD programmes (Burton, 2008). Social competency and pro-social skills such as, but certainly not limited to, assertiveness training, conflict resolution, anger management skills and self-control need to be integrated into the curriculum and taught in classrooms through the primary school grades (Burton, 2008).

Participant F mentions that someone should speak to learners; motivational speakers should come to schools and speak to learners on how to deal with their problems without violence and anger.

Participant D had the following to say with regard to primary intervention strategies:

Children need to be taught appropriate behaviour and what is right and wrong. When confronted with certain situations and this needs to be incorporated into the curriculum at primary school level especially at foundation phase. Teachers as well need to be skilled in handling aggressive children, some need to be re-trained.

Both **Participants B** and **E** also agree with this statement by mentioning the following:

Young children are very impressionable, so teaching them to deal with conflict and having good role models around them makes an enormous difference when they confronted with certain situations in later years.

(Participant B)

It is important that we as teachers are trained on how to deal with violent and aggressive children in the classroom and also children should be taught from pre-primary how to cope with stressful situations in their life and it should be ongoing throughout their primary school years. This will help the child become better at deciding wrong from right in difficult situations. (Participant E)

Secondary intervention strategies need to be implemented to reduce the impact of the violent incidences for example, getting parents involved, enforcing the code of conduct when an incidence has occurred and also getting assistance for the teacher if need be, for instance contacting the EAP.

As seen by the comments made by the participants below teachers and parents getting together is important. Teachers should come together, discuss problematic children, and decide what the next step forward is, especially with learners who are displaying anger and aggression. **Participant B** felt that if this was discussed earlier, incidences could have been avoided. Sometimes a child may be aggressive towards one teacher and not to the other for whatever reason, so by discussing this steps can be taken to avoid any further behaviour problems. Participants made the following comments on parental involvement and the code of conduct:

We as teachers could have come together and said that if he has this problem, why? Should we call parents? That kind of thing. If he is doing this in all the classes then clearly it is not us who is the problem, its him.

(Participant A)

...and when we came out with the school code of conduct, it actually curbed it. That's one and two I think these children need a lot of assistance and help and maybe other teachers stepped in earlier it could have been avoided....drawn up school code of conduct sanctioned by SGB.....some of our children need love and to be checked on...

(Participant B)

Children with serious misdemeanours should be suspended and if it continues they should be expelled and once you set an example with one

child you will find that other will follow but if you don't take any steps or do anything about it the definitely will have others following suite.

(Participant D)

...could have been avoided if he did it the first time in another class the teacher could have called the guardian or mother and told her about the problem... **(Participant E)**

Possibly, if the necessary attention was given to the learner by the parent or teacher but in terms of the teacher it is a bit difficult because of the large numbers. It is not easy to spot a child that has an issue or having problems. **(Participant F)**

They also felt that once the school code of conduct is implemented effectively then behavioural problems would be curbed. Having a school code of conduct that works effectively and makes a difference in behaviour of learners is of utmost importance. Without these rules and regulations that govern school code of conduct, chaos will ensue. The teacher may feel that the child is only problematic in her class and does not report it, only to find out when the issue becomes serious that the child displays aggressive behaviour in other classes too. Therefore, if teachers make the time to meet and discuss their problematic learner then unnecessary situations can be avoided.

Parents can be called in, their children's behaviour discussed, and a way forward can be decided. The parent is then made aware that the child is displaying aggressive behaviour and needs to be dealt with. The parent will have more information about the child especially if the behaviour stems from a problem at home. Mncube (2010) agrees that if serious problems arise in childhood, such as tobacco, drug, or alcohol abuse, suicide threats, and violence, solutions will be strongest if home, school and community work well together. Having better insight on the child may help the teacher and management to decide how to deal with the learner.

Teachers also feel that the large class sizes does not help because they cannot spend their time on a problematic child and neglect the rest of the class. They do not have the time to find out about the child because most of the time is spent on teaching or assessments. Their

workload does not afford them the time to counsel children nor are they trained for such a thing.

An important tertiary strategy as outlined from the participant's comments is getting counsellors involved. Here again it is up to the DoE to help schools with this. If the parent gets more involved with the school and the child then only can we move forward. Parents or caregivers should know that the child is undergoing counselling. The school can also provide the parent with information on where to get help for the child that is unable to cope with the stresses he/she is facing at home or school. Maree (2000) recommends active involvement from the government and professional services, such as psychologists in order to address external factors that contribute to school violence, for example, poverty, and problems within a family and counsellors can help learners.

Participants made the following comments with regard to counsellors, psychologists, and role of DoE.

Parent came to school, we had a discussion with parent, spoke to the child. There was a slight change thereafter because now he knew we know where he is coming from...counselled him. That is the only thing you can do for a child. There is nothing much beyond that besides talking to him and giving him support at school. (Participant B)

...can counsel the children and give them advice, but we can't change things. The LO curriculum is designed for the teacher to finish syllabus. There are aspects where children can air their views, discuss their issues, they given the opportunity. It is a much-relaxed atmosphere. (Participant C)

As I said, management should get more involved. They should deal with learners as a whole get the police to come and talk to them. Get outside people in to come talk to them about their behaviour and how it affects them later in their lives, their aggression...life skills help to an extent. I think life skills subject should be taken more seriously. (Participant D)

I think the school can speak to the learners about their behaviour in class and how they should behave. They should also get counsellors. You know previously we had guidance counsellors in the schools and if we had any issues the learners were sent to the guidance counsellors to be counselled whether it was school work or issue with the teacher or problems at home so I think that schools should get counsellors to come in once a week to take care of these children's needs. (Participant E)

Steps should be taken to ensure that teachers are provided with the appropriate skills to address violence against them. Early childhood education programmes help equip them to deal with problems rather than display maladaptive behaviour. In terms of school management, many educators exhibit a lack of classroom management skills, a situation that is exacerbated by the banning of corporal punishment as a disciplinary option (Burton, 2008). Although the DoE can change many factors surrounding violence against teachers, it should also be noted that they are limited in terms of family dynamics, what happens in the homes of these children and their community organisations to help with issues regarding the learner.

4.4 Observation checklist

During observation of the participants in the classroom setting, it was noted that no violent or aggressive behaviour had taken place. This was probably due to the fact that there was an observer in the classroom and the children tended to be at their best behaviour on the instruction of the teacher. Generally, the classroom behaviour was good; just some noise at times especially with the younger and less experienced teachers.

Classroom management was fairly good but **Participant E** tended to have problematic children. The attention of pupils was not sustained throughout the lesson; they became easily distracted. **Participant B** was softly spoken so children became a little noisy. **Participants D** and **E** found their pupils became restless more especially towards the end of the lesson. Learners were not highly disruptive, older, more experienced teachers had more classroom control but **Participants D** and **E** had some disruptive learners, some who walked around during the lesson. Due to the fact that there was an observer present, pupils did not

display any violent behaviour. Most of the lessons were based on chalk and talk with little or no resources used, so children did become bored and distracted at times.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of the research that was obtained from semi-structured interviews and observational checklists. The participants' experiences were very similar to the findings in international studies as reviewed in chapter 2. Although many of the participants experienced verbal aggression, it is to be reiterated that the small sample was considered a limitation and not representative of the teacher population.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory helped make the understanding of the factors that determine aggressive and violent children. It was clearly seen that the systems discussed in chapter 2 influenced the child's behaviour; family and community were key influences in determining violent behaviour as mentioned by the participants. The role of the parent, lack of support given to the child, involvement in gang related activities and violence in the community, living conditions (poverty) as well as solving conflict with violence behaviour have all been contributors to violence in young children.

The impact of aggressive and violent behaviour on teachers was also looked at, there was found to be a ripple effect, and the entire educational institution is affected. Teachers in this study were both positively and negatively affected by their experiences. Some felt it had changed them as teachers and given them a different perspective of their job while others were disappointed and let down by the system. It was noted that there were many role players in this equation of violence against teachers and each had their own contributions to the situation. Participants voiced their feelings on how the system was failing them and where change can be made to avoid the negative consequences of violence towards teachers. With these experiences and views, it can be seen that teachers feel unsupported in their plight to educate young learners. The next chapter dealt with the summary of the findings, limitations of the study and future recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented, and discussed the findings of the research study. Based on the analysis, conclusions were provided and then followed by recommendations and areas of future research inquiry. Considered in this chapter were the strengths and limitations of the research undertaken.

As mentioned at the beginning of the study the research questions that the study was based on are as follows:

- What are the primary school teachers' experiences of violence towards them perpetrated by learners?
- What are primary school teachers' perceptions of the causes of learner violence?
- What is the impact of primary school teachers' experiences on their well-being and professional performance?

5.2 Synopsis of findings

The intention of the research was to investigate the teacher's experience of violence perpetrated by their learners in primary schools. Data was collected from three government schools within the area of where I taught. Through semi-structured interviews of experiences of violence towards them by their learners, the focus was on investigating their subjective experiences, their perceptions of the causes of this violent behaviour and their views on how intervention strategies can help the situation become less stressful to the teacher. The information gained from the participants could thus engage the DoE into changing and revising policies to curb the violent acts by primary school learners. Utilising the research questions, literature review and findings with relation to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, an outline is discussed below.

5.2.1 Types of aggression/ violence experienced by the teacher

Definitions of violence were reviewed in chapter two and according to these definitions, violence did not only mean physical abuse but mental, emotional and as well as verbal. Although many of the participants had not experienced direct physical harm, their experiences were shattering none the less. Emotional and verbal abuse are the most common forms of school violence, however because it is not as apparent as physical forms of violence it has been mostly overlooked or ignored (Sheras, 2002) and the current study lends credence to this statement as it found that verbal and emotional aggression was most common in classrooms.

Due to the age of the children, physical violence was not a common occurrence, though children beyond the age of 12 in primary schools displayed a higher incidence of physical aggression. School violence is regarded as a multidimensional construct, yet there is no definite description about its precise dimensions because definitions often lack comprehensiveness and reflect author bias (Furlong & Morrison, 2000). As a result of this, the current study took into consideration the teachers perspective and what they considered aggressive and violent behaviour inflicted on them.

It was found in this study, that children who were exposed to bad role models and vulgar language, were more prone to emulating the negative behaviours in classrooms. According to Bronfenbrenner (1994), school violence is a product of complex interactions between the other systems (such as the individual, family, community, and society). Experiences that occur out of the school context spills over into school and vice versa, much like Bronfenbrenner's principle of interdependence, the cycle of violence continues.

On inspection of the participants' reported incidences, it was found that most teachers experienced similar type of violence in different manners suggesting that different perceptions of an event can widen the knowledge and understanding of the teachers' experiences of violence towards them. It also emerged from the analysis that teachers were disrespected due to the new generation of children whose rights are seemingly more important than the teachers' rights were and teachers felt a sense of disappointment that young children have changed so much in the past few years. As mentioned by the participants that a particular look, tone of voice, and body language of the child was

unsettling and uncomfortable for them. This has also led to a kind of emotional abuse that affected the teachers in different ways as teachers are always on edge and that affects them emotionally which impacts on their ability to teach.

5.2.2 Factors contributing to aggressive and violent behaviour in learners

Research over the years have shown that violence is often a result of multiple factors that are interconnected (Astor et al., 1996; Benbenishty & Astor, 2005; Krug et al., 2002). At the micro level it emerged that the older the child was in primary school, the more aggressive he or she was. The complex relations that the child was exposed to such as parents, caregivers, and peers influenced the child's behaviour. The learner is moulded according to what he experiences with these individuals, for example, as mentioned in chapter four, those learners who have poor role models and are in contact with violent individuals, abuse at home and substance abuse are more prone to violent behaviour. Young children internalise the violence they experience at home, coming to regard it as normal and an acceptable means of resolving conflict (Burton, 2008).

Another factor as mentioned by a participant is more a chemical imbalance like ADHD, which predisposes individuals to violent and impulsive behaviour. Most of the aggressive children were boys that came from low-income areas though even children from so-called good families were also displaying violent behaviour due to pressure of having too much responsibility placed on them from adult figures.

As mentioned by participants and in keeping with Bronfenbrenner's (1994) theory, lack of parental supervision and communication, inconsistent discipline methods and unstable families made children more susceptible to violent behaviour. Goldenburg and Goldenburg (1996) corroborated this allegation when they said that inappropriate parenting or over parenting to be at risk. Children whose parents did not spend enough time with them and did not involve themselves in all spheres of their young child's life were also found to be at risk of delinquent behaviour.

From this study, it also emerged that many children came from dysfunctional families, single parent households or brought up by grandparents and this was a contributory factor to violent behaviour. Without proper role models in their lives, their foundations lead them to

more aggressive and violent behaviour. This also contributed to them joining bad company leading to peer pressure and substance abuse at a tender age at which they are very easily manipulated and influenced. Research over the years have confirmed a link between substance abuse and violent behaviour (Bennet & Holloway, 2005).

In keeping with the macro or societal influence, this study found that the new generation had a newfound control and power due to their rights, which they abused to the fullest extent and the constant exposure to violence through media exposed them to a greater risk to violent behaviour. During data analysis, it was found that parents did not supervise or control the television content viewed by their children and as a result, children watched violent movies and sometimes modelled the negative and violent behaviours viewed.

Related to all these systems was the chronosystem where most children felt that the only way to solve conflict was through violent behaviour, remnants of the Apartheid era. Their newfound rights also contributed to their violent behaviour knowing that the teacher cannot do anything to them that is demeaning, as no corporal punishment, including verbal or emotional abuse can be inflicted on them. The means of discipline is restricted and the child knows this very well so the tables have turned and much negativity centres on the education system as a whole.

5.2.3 Effects of aggression on teachers wellbeing and professional performance

This study explored the relationship between learners and teachers but specifically focused on the experiences of teachers and the effects of violence on them. It was found that when compared to international research on learner-on-teacher violence, within the sub-continent, very limited literature exists. This could in part, be due to incidents not being reported or highlighted unless it leads to serious injury or death. There were many effects on the teacher both professionally and psychologically.

As mentioned by participants in this study, especially the youngest, she had to rethink her career path and wondered if she would continue in this profession. This then relates to the issue of teacher attrition, where many teachers have left the profession in large numbers. Lack of motivation, stress, and anxiety are some of the negative effects of violence against teachers by their learners. Research has shown that an individual does not need to endure

physical injury or be involved in the incident to be traumatised or develop PTSD like symptoms (Gwaintley, 1987). The constant threat of violence in the classroom, including symptoms of PTSD, eventually leaves the teacher feeling demotivated, depressed, and reaching burnout in the classroom. This leads to poor performance and ultimately poor academic results. This study also suggested a link between violence amongst youth, lack of support by school management and poor performance in schools; however, more research is required in this area.

It also emerged that teachers took their frustrations home to their families, affecting family life and leaving them stressed and anxious. Their frustration also stemmed from the fact that they did not get much support from the management and that school policies let them down. Their planned teaching for the day gets upset due to one incident leaving them vulnerable to disruptive classroom behaviour and more abuse. Referring to a study done by Pahad (2011) it was found that educators who were affected by violence experienced demotivation and an inability to perform sufficiently in their capacity as an educator.

Although some participants did mention negative consequences, it is important to note others felt a positive change, as one participant mentioned although she felt untrained for the situation, she eventually learnt how to cope probably the only way to remain sane in a violent society. Another participant also mentioned she was not affected because of her years of teaching and her disciplinarian characteristic, helped her cope. She also got her strength from the fact that she felt in control because management supported her.

I felt though, that the participants did not share all information on their experiences probably as there is a certain shame and stigma attached to admitting being a victim of violence especially perpetrated by a younger learner. Teachers are dismayed about the fact that learners have little respect for them due to their rights and because teachers have to play multiple roles in the classroom like parents, police officers, psychologists, and lastly as a teacher and this has somehow placed them at a greater risk of being victims of violence.

5.2.4 Challenges and intervention strategies with regard to inter- sectoral collaboration

There are many role players in this situation of violence against teachers by their learners, parents, management and the DoE, all have a part to play either negatively influencing the situation or making positive changes with regard to this phenomenon. During the analysis of the data, it emerged that besides teachers and learners, there were many other role players in this phenomenon. This is in keeping with Bronfenbrenner's theory of interrelatedness of aspects. This study highlighted the importance of parents, management and DoE working together to achieve far more goals than each one playing a part in isolation . If these role players find solutions together then violence in primary schools can be curbed. Maree (2008) avers that it is equally important to involve parents and teachers in the process to curb school violence by educating and supporting these role players and he recommends active involvement from the government and professional services.

5.2.4.1 Parental involvement

It was clearly stated by the participants that parents should play a more active role in their children's lives and not neglect them. Growing up and living in a supportive environment, forms the basis of who and what a child becomes, delinquent and anti-social behaviour is highly probable in the absence of this important source (Van Der Merwe, 2009). The concept of children at that age need attention, love and support and if that is lacking they are more prone to violent behaviours. The role models they exposed to during primary school years, will affect all spheres in their lives from high school to adulthood.

Gouws et al. (2000) re-iterated that parents can provide models for appropriate behaviour in moral situations and children who identify with and value the esteem of their parents are less likely to become delinquent. It was also apparent that many of these violent children came from dysfunctional backgrounds with no positive role models in their lives. Many young children became aggressive due to their situation at home (e.g. poverty, abuse) and lashed out on the teacher who was the easiest target and next closest adult figure to them.

The research also showed that children were not taught proper values and morals at home and this extended into the classroom. Parents also were not getting involved in the child's

education by not checking on the child's progress and not attending parents meetings at school. If parents were committed to aiding their child's education and communicated more often with the school about the child's progress then incidences of violence will be curbed. Participants of this study felt that if parents were more enthusiastic about their child's behaviour and performance much violence could be avoided. This would help nipping it in the bud so to speak.

5.2.4.2 Management

Management was also a topic of concern to the teachers in that some felt unsupported during the incidents. Their feelings were quite clear when they mentioned that management let them down and did not adhere to the school code of conduct. Management was not consistent and did not implement rules that the code of conduct stipulated. This in turn gave the learner a sense of encouragement to continue with their aggressive tendencies and left the teacher powerless and not in control of the situation. Though it was suggested by many that management let them down, some teachers felt that because their school had a strong management team, a no nonsense principal and a committed SGB, this made the situation easier to handle. Management was pro-active, gave support to the teacher, and carried out the punishment as per the code of conduct. This left the teacher feeling more confident and reassured and most importantly, safe to teach. Many believe the leadership of the school environment is a good place to begin (Crawage, 2005).

5.2.4.3 The Department of Education and the need for counsellors

The link between key role players is the DoE; without their help, not much can be changed. The research brought about the fact the DoE should take this situation more seriously before teacher attrition worsens. Ideas posed by participants offered suggestions as to how the DoE could make these changes, thereby playing a more crucial role in the situation of violence against teachers by bringing back counsellors and remedial teachers. It was felt that children needed more than what the teacher could offer or had time for.

The problem of the socio-economic situation can be addressed by providing feeding schemes, motivational speakers, and teachers who are well trained to handle children with

psychological issues. Educational psychologists are needed to help children with difficulties and therefore the DoE needs to employ people who are suitably qualified to counsel children in need. Therapy and behavioural modification strategies may assist learners with serious aggressive tendencies and only qualified psychologists can deal with such treatment.

It was also noted that the DoE could bring in security guards to problematic schools with a high rate of learner-perpetrated violence as opposed to the school having to deal with the problem alone. Teachers need more support from the DoE, there should be regular visits to schools, and situations addressed if need be. The DoE could make a major difference if they took more interest in the teachers' wellbeing. There is a need for ongoing, systematic, institutionalised recording and reporting of data at a school, district, and provincial level that would all feed back to the national DoE, so this data would allow school authorities and the DoE to monitor the progress of interventions (Burton, 2008).

5.2.5 Effectiveness of school policies

Schools should provide a very clear framework or code of conduct for learners, detailing acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and codes of conduct, disciplinary procedures, and emergency procedures should all be clearly communicated to learners (Burton, 2008). School policies in general allow schools to function smoothly but this study showed while schools had policies in place, these were not being upheld. Management did not adhere to these codes and did not effectively implement them. They were inconsistent, allowing children to take advantage of the lack of discipline. It also emerged that children enjoyed some forms of the punishment they received as it gave them some kind of attention, which they rarely received at home. This made the code of conduct then ineffective, therefore it was suggested that it be changed or revised for better results.

Teachers felt that if a school policy was well constructed and adhered to, then future incidents will be on a decline leading to the educator feeling safe and more supported. Burton (2008) suggests that if management is effective within the school, this will enable effective discipline and control. In the South Africans Schools Act 84 of 1996, Chapter Two, Section 8 (1-2) it states that the governing bodies of public schools must adopt a Code of Conduct for the scholars, which must be discussed by scholars, parents and educators of the school. This Code of Conduct must aim to create a disciplined and positive school

environment that will assist with improving and maintaining the quality of the learning process (DoE, 1996).

5.2.6 School-based intervention strategies

This study outlined many important intervention strategies to help the teacher against the violent behaviour from his/her pupils. Without these strategies, it is unlikely that teachers will be motivated to stay in the profession and new teachers entering the profession. At the top of the list for strategies mentioned, teachers indicated that parents should work in conjunction with them to bring about change in the learner. Parents should attend meetings when given notices and check up on their children by having a relationship with the teacher. This relationship is an important but vital link to preventing violent behaviour from the learner.

In addition, teachers can get involved by having regular meetings on problematic children and deciding the step forward from there. One teacher could be better at assisting the child and the child may have more respect and fear for that teacher, so in this way future incidences can be avoided. Parents can be contacted even if the issue is not serious but has the potential to become violent. The child's behaviour should be discussed with the parent so they could monitor the child's behaviour both at home and school. Stevenson and Baker (1987) mentioned, that to effectively assist their child in his/her efforts to meet the demands of school, parents need to have knowledge about their child's schooling to help their child.

The study also found that large class sizes exacerbated the situation and the teacher could not deal with so many children especially those with ADHD and so on. The teacher had no time to address individual issues due to the number of children being taught and spending most of the lesson dealing with disruptive learners. It was suggested fewer children in a class would reduce the number of incidences of violent behaviour and allow the teacher to cope better.

Other important strategies were also suggested, such as teacher training and workshops. Most teachers were not trained to deal with violent children and needed to attend workshops and further training to equip them to handle potential situations of violence. A

confident teacher will have fewer problems in their classrooms. Skills development workshops are necessary to ensure teachers can cope better in their classrooms. Classroom management skills are vital in improving better classroom conditions. Steps should also be taken to provide educators with appropriate skills to address violence at schools and in terms of school management, many educators exhibit a lack of adequate classroom management skills (Burton, 2008).

All teachers agreed that the DoE needed to employ counsellors at schools because teachers were not sufficiently equipped to deal with children who had various emotional and psychological problems. Life skills programmes need to incorporate teaching of important skills, like values, morals, anger management, dealing with stress to mention a few. Children at primary school level are easily influenced and moulded, therefore the DoE should implement ECD programmes teaching pro-social skills, and coping mechanisms to deal with difficult situations. Motivational speakers also are needed throughout the year, speaking to the learners about various issues that may affect them like substance abuse, following the right path, staying away from negative influences, and encouraging them to be better people. The American Psychological Association (2013) agreed that partnerships could yield more integrated efforts to provide prevention, early identification, intervention, and treatment of problems amongst youth.

The 'whole school' approach is what should be adopted, as Burton (2008) mentions that the school is an entity that consists of several components, all of which are interdependent – learner, educators, principal, school management teams, SGB's and parents or caregivers- all of these systems interact and exist within the greater system of the home and community. By dealing with all aspects of the system then only will violence be reduced or eradicated.

The DoE can make all of these changes to bring about less chaos in the education system. Although they cannot directly influence parents and communities, they can however engage other departments like police, cultural organisations, and other departments to help learners. Maree (2008) recommends active involvement from the government and professional services, such as psychologists, in order to address external factors that contribute to violence for example poverty and family problems.

5.3 Strengths and limitations of the study

This research in itself is considered a major strength of the study; it has contributed to the existing knowledge base on violence against teachers, more specifically in primary schools. There has been a dramatic increase in violence in schools especially among younger learners and this has influenced teachers experiencing violence. This then has caused the DoE, schools, and management to implement interventions to help curb the situation. This study could contribute greatly to interventions in the future by shedding more light and a better perspective on the situation.

Not much research has been done on this specific study, most research conducted was quantitative and involved mostly secondary schools, therefore this qualitative study brings about more knowledge and enlightenment on the teachers experiences. I was able to interact with the participants and gain much meaning from their experiences. I was able to gain insight into the forms of violence experienced by the educators involved and the factors that lead to this violence in classrooms against teachers. The strength of the research also was due to the study being of an exploratory nature, which then allowed the researcher to locate themes within the rich and detailed data that was gathered from each participant. Using multiple instruments also can be seen as a strength of the study because the results were more reliable and valid.

However, an exploratory focus can also be a limitation in that it only focussed on a few educators and specific schools. The data gathered cannot be generalised to all populations. The qualitative approach of the research study can be seen as a strength also because it focuses more on the experiences of the teacher, getting a more in-depth and detailed analysis of the teachers' experiences and feelings on the subject. Although the small sample group was of an advantage since the researcher was able to obtain more extensive data it also has a disadvantage due to the research being generalised as mentioned above.

Another limitation that was experienced was that the individuals were chosen from a certain type of community that they taught in, limited the extent of the research. Most participants were not exposed to physical violence due to the kind of school and location they taught at therefore the researcher did not get the holistic picture of how this affected teachers on a daily basis. Findings in a community of a different economic and cultural background maybe different.

The content analysis also could have created a bias in that the researcher had to find patterns and themes in areas of interest. This type of research also is time consuming in terms of data collection and analysing detailed data. Also not many schools were interested in being part of the research and this made it difficult for the researcher to collect data. The observation checklist did not generate any significant data.

5.4 Recommendations for future research

It is recommended that more research on violence against teachers be done based on this study. The DoE has noticed a decline in the teacher population due to many leaving and not many wanting to come into the profession. There is also high absenteeism amongst teachers and many are treated for psychological problems. Qualitative and quantitative studies undertaken in this subject may shed more light to the reason of the issues mentioned above. This will help fill the gaps and links of this research area. Both types of studies will also help give different perspectives on the topic of violence against teachers in both primary and secondary schools.

Regular investigations should be conducted so to update the rates of the incidences experienced by teachers. There are future recommendations that need to be highlighted in this research through the experience of the researcher. During the investigation, I found that my research was limited due to the fact that I chose a sampling area for my convenience. The community from which some of the learners came from where of a better socio-economic structure and some schools had predominantly one racial group. The study did not incorporate groups from various socio-economic backgrounds and multiracial groups.

Current literature holds that children who are raised in impoverished families and neighbourhoods have an increased likelihood of engaging in aggressive or violent behaviour (Miller, 2008) and that the characteristics of the community encroach on the school environment (Burton, 2008). A comparative study should be undertaken in both affluent areas and low-income areas to get a better understanding of experiences of violence against teachers. It is also important to explore the interpersonal relationship between educators and learners. Literature on this topic suggests a strong correlation between learner-educator relations and the classroom climate (Moos, 1979).

An American study found that a 'tough and caring' approach by educators made learners feel genuinely cared for and encouraged to succeed unlike a 'strict and distant' or 'inconsistent and afraid' approach (Furlong & Morrison, 2000). As mentioned in the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), this relationship is crucial in order to prevent this type of violence and warrants further research especially in South African schools. It is suggested that further research be conducted on learners' perspective of violence against teachers. This may broaden the understanding of this specific topic and give tremendous insight to many organisations especially the DoE. Continued research on effectiveness of policies, interventions, school administrations and the education system should be undertaken to identify what is working positively and is successful and those that need to be revised.

5.5 Conclusion

This study explored the experiences of violence against teachers in primary schools. Information gained from the various individuals, the relevant literature reviewed and the theory by Bronfenbrenner (1979) helped to address the research questions of this study. Synopses of the findings were discussed and important aspects discovered were highlighted.

The strengths and limitations of this study were also addressed. The strengths were related to the qualitative and exploratory nature of the study that brought rich and detailed information into the study. This was also a limitation due to the small sample group, so future studies that are considered should be done on a larger scale. This will avoid generalisation of entire school and teacher populations. Further research conducted in South African schools will help all stakeholders to create successful interventions and re-looking at what exists now. Effectiveness of policies should be scrutinized and revised so it works in curbing future incidences of violent acts amongst young learners especially. Despite issues, school violence is still considered a serious issue affecting teaching and learning in South African Schools.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, K. (2002). Rate of violent pupils expelled rises for the first time since 1996. *Education Guardian.co.uk News*, Retrieved 19 May, 2014 from: <http://education.guardian.co.uk>.
- Allen, K. (2005). Cognitive perspective to violence expression. In K. Sexton-Radek (Ed.) *Violence in schools: issues, consequences, and expressions* (pp. 49-72). Westport: Praeger Publishers.
- American Psychological Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed.). Washington DC: American Psychiatric Association.
- American Psychological Association. (2011). Understanding and Preventing Violence Against Teachers. Retrieved November 20, 2014, from: <http://www.apa.org/ed/schools>.
- American Psychological Association. (2013). Violence against teachers spurs urgent call to action. Retrieved April 15, 2014, from: <https://www.apa.org/monitor>.
- Astor, R.A., Pitner, R. O., & Duncan, B. B. (1996). Ecological approaches to mental health consultation with teachers on issues related to youth and school violence, educating children in a violent society. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 65 (3), 336-355.
- ATL: Association of Teachers and Lecturers. (2008). Nearly a third of teachers face physical aggression at the hands of their pupils. *Association of Teachers and Lecturers' Annual Conference*, March. Torquay, UK.
- Australian Education Union. (2003). *Damage control*. Retrieved March, 2015, from: <http://www.aeufederal.org.au>
- Babbie, E., & Mouton, J. (2001). *The practice of social research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Barlow, D. H., & Durand, V. M. (2009). *Abnormal psychology: An integrative approach* (5th ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Beck, J. S. (1995). *Cognitive therapy: Basics and beyond*. New York: The Guildford Press.

- Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R. A. (2005). *School of violence in context: Culture, neighbourhood, family, school and gender*. New York: Oxford Publishers.
- Benefield, J. (2004). *Teachers – the new targets of schoolyard bullies?* Retrieved March 20, 2015, from: <http://www.ppta.org.nz/cms/imagelibrary/100894.pdf>.
- Bennet Jr, M. D., & Fraser, M. W. (2000). Urban violence among African American males: Integrating family, neighbourhood, and peer perspectives. *J. Soc. and Soc. Welfare*, 27, 93.
- Bennet, T., & Holloway, K. (2005). *Understanding drugs, alcohol and crime*. United States: Open University Press.
- Blase, J., & Blase, J. (2003). Breaking the silence: Overcoming the problem of principal mistreatment of educators. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 41 (4), 367-422.
- Blaser, T. (2008). *South African Schools most dangerous in the world – only 23% of pupils safe – 5th February 2008*. Retrieved January 10, 2015 from <http://www.sairr.org.za/press-office/archive/south-african-schools-most-dangerous-in-the-world-2013-only-23-of-pupils-safe.html>.
- Boonzaier, F., & Shefer, T. (2006). Gendered research. In T. Shefer, F. Boonzaier, & P. Kiguwa (Eds.). *The gender of psychology* (pp. 3-11). Cape Town: UCT Press.
- Booren, L. M. (2007). *An exploration of the relationship between students and teachers perceptions of school safety and the importance of safety strategies*. Washington: Washington University.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2), 77-101.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. *International Encyclopaedia of Education*, 3 (2), 1643-1647.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods*. London: Oxford University Press.

- Buck, C. A. (2006). *The effects of direct and indirect experiences with school crime and violence on high school teacher burnout*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Georgia: Georgia State University.
- Burr, V. (2003). *Social constructionism*. London: Routledge.
- Burton, P. (2008). *Merchants, skollies and stones experiences of school violence in South Africa*. Cape Town: Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention.
- Burton, P., & Leoschut, L. (2012). School violence in South Africa: Results of the 2012 national school violence study. Cape Town: Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, *Monograph Series*, (12).
- Burton, P., & Mutonyizwa, T. (2009). Inescapable violence: Cyber bullying and electronic violence against young people in South Africa. *Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention 8*, 1-12
- Bushman, B. J., & Anderson, C. A. (2001). Media violence and the American public: Scientific facts versus media misinformation. *American Psychologist*, 56 (6-7), 477.
- Bushman, B.J., & Huesmann, L.R. (2001) Effects of televised violence on aggression (pp. 223-254). In D. Singer & J. Singer (Eds.), *Handbook of Children and Media*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Christiansen, I., Bertram, C., & Land, S. (2010). *Understanding research*. Pietermaritzburg: UKZN Faculty of Education.
- Colvin, G. (2004). *Managing the cycle of acting-out behaviour in the classroom*. Eugene, OR: Behaviour Associates.
- Cooper, D.J. (2006). *Abuse breeds abuse: Pulled from a life of destruction*. United States: Publish America.
- Crawage, M. (2005). *How resilient adolescent learners in a township school cope with school violence: a case study* (Unpublished PhD Thesis). Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*: Sage Publications.

- Cresswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Currie, I., & De Waal, J. (2013). *The bill of rights handbook*. G. D'Ambrosio Angelillo
- Dalton, J. H., Elias, M. J., & Wanderman, A. (2001). *Community psychology: Linking individuals and communities*. Belmont.
- Daniels, J. A., Bradley, M. C., & Hays, M. (2007). The impact of school violence on school personnel: Implications for psychologists. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 38, 652-659.
- Denscombe, M. (2003). *The good research guide: for small-scale social research projects*: Open University Press.
- De Vos, A. A., Strydom, H.F., & Delpont, C.S. (2005). *Research at grass roots*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- De Wet, C. (2007a). Educators as perpetrators and victims of school violence. 20(2), 10-42. http://reference.sabinet.co.za/webx/access/electronic_journals/crim/crim_v20_n2.
- De Wet, C. (2007b). Free State educators' perceptions and observations of learner-on-learner, learner-on-educator and educator-on-learner school violence. *South African Journal of Education*, 11 (1), 60-85.
- De Wet, N.C. (2007c). Violence in schools. In C.C. Wolhuter, E. M. Lemmer, & N. C. De Wet, *Comparative Education: Education systems and contemporary issues* (pp.248-262). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- De Wet, N. C., & Jacobs, L. (2006). Educator-targeted bullying: Fact or Fallacy? *Acta Criminologica*, 19 (2), 53-73.
- Department of Education. (1996). *South Africans Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Department of Education. (2005). *Teachers for the future: Meeting teacher shortages to achieve education for all*. South Africa: Department of Education.

- Donovan, B. (2000, December 8). Union Head: New teachers need training. Retrieved May 7, 2015, from <http://www.gallupindependent.com/12-08-00.html>.
- Drew, C. J., Hardman, M. L., & Hosp, J. L. (2008). *Designing and conducting research in education*: SAGE.
- Dzuka, J., & Dalbert, C. (2007). Student violence against teachers: Teachers' well-being and the belief in a just world. *European Psychologist*, 12 (4), 263-270.
- Eliasson, M. A. (2007). *Verbal abuse in school: Constructing gender and age in a social interaction*. Sweden: Department of Public Health Sciences.
- Elliot, D. S. (1994). *Youth violence. An overview*. Queenstown: Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence.
- eNCA. (2013). Developing story: Sasolburg pupil shoots teacher, school shut down. <http://www.enca.com/south-africa/scholar-shoots-teacher>.
- Epstein, J. L. (2001). *School, family and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Boulders: Westview Press.
- Espelage, D., Anderman, E. M., Brown, V.E., Jones, A., Lane, K. L., McMahon, S.D., & Reynolds, C. R. (2013). Understanding and preventing violence directed against teachers: Recommendations for a national research, practice, and policy agenda. *American Psychologist*, 68(2), 75.
- Farrington, D. P. (1998). Predictors, causes, and correlates of male youth violence. *Crime and Justice*, 24, 421-475.
- Fisher, K., & Kettl, P. (2003). Teacher's perceptions of school violence. *Journal of Paediatric Health Care*, 17(2), 79-83.
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2005). The interview: from a neutral stance to political involvement. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Sage book of qualitative research* (pp. 695-727). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Frankel, P. (1993). *Violence, traumatic stress and children: A short to therapeutic education*. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand.

- Furlong, M., & Morrison, G. (2000). The school in school violence: Definitions and facts. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioural Disorders, 8* (2), 71-82.
- Gabarino, J., & Dubrow, N. P. (1992). *Children in danger: Coping with consequences of community violence*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Gold, Y. (1996). Beginning teacher support: Attrition, mentoring and induction. In C.B. Courtney (Ed.), *Handbook of Teacher Education*. (pp. 548-594). Washington DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Goldenburg, I., & Goldenburg, H. (1996). *Family Therapy: An overview* (4th ed.). Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole.
- Gouws, E., Kruger, N., & Burger, S. (2000). *The Adolescent* (2nd ed.). Cape Town: Heineman Publishers.
- Govender, M. (2013). The psycho-educational impact of bullying on primary school learners. University of South Africa, Pretoria, <http://hdl.handle.net/10500/9740>>
- Graig, W. M. (1998). The relationship among bullying, victimization, depression, anxiety, and aggression in elementary school children. *Personality and individual differences, 24*(1), 123-130.
- Gregson, J. (2004). System, environmental, and policy changes: Using the social-ecological model as a framework for evaluating nutrition education and social marketing programmes with low-income audiences. *Journal of Nutrition Education, 33* (1), 4-15.
- Gwaintley, H. (1987, July). Post-traumatic stress and EAP response. *Employee Assistance Professionals Digest*.
- Hambe, B. (1999). Have no doubt it is the fear in the land: An exploration of the continuing violence in South Africa. *Journal for Political Psychology, 7* (1 and 2), 113-128.
- Hamburg, B.A. (1998). Youth violence is a public health concern. In Elliot, D.S., Hamburg, B. A. & Williams, K.R. (eds), *Violence in American schools*. (pp.31-44). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Hansen, J., & Sullivan, B. A. (2003). Assessment of workplace stress: Occupational stress, its consequences, and common causes of teachers stress. In J. E. Wall, & G. R. Walz

- (Eds.), *Measuring up: Assessment issues for teachers, counsellors, and administrators* (pp.611-621). Tuscon: CAPS Press.
- Hawe, P., & McClaren, L. (2005). Ecological perspectives in health research. *Journal of Epidemiology of Community Health, 59*, 6-14.
- Henning, E. (2004). *Finding your way in qualitative research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Henry, D., Guerra, N., Huesmann, R., Tolan, P., Van Acker, R., & Eron, L. (2000). Normative influences on aggression in urban elementary school classrooms. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 28*(1), 59-81.
- Hirschi, T., & Gottfredson, M. R. (1994). *The generality of deviance*. New Jersey: Transaction.
- Hoffman, A. M. (1996). *Schools, violence, and society*. Westport: Praeger.
- Huberman, A. M., & Miles, M. B. (2002). *The Qualitative researchers' companion*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Human Sciences Research Council. (2005). *Integrated report on factors determining "educator supply and demand in South African public schools"*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.
- Huston, A. C., & Ripke, M. N. (2006). *Developmental contexts in middle childhood: Bridges to adolescence and adulthood*: Cambridge University.
- Infante, D. A. (1987). Aggressiveness. In J. McCroskey & J. Daly (eds.). *Personality and interpersonal communication*, (pp. 157-192). Newbury Park: Sage.
- Infante, D. A. (1995). Teaching students to understand and control verbal aggression. *Communication Education, 51-63*.
- Joyce, T. M. (2013). School Violence: Reimagining Schools as 'Safe Havens'. *Journal of Sociology, 73*(3), 249-258).
- Kadel, S. W. (1999). *Reducing school violence: Building a framework for school safety*. Greensboro: Serve.
- Kaupii, T., & Porhola, M. (2012). Schoolteachers bullied by their students: Teachers' attributions how they share their experiences. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*, 1059-1068.

- Kelly, J.G. (1996). Ecological constraints on mental health services. *American Psychologist*, 21 (6), 535-539.
- Klaasen, E. (1990). The impact of violence on children. In E. Klaasen (Ed.), *The influence of violence on children*. Cape Town: Centre for Intergroup Studies.
- Kolbacher, F. (2006). The use of qualitative content analysis in case study research. *Qualitative Social Research*, 7(1), 1-18.
- Kollapan, J. (2006). Chairperson: South African Human Rights Commission. Retrieved 18 March 2015, from: <http://lnw.creamermedia.co.za/articles/attachments/12121>.
- Kondrasuk, J. N., Greene, T., Waggoner, J., Edwards, K., & Nayak-Rhodes, (2005). Violence effecting school employees. *Education*, 125 (4), 638-647.
- Krug, E. G., Dahlberg, L. L., Mercy, A. J., Zwi, A. B., & Lozano, R. (2002). *World Health Organisation Report on Violence and Health*. Geneva: World Health Organisation.
- Kyriacou, C. (1987). Teacher stress and burnout: An international review. *Educational Research*, 29, 146-152.
- Ladbrook, M. W. (2009). *Challenges experienced by educators in the implementation of Inclusive education in primary schools in South Africa*. <<http://hdl.handle.net/10500>
- Law, M., Stewart, D., Letts, L., Pollock, N., Bosch, J., & Westmorland, M. (1998). *Guidelines for Critical Review of Qualitative Studies*. Retrieved February 10, 2015, from: <http://www.php.portal.mbs.ac.uk>.
- Leoschut, L. (2009). *Running nowhere fast: Results of the 2008 National Youth Lifestyle study*. Cape Town: Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention.
- Le Roux, J. (ed.). (1994). *The black child in crisis: A socio-educational perspective*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Longhurst, R. (2003). Semi-structured interviews and focus groups. *Key methods in Geography*, 117-132.
- Lyons, E., & Coyle, A. (2007). *Analysing Qualitative data in psychology*. United States: Sage.

MacMillan English Dictionary (2007). Retrieved from:

<http://www.macmillandictionaries.com/dictionary-online>.

MacNeil, G., & Stewart, C. (2000). Crisis intervention with school violence problems and volatile situations. In A. Roberts (Ed.), *Crises intervention handbook: Assessment, treatment and research* (pp.229-248). New York: Oxford University Press.

Madikizela-Madiya, N., & Mncube, V. S. (2014). The hybrid nature of school space and the manifestation of violence in South African schools. *Journal of Sociology*, 5(2), 197-205.

Maree, K. (2000). What can be endured must be cured: Untying the Gordian Knot of Violence in South African Schools. *Acta Criminologica*, 13(3): 1-13.

Maree, A. (2008). Criminogenic Risk Factors for Youth Offenders. In Bezuidenhout, C. & Joubert, S. *Child and Youth Misbehaviour in South Africa. A Holistic Approach* (2nd ed.). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Martin, D., Mackenzie, N., & Healy, J. (2013). Balancing risk and professional identity, secondary teachers' narratives of school violence. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 13(4), 398-414.

Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1981). The measurement of experienced burnout. *Journal of Occupational Behaviour*, 2 (2), 99-113.

MacMohan, S. D., Todd, N. R., Martinez, A., Coker, C., Sheu, C.F., Washburn, J., & Shah, S. (2012). Aggressive and prosocial behaviour: Community violence, cognitive and behavioural predictors among urban African American Youth. *American Journal of Community Psychology*.

McMahon, S. D., & Watts, R. J. (2002). Ethnic identity in urban African American youth: Exploring links with self-worth, aggression, and other psychosocial variables. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 30(4), 411-431.

McMillan, J., & Schumaker, S. (2001). *Research in Education. A conceptual introduction*. New York: Longman.

- McPherson, P. R. (2005). Teachers leaving the profession: The influence of violent and student behaviour on teacher attrition as perceived by the school district administrators in Pennsylvania's public schools. Pennsylvania: Baylor University.
- Mehmet, O.S. (2012). An investigation of violence against teachers in Turkey. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 39(1).
- Merriam, S. B. (2002). Introduction to qualitative research. In S. B. Merriam (Ed.), *The Nature of Qualitative Enquiry* (pp. 3-17). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Mertens, D. M. (2005). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: integrating diversity with quantitative and mixed methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Miller, M. (1996). *Coping with weapons and violence in school and on your streets*. New York: Rosen.
- Miller, T. W. (2008). *School violence and primary prevention*. New York: Springer.
- Mkhondo, L. (2005). *Vuka S'Hambe: young prisoners awakening. Project, report, and evaluation*. Johannesburg: Centre for Violence and Reconciliation.
- Mnyaka, N. M. (2006). *Exploring the promotions in schools in the Eastern Cape: A whole school developmental approach*. Pretoria: UNISA.
- Mncube, V. (2010). Parental involvement in school activities in South Africa to the mutual benefit of the school and the community. *Education as Change*, 14(2), 233-246.
- Mncube, V., & Madikizela-Madiya, N. (2014). Gangsterism as a cause of violence in South African Schools: The case of six provinces. *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology*, 5(1), 43-50.
- Mncube, V., & Netshitangani, T. (2014). Can Violence Reduce Violence in Schools? The Case of Corporal Punishment. *Journal of Sociology and Social anthropology (JSSA)*, 5, 1-1.
- Mogano, R. (1993). *The resurgence of pupil power: Explaining violence in African schools*. Johannesburg: Centre for the study of Violence and Reconciliation.
- Mohlala, T. (2006). A controversial plan. *Mail and Guardian online*. Retrieved 20 January 2015 from <http://www.mg.co.za>.

- Molosankwe, B. (2014). Pupil expelled for attack on teacher. Retrieved 21 March 2014, from IOL NEWS <http://www.iol.co.za>.
- Moore, K., Jones, N., & Broadbent, E. (2008). School violence in OECD countries. *Plan international*.
- Moos, R. H. (1979). *Evaluating educational environments: Procedures, measures, findings and policy implications*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT). (2003). Survey in the North West Schools Reveals Nearly 1000 Cases of Physical and Verbal Abuse. Retrieved 10 April 2015 from: <http://www.nasuwt.org.uk>
- Neely, A. M. (2003). *The impact of the threat of violence on selected school districts in Texas*. Texas: Texas Austin and Massachusetts University.
- Neser, J. (2005). An exploration of learners' views on certain aspects of school safety. *Acta Criminologica*, 20(3): 61-78.
- Neuman, W. L. (1997). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Ngakane, M.V., Muthukrishna, N., & Ngcobo, J. E. (2012). Experiencing violence in schools: Voices of learners in Lesotho context. *Anthropologist*, 14(1), 39-48.
- Ngongo, R. G. P. (1995). *Conflict management and resolution*. Pinetown: KZN Books.
- Novotney, A. (2009). Little-known victims. *Monitor on Psychology*, 40(9), 68. Retrieved 27 February 2014, from <http://www.apa.org/monotor/2009>.
- O'Farrell, S. L., & Morrison, G. M. (2003). A factor analysis exploring school bonding and related constructs among upper elementary students. *California school Psychologist*, 8, 53-72.
- Opic, S., Lokmic, M., & Bilic, V. (2013). Violence against teachers-rule or exception? *International Journal of Cognitive Research in Science Engineering and Education* (IJCRSEE), 1(2), 6-15.
- Orlikowski, W., & Baroudi, J. J. (1991). Studying information technology in organisations: Research approaches and assumptions. *Information Systems Research*, 2 (1), 1-28.

- Orr, T. (2003). *Violence in our Schools: Halls of Hope, Halls of Fear*. New York: Franklin Watts.
- Oswalt, A. (2008). *Urie Bronfenbrenner and child development*. Retrieved 11 March, 2014 from http://www.mentalhelp.net/poc/view_doc.php?type=doc&id=7930.
- Pahad, S. (2011). *Educators' experiences of school violence*. (Doctoral dissertation). Accessed on 27 February 2014. Retrieved from <http://hd.handle.net/10539/9206>.
- Paton, G. (2010, May 8). Punish parents who falsely accuse teachers, says heads. Telegraph.
- Paudel, R. B. (2005). Clinical Research in Finance. *The Journal of Nepalese Business Studies*, 2 (1), 95-97.
- Paul, P. (2005). Psychopathological and psychosocial factors that contribute to violent behaviour in youth. In K. Sexton-Radek, *Violence in Schools: issues, consequences, and expressions* (pp. 73-87). Wesport: Praeger Publishers.
- Petersen, G. J., Pietrzak, D., & Speaker, K. M. 1998. The Enemy within: A National study and school violence and prevention. *Urban Education*, 33(3): 331-359.
- Pillay, J. (2012). Keystone Life Orientation (LO) teachers: implications for educational, social and cultural contexts. *South African Journal of Education*, 32(2), 167-177.
- Pineiro, P. S. (2006). *World report on violence against children*. Geneva: United Nations. Teachers working in a gang-violent community in the Western Cape. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 14: 107-115.
- Prinsloo, I. J. (2005). How safe are South African Schools? *South African Journal of Education*, 25 (1), 5-10.
- Reckson, B., & Becker, L. (2005). Exploration of the narrative accounts of South African teacher working in a gang-violent community in the Western Cape. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 14(2), 107-115.
- RSA (Republic of South Africa). (1996). *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Roberts, W. M., & Morotti, A. A. (2000). The bully as victim: Understanding bully behaviours to increase the effectiveness of the bully-victim dyad. *Professional school counselling*, 4(2), 148-155.

- Rojek, D. G., & Jensen, G. F. (1996). *Exploring delinquency: causes and control*. California: Roxbury publishing Company.
- SACE. (2011). *An overview of school based violence in South Africa* (Education, Trans.).
- Sachs-Ericsson N., Verona, E., Joiner, T., & Preacher, K. J. (2006). Parental verbal abuse and the mediating role of self-criticism and adult internalising disorders. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 93*, 71-78.
- SADTU. (2014). A year of Action: Violence against teachers (Education, Trans.): South African Teachers Union. Retrieved 24 March, 2014 from: <http://www.sadtu.org.za>.
- Santrock, J. W. (2008). *Life-span development* (11th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Schonfeld, I. S. (2006). School violence. In Kelloway, E.K., Barling, J. & Hurrell, J. J. (eds.) *Handbook on workplace violence* (pp.169-209). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Scott, T. M., Nelson, C. M., & Liaupsin, C. J. (2001). Effective instruction: The forgotten component in preventing school violence. *Education and Treatment of Children, 24*, 309-322.
- Scottish Executive Education Department (2001). *Better Behaviour – Learning the Report of the Discipline Task Group*. Edinburgh.
- Seekings, J. (1996). The 'lost generation': South Africa's 'youth problem' in the early-1990s. *Transformation, 29*, 103-125.
- Sewsunker, K. (1999). Violent pupils. *Sunday Times*, 27 June.
- Sexton-Radek, K. (2005). *Violence in schools: Issues, consequences, and expressions*. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Shafii, M., & Shafii, S. (2001). *School violence: Assessment, management and prevention*. Washington DC: American Psychiatric Publishing.
- Sheras, P. (2002). *Your child: Bully or victim? Understanding and ending school yard tyranny*. New York: Skylight Press.
- Shumba, A. (2003). Children's rights in schools: What do teachers know? *Child Abuse Review, 12*, 251-260.

- Sinkovics, R., Penz, E., & Ghauri P. (2008). *Management International Review*, 48(6), 689-718.
- Smith, C., & Carlson, B. E. (1997). Stress, coping and resilience in learners and youth. *Social Service Review*, 231-256.
- Smith, D. L., & Smith, B. J. (2006). Perception of violence: the views of teachers who left urban schools. *The High School Journal*, February/March, 434-442.
- South African Department of Basic Education. (2014). *Safety in Education*. Retrieved 25 March 2014 ,from: <http://www.education.gov.za/Programmes/SafetyinEducation>.
- South African Department of Basic Education. (2013). *National Safe Schools Framework. Ministerial Council of Education*. Retrieved 25 March 2014 from: <http://www.mceetya.edu>.
- Slake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Steffgren, G., & Ewen, N. (2007). Teachers as victims of school violence. The influence of strain and school culture. *International Journal of Violence and School*.
- Stevenson, D., & Baker, D.P. (1987). The family-school relation and the child's school performance. *Child Development*, 1348-1357.
- Sugai, G., & Horner, R. H. (2002). The evolution of discipline practices: School-wide positive behaviour supports. *Child and Family Behaviour Therapy*, 24, 23-50.
- Tait, L. A. (2004). *School violence: A critical review of Canadian and American studies*. Ottawa: Simon Fraser University.
- Tariq, (2009). *Validity in research design*. Retrieved 20 March 2014 from <http://www.activecampaign.com>.
- Teacher Support Network. (2005). *Call on classroom disruption on rise by 45%*, retrieved 10 November 2015, from, <http://www.teachersupport.info/index.cfm?p=3420>
- Terre Blanche, M., Durrheim, K., & Kelly, K. (2006a). First steps in data qualitative analysis. In M. Terre Blanche, K. Durrheim, & D. Painter (Eds.), *Research in practice: Applied methods for social sciences* (pp.320-344). Cape Town: UCT Press.

- Terre Blanche, M., Kelly, K., & Durrheim, K. (2006b). Why qualitative research? In M. Terre Blanche, K. Kelly, & K. Durrheim (Eds.), *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences* (pp. 271-284). Cape Town: UCT Press.
- Terry A. A. (1998). Educators as targets of bullying by their pupils: A study to investigate incidents. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *68*, 255-268.
- The Centre for Disease Control (2013). The Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Prevention. Retrieved 24th March from <http://www.cdc.gov/violencepreventionoverview/socio-ecological>
- The Centre for the Prevention of School Violence. (2002). *Just what is "school violence"*. Retrieved February 15, 2015, from: North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, http://www.ncdijdp.org/cpsv/pdf_files/newsbrief5.
- The Centre for the study of Violence and Reconciliation. (1998). Into the Heart of Darkness: Journeys of the Agents in Crime, Violence and Death. Paper prepared as part of the research conducted by the Centre for the study of Violence and Reconciliation for the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). Available at <http://www.csvr.org.za/pubslis/pubscrim.htm>.
- The Ministry of Children and Youth Services. (2010). Review of the roots of youth violence: Literature reviews. Retrieved 11 March, 2014 from: <http://www.children.gov.on.ca>.
- The South African Department of Education. (2011). *Bill of Responsibilities for the Youth of South Africa*. Retrieved from: <http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx903>.
- Thompson, C. (2013). Violence against teachers often ignored. Huffington Post. Retrieved 27 February, 2014 from: <http://www.csmonitor.com/TheCulture/family/2013>.
- Ting, L., Sanders, S., & Smith, P. L. (2002). The teachers' reaction to school violence: Psychometric properties and scale development. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *62* (6), 1006-1019.
- Tintswalo, M.V. (2014). Schools as sites of violence: The role of social capital in reducing violence in South African township schools. *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology*, *5*(1), 51-60.

- Trackman, V. M. (2008). *Educator's perceptions of school violence*. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand.
- Twemlow, S. W., Fonagy, P., & Sacco, F. C. (2002). Feeling safe at school. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 72 (2), 303-326.
- United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. (2007). *UNESCO Expert Meeting: "Stopping Violence in Schools: What Works?"* (pp. 1-68). Paris: United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.
- Vally, S., Dolombisa, Y., & Porteus, K. (1999). Violence in South African Schools. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 2 (1), 80-90.
- Van der Merwe, H. (2009). Delivering justice during transition: Research challenges. *Assessing the impact of transitional justice: Challenges for empirical research*, 115-42.
- Van den Aardweg, E. M. (1987). Possible causes of school violence. *South African Journal of Education*, 7 (3), 223-230.
- Van Jaarsveld, L. (2011). An investigation of safety and security measures at secondary schools in Tshwane, South Africa, Pretoria, <<http://hdl.handle.net/10500/5800>>
- Vettenburg, N. (2002). Unsafe feelings among teachers. *Journal of School Violence*, 1 (4), 33-49.
- Visser, M. (2007). The social ecological model as theoretical framework in community psychology. In N. Duncan, B. Bowman, A. Naidoo, J. Pillay, & V. Roos (Eds.), *Community psychology: Analysis, context and action* (pp. 102-116). Cape Town: UCT Press.
- Walker, H.M., Ramsey, E., & Gresham, F.M. (2004). *Antisocial behaviour in school: evidence-based practices*. Belmont: Thomson and Wadsworth.
- Walker, T. (2013). Violence against teachers - An overlooked crisis. *National Education Association*. Retrieved 11 March, 2014 from: <http://neatoday.org/2013/02/19>.
- Ward, C. (2007). Young people's violent behaviour: Social learning in context. In P. Burton *Africa* (pp. 9-36). Cape Town: Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention.

- Watts, J., Cockcroft, K., & Duncan, N. (2009). *Developmental Psychology*. Cape Town: UCT Press.
- Weissberg, R. P., & O'Brien, M. U. (2004). What works in school-based social and emotional learning programmes for positive youth development. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 591, 86-97.
- Willey, J. (2008). *Stressed teachers seek comfort in food binges*. Retrieved March 21, 2015, from: <http://.express.co.uk/posts/view/58086>.
- Wilson, S. J., & Lipsey, M. W. (2007). School-based interventions for aggressive and disruptive behaviour: Update of a meta-analysis. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 33(2), 130-143.
- Woods, B. (1995). *Basics in psychology*. London: Hodder Stoughton.
- World Health Organisation. (2014). *Ecological Framework*. Retrieved from: <http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/ecology/en>.
- Youth Studies Australia. (2005). *Youth Monitor: Bullying and violence*, 24:4.
- Zeira, A., Astor, R.A., & Benbenishty, R., (2004). School violence in Israel – Perceptions of homeroom teachers. *School Psychology International*, 25(2), 149-166.
- Zulu, B.M., Urbani, G., Van der Merwe, A., & Van der Walt, J.L. (2004). Violence as an impediment to a culture of teaching and learning in some South African schools. *South African Journal of Education*, 24(2), 170-175.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethical clearance: University of Kwa Zulu Natal



7 October 2015

Mrs Komashni Govender 214581961
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Govender

Protocol reference number: HSS/1518/014M

Project title: An investigation of primary school teachers' experiences of violence towards them perpetrated by learner

Expedited-Full Approval

In response to your application dated 17 November 2014, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Mr Henry Muribwathoho
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Morojele
cc School Administrator: Ms T Khumalo

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymnm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

Appendix 2: Ethical clearance: KZN Department of Education



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane

Tel: 033 392 1004

Ref.:2/4/8/309-2

Ms K Govender
19 Protea Place
LA MERCY

Dear Ms Govender

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **“AN INVESTIGATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS’ EXPERIENCES OF VOLENCE TOWARDS THEM PERPETRATED BY LEARNERS.”**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 15 October 2015 to 31 October 2016.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Pinetown District

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 14 October 2015

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa ...dedicated to service and performance
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004 beyond the call of duty
EMAIL ADDRESS: kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za / Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za
CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363; Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: WWW.kzneducation.gov.za

Appendix 3: Informed consent given to participants



Faculty of Education
School of Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood Campus
P. Bag X03
Ashwood 3605
Durban
__/__/2015

Dear Participant

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Komashni Govender. I am a Psychology of Education Masters candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, South Africa.

I am interested in finding out what are the experiences of primary school teachers of violence perpetrated by their learners. Your school is one of my case studies. To gather the information, I am interested in asking you some questions.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 1 hour and may be split depending on your preference and will take place at the school in an office.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- The research aims at knowing the challenges of your community relating to resource scarcity, peoples' movement, and effects on peace.

- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- My supervisor is a registered psychologist and will assist in case of any emotional issues.
- If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		

Kind regards

Komashni Govender

Should you have any queries/ questions, please contact myself or my supervisor at the details below:

Email: komashnigovender@gmail.com

Cell: 0734581551

Supervisor: Mr. Henry Muribwathoho, School of Educational Psychology, Edgewood Campus.

Contact details: email: Muribwathoho@ukzn.ac.za

Phone number: (031) 260-7011

Details of Research Office: HSSREC – Ethics

Govan Mbeki Building, University of Kwa Zulu- Natal

Contact person: Mariette Snyman

Phone number: (031) 260-8350

DECLARATION

I..... (full name of participant), hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

Appendix 4: Pre-questionnaires

Name of School:

Teachers Name:

PRE- QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questions are directed towards teachers of Grades Six and Seven pupils (11, 12 and 13 year olds). Questions one to five are specific, so please cross the appropriate box. Question 6 is open-ended; please answer as honestly as possible.

1. Gender?

M	F
----------	----------

2. How many years of experience do you have teaching Grades Six and Seven?

1 – 3 years	4 – 7 years	7 – 10 years	Over 10 years
--------------------	--------------------	---------------------	----------------------

3. Have you ever had aggressive pupils in your class?

Y	N
----------	----------

Answer the next question only if you answered **yes** to question 3.

4. Was the aggression directed towards you?

Y	N
----------	----------

Answer the next question only if you answered **yes** to question 4.

5. What type of aggression was displayed by your pupil towards you?

VERBAL	PHYSICAL
---------------	-----------------

6. Describe your experience of the type of aggression mentioned in question 5. (This is an open-ended question, answer at the back of the page).

Appendix 5: Observational checklist

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST						
Observation	Participant A	Participant B	Participant C	Participant D	Participant E	Participant F
Classroom behaviour						
Classroom management						
Pupil attention						
Learner disruptive behaviour						
Violent conduct						
Teaching method						
Use of teaching aids						

Appendix 6: Semi- structured interview schedule

PART A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Information	Participant A	Participant B	Participant C	Participant D	Participant E	Participant F
Age						
Gender						
Position held						
Qualification						
Teaching Experience						
No. of years - current school						

PART B: SEMI- STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Do you have aggressive learners in your class?
2. Have you ever experienced aggressive behaviour from your Grades 6 and 7 learners that was directed towards you and what type of aggression was it?
3. Describe your experience of aggression by your learner towards you.
4. What were the circumstances that lead to this aggressive behaviour?
5. How did you react with regards to this type of behaviour?
6. In your opinion, what do you think are the factors involved in playing a role in this aggressive behaviour?
7. Do you think this type of behaviour could have been avoided? If so, how?
8. Do you report such incidences to the management? How was the pupil dealt with by management?
9. Was the parent contacted and informed about the child's behaviour?
10. How did this incident/s affect your wellbeing?
11. What kind of policies does the school have in place to deal with such situations and do you think it is sufficient?
12. How do you think the school can address such issues of aggression from learners towards teachers, in order to prevent such incidences from occurring?
13. In your opinion, how do you think the Department of Education can lend support to schools that experience such issues?
14. Do you think parents should be blamed for their children's behaviour? Give a reason for your answer.
15. What is the age and gender of the child?
16. How many years are you teaching for?

17. How do you get the parent to play a more active role?
18. What factors do you think play a role in aggressive behaviour in children in general?
19. How have children changed throughout the years?
20. Do you think schools need guidance counsellors? Why do you think so?
21. Is there a certain protocol that needs to be followed? If yes, what is the protocol?
22. Do you think the language barrier may create a problem? Give a reason for your answer.
23. Do you think the curriculum is appropriate to help aggressive children? Why so?
24. Has this experience changed you? If so, how?

Appendix 7: Language clearance certificate

V HARIPERSHAD
10 BENEVOLENT STREET
CROFTDENE
CHATSWORTH
4092

vaneshree@wisbygroup.co.za

Cell: 072 222 4201

11 December 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to record that I have:

- Carried out language editing, formatting etc.
- And made suggestions to student to address at his/her discretion

On the following dissertation :

Primary school teachers' experience of violence towards them perpetrated by learners

by

Komashni Govender



V Haripershad
Language Editor

Appendix 8: Turnitin Report

primary school teachers' experiences of violence perpetrated by learners

ORIGINALITY REPORT

16%

SIMILARITY INDEX

14%

INTERNET SOURCES

2%

PUBLICATIONS

9%

STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1

www.cjcp.org.za

Internet Source

2%

2

uir.unisa.ac.za

Internet Source

1%

3

204.14.132.173

Internet Source

1%

4

www.issafrica.org

Internet Source

1%

5

www.mrc.co.za

Internet Source

1%

6

www.ajol.info

Internet Source

1%

7

fedsas.org.za

Internet Source

1%

8

Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal

Student Paper

1%

9

www.ijcrsee.com

Internet Source

1%