

An investigation into the nature and factors which lead to violence in Buffalo City high schools

A dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Education in the School of
Postgraduate Studies, University of Fort Hare



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Declaration

I hereby declare that An investigation into the nature and factors which lead to violence in Buffalo City high schools is my work that has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

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November 2010

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Date 30-03-11

Abstract

The escalation of violence in schools is of great concern not only to researchers but also to the South African government. Themes and percentages were used to analyse and interpret data collected from learners and educators. Questionnaires and interviews were used as data collection instruments. The purpose of the study was to investigate the nature and factors which lead to violence as well as forms of violence prevalent in schools. The factors which lead to violence and victims of school violence had to be identified if violence is to be completely eradicated in schools. The perpetrators and victims of violence were identified. The study adopted a mixed method design and concurrent triangulation design in order to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

Four high schools in Buffalo City Municipality in the East London District were purposively selected to form the context of the study. The participants were 80 learners and 20 educators from the selected high schools. All schools were township schools in the Mdantsane area. The questionnaire was piloted in a school outside the East London District. The results of the study revealed that violence is prevalent in the schools. Bullying, vandalism, gangsterism, and corporal punishment were some of the forms of violence prevalent in schools. The factors which lead to violence were ascribed to the high rate of violence and crime in our communities; indiscipline on the part of learners; intolerance; the high rate of unemployment; easy access to school premises by people from outside, including gangsters and lack of recreation facilities in schools, especially township and rural schools.

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ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
CSA	Child Sexual Abuse
DoE	Department of Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PAC	Pan African Congress
PSV	Project for the Survivors of Violence
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SAPA	South African Press Association
SG	Superintendent General
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team



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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a general overview of the whole study. It achieves this by providing the background information that triggered the study and discussing the problem statement; research questions; the purpose of the study; research objectives; and assumptions of the research study. The significance and rationale of the study will also be highlighted and the delimitation of the study, definition of terms, and limitations of the study will be provided. The chapter will conclude by providing an outline of the rest of the study.

1.2 Background of the study

Almost every day when one opens a newspaper in South Africa, one comes across articles detailing attacks involving learners or educators which have taken place in the school premises. This makes it difficult to feel safe at school and is likely to have a negative impact on effective teaching and learning, and on good management. Fishbaugh, Berkeley, and Schroth (2003: 19) point out that, "Both teachers and students appear justified in fearing for their own safety with the consequence that the learning process is stymied by the need to deal with unruly behaviours and to prevent serious episodes of aggression and violence". This implies that educators spend a lot of time trying to solve problems associated with school violence instead of focusing on teaching and, as a result of this, the effectiveness of teaching and learning is negatively affected. *The Human Rights Commission Report* (2006: 1) pointed out that, "The

environment and climate necessary for effective teaching and learning is increasingly undermined by a culture of school-based violence – and this is becoming a matter of national concern”. It is against this background that the researcher has undertaken to conduct a study into the nature and factors which lead to violence in schools. The magnitude and effects of violence on teaching and learning is a national concern and this is even more worrying because school violence is escalating despite the measures that have been put in place by the Department of Education. For example, ten years ago Harber and Muthukrishna (2000: 424) identified violence as a major problem in South African schools.

“A particular problem in many South African schools is that of violence. South Africa is a violent society. An average of 52 people were murdered each day in South Africa in 1995, giving it a murder rate more than 80 times that in Britain and making South Africa the most violent country outside a war Zone”.

But ten years later the situation has not changed; South African schools are still perceived as the most dangerous in the world (South African Institute of Race relations, 2008). The above quote hints at the problem of violence in schools and how it affects teaching and learning, because research has proved that what is happening in the community can easily be played out on the school premises. Researchers have identified many problems and painted a bleak picture of violence in South African schools (Townsend, Flisher, Chikobvu, Lombard and King, 2008; Van Jaarsveld, 2008; Prinsloo, 2008 and Xaba, 2006). As such, “Schools in urban areas, particularly townships, are regularly prey to gangsterism. Poverty, unemployment, rural-urban drift, the availability of guns and general legacy of violence creates a context where

gangsters rob schools and kill and rape teachers and students in the process” (Harber and Muthukrishna, 2000: 425). This study seeks to identify factors which lead to violence; the forms of violence prevalent in schools, as well as their effect on teaching and learning. The study also seeks to investigate whether the claims by researchers, as quoted above, are true for Buffalo City high schools.

Crawage (2005: 12) describes school violence as “the exercise of power over others in school related settings by some individual, agency, or social process”. This implies that school violence can be committed in many ways, and that those in the school environment cannot only be threatened and harmed physically, but they can also be harmed emotionally. The National Department of Education is taking this problem seriously. According to Motshekga (2008), the former Education MEC of Gauteng Province,

“...There is ongoing bullying in schools; all forms of violence in schools”. As a way of showing that the government is taking school violence seriously, “An early warning system is to be implemented in 240 Gauteng schools to prevent ‘senseless’ violence. The situation at our schools demands that all the stakeholders have to come up with a detailed plan of fighting school violence so that long term solutions can be achieved” (Motshekga, 2008).

This implies that the government views violence as a serious threat to effective teaching and learning. As such, “On average South Africa’s schools ranked more than 20 percentage points below the world-wide country average of 47% of pupils declaring that they felt a high degree of safety in the classroom” (South African Institute of Race

Relations, 2008: 1). According to the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) study only 23% of South African pupils said they felt safe at school and the study concluded by saying that, "the findings of the study suggested that media reports of school violence were not merely isolated incidents but part of a growing pattern of violence and disorder" (SAIRR, 2008: 1). The findings of the above study also imply that incidents of school violence are on the increase. "The problem deserves urgent attention in parliament and needs a national safety plan that will return proper law and order to the school ground. Failing this, it is difficult to see how schools will produce the skills necessary to drive the South African economy" (SAIRR, 2008: 1).

If lasting solutions are to be achieved parents and the communities from which learners come, and in which schools operate, have to be included in charting the way forward. In their study on school violence, De la Rey, Duncan, Shaffer and Van Niekerk (1997: 137) stated that "it is evident that over the years, many adolescent learners in South Africa have been exposed to school violence, at school and community levels, which had a devastating impact on learners, families, and communities". It is also true that school violence is not an exclusively South African problem. For instance, learners in developed countries like America have shot and killed learners and educators within school premises (De la Rey et al., 1997). Under these circumstances there is reason for one to be concerned about one's safety in the school environment and it is not surprising that the government is also concerned about school violence.

It is no exaggeration that the South African government is losing a lot of money because of litigations against it as a result of injuries or even deaths that take place in the school environment (Alston 2006). *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996)* makes reference to “freedom and security of the person” and therefore it is the duty of the government to make sure that both learners and educators are safe and secure whilst they are within the school premises. It is also incumbent on educators to make sure that learners are safe and protected at all times as they are acting *loco parentis*. Section 12 (1) (c) of *The Bill of Rights* stipulates that, “Everyone has the right to freedom and security of the person, which includes the right to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources”. This implies that, in order for teaching and learning to occur in a safe environment in our schools, the safety of both learners and educators should be a priority. On the other hand, it has to be made clear that educators do not always know what is expected of them with regards to the safety of learners in their care. It is of paramount importance that one looks at the community in which schools operate in order to conceptualize what is happening in our schools. Crime rates in our communities are very high and it is therefore not surprising that crime spills into our schools.

The National Department of Education (DoE) has recently embarked on a campaign to make our schools ‘safe zones’ (Nzapheza 2008). Launching this campaign, the Minister of Education acknowledged that, “crime and violence and the lack of recreational facilities at schools were major challenges” (Nzapheza 2008). This implies that the

Minister of Education has identified some of the problems that are contributing to school violence and the necessity for a proper plan to curb this problem.

There is no doubt that school violence is a cause for concern in South Africa because of its effect on school performance. Recently, the entire staff at a school in the King William's Town District was moved to another school because the school got a zero matric pass rate; one of the contributing factors was school violence (Nzapheza 2008). Commenting on violence in these schools, the Department spokesperson, Mr. L. Pulumani said: "There was continued fighting with the community and at some point residents attacked a teacher at the school. Teachers, parents and pupils could not work. There is just too much hooliganism at the school" (Nzapheza 2008). This report implies that where there is no co-operation; there can be no delivery with regard to academic performance under these circumstances and hence effective teaching and learning is stymied. It is important to determine the factors that lead to school violence, because in some cases violence can be attributed to historical events. As such, it would be advantageous to identify the factors which contribute to the escalation of violence in schools as well as its effects on teaching and learning if violence is to be rooted out.

1.3 Statement of the research problem

The issue of school violence is topical in South Africa. According to Mbete, the provincial Education Department coordinator for the school safety programme, cited in Maqhina (2008: 5) reported that, "the escalating crime at schools has unsettled everyone. Provincial coordinators (of school safety programmes) meet every quarter in

Pretoria to discuss ways of dealing with crime ... in our schools". This implies that school violence is now a serious problem in South African schools. For example, a school in Kei Road has recently been identified as one of the nine most dangerous schools in South Africa (Maqhina, 2008: 5). Another school in the King William's Town District has experienced many incidents of school violence over a long period of time and this impacted negatively on the academic performance of learners and as a result of this the entire staff, including the principal, was transferred to another school (Maqhina, 2008: 5). An educator was attacked by a learner in one of the high schools in the East London District and, a few weeks after that incident, the same learner stabbed another learner within the school premises (Maqhina 2008). Even the electronic and print media highlight the escalation of school violence and incidents of school violence dominate headlines on a regular basis. The researcher has not yet come across any studies on school violence in Buffalo City high schools.

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1.4 Research Questions

The main research question is:

What is the nature and factors which lead to violence in Buffalo City high schools?

The following sub-research questions will be addressed in this study:

1.4.1 What forms of violence are prevalent in schools?

1.4.2 Who are the perpetrators of violence in schools?

1.4.3 What is the gender and age of the victims of school violence?

1.4.4 Which age-group and gender is most affected by incidents of school violence?

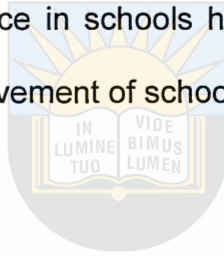
1.4.5 What are the causes of violence in schools?

1.4. 6 What are the effects of violence on learners and educators?

1.4.7 What are the suggestions of educators regarding the eradication of school violence?

1.5 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the nature and causes of school violence in Buffalo City Municipality high schools. Violence in schools is escalating despite the fact that measures to address the problem have been put in place by the DoE and schools themselves (Motshekga, 2008). Violence in schools has also had adverse effects on teaching and learning and overall achievement of school objectives (Maqhina, 2008).



1.6 Research objectives

This study seeks to determine:

- 1.6.1 The nature and forms of violence prevalent in schools.
- 1.6.2 The perpetrators of violence in schools.
- 1.6.3 The victims of violence in schools.
- 1.6.4 The age-group and gender of victims and perpetrators of school violence.
- 1.6.5 The factors which lead to violence in schools.
- 1.6.6 The effects of violence on learners and educators.

1.7 Assumptions of the research study

The study assumes that:

- 1.7.1 There are various forms of violence in schools.

- 1.7.2 Educators and learners are perpetrators of violence in schools.
- 1.7.3 Educators and learners are victims of violence in schools (with girls and younger learners being more vulnerable).
- 1.7.4 Younger learners and girls are victims of violence in school.
- 1.7.5 There are various factors which lead to violence in schools.
- 1.7.5 There are various effects of violence on learners and educators.

1.8 Significance of the study

School violence appears to be on the increase in South African schools. It is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute to new strategies for fighting or curbing school violence. This study also hopes to assist policy makers with preventive measures and instruments that could be used to detect perpetrators of schools violence. Both learners and educators should feel safe within the school premises in order for the school environment to be conducive to learning and teaching. This is also going to make a major contribution by sensitizing all stakeholders (learners, educators, parents, and both provincial and national departments of education) regarding equipping themselves with coping skills so that school violence is tackled effectively.

1.9 Rationale of the study

The researcher, as an educator, has noticed a serious breakdown of discipline in schools and educators seem not to know what to do with learners who are difficult to control. In addition, reports on television and print media highlight the escalation of school violence, such as learners assaulting and stabbing other learners and educators,

and educators being sexually, emotionally and physically abusive to learners at school. It appears that schools are no longer safe environments for learners to learn and educators to teach. It is quite depressing to read about and listen to the news about the abuses, and even killings, that take place within the school premises. It is against this background that this study seeks to determine the forms and factors which lead to school violence.

1.10 Delimitation of the study

This study had focused on four township high schools in the Buffalo City Municipality each of which had a history of violence. The population of these schools was comprised of high school learners and educators. Twenty learners and five educators per school participated in this study.



1.11 Definition of terms

1.11.1 School violence: shall refer to “the exercise of power over others in school

related settings by some individual, agency, or social process” (Crawage 2005).

1.11.2 Social learning: in psychological theory, a change in behaviour that is controlled

by environmental influences rather than by innate or internal forces (Britannica Concise Encyclopaedia).

1.12 Limitations of the study

Violence is a sensitive topic and this implies that some learners might not have been free to air their views, because the perpetrators may have been present within the

school. In order to alleviate all these fears the researcher assured all the participants of confidentiality and each participant was issued with a questionnaire to work and respond individually. The researcher tried by all means to achieve the objectives of the study. Although school managers complained about being busy the researcher managed to get full co-operation from all of them. Data collection required maximum co-operation from all the primary sources, but the researcher was able to overcome all the challenges and all the necessary data was collected without any hindrances. The distance traveled was also a limitation because it was too expensive for the researcher to reach schools in the periphery of Buffalo City. To overcome this problem the researcher undertook the study in schools that are in close proximity to each other in order to cut down on expenses. Time was also a limitation because the study had to be completed within three years as stipulated by the University of Fort Hare's Faculty of Education. It was for this reason that only four high schools had been conveniently sampled.

1.13 Chapter outline

Chapter two has outlined the theoretical framework; the nature and extent of school violence in the developed countries; and the nature and extent of violence in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries. The chapter has also looked at violence in the South African context; the nature and extent of violence in South African schools; the causes of violence in South African schools; and the effects of violence on teaching and learning. The chapter concludes with a comprehensive summary.

Chapter three has outlined the paradigm and approach of the study; research design; population, sample, and sampling; instrumentation: questionnaires and interviews; validity, reliability and trustworthiness of the study; data collection and analysis methods; ethical considerations; and a summary.

Chapter four presents the data analysis under the following headings: understanding of school violence by respondents; nature of violence prevalent in schools as reported by the respondents; causes of school violence as reported by respondents; high crime rate and violence in our communities; indiscipline and intolerance; safety and protection of victims of violence on school premises; and effects of school violence on learning and teaching. The chapter has also presented the effects of school violence on learners; effects of school violence as perceived by educators on learning, as well as on teaching. The chapter concluded by elaborating on the suggestions given by educators on how to eradicate school violence. A summary of the chapter is also provided.

Chapter five consists of a discussion of findings of the study. This includes a discussion of forms of violence prevalent in schools and of the perpetrators of violence in schools. The chapter also discusses the causes of school violence and the effects of school violence on learning and teaching. Finally a summary of the chapter is presented.

Chapter six has outlined the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides a review of relevant literature on the nature and causes of school violence. International, regional, and local literature related to the topic was examined. Specifically this chapter covers the following: the study's theoretical framework; nature and extent of school violence in the developed countries; the nature and extent of school violence in Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries; violence in the South African context; the nature and extent of violence in South African schools; and the causes of violence in South African Schools. The chapter also reviews literature related to the effects of violence on teaching and learning. The following section presents the theoretical framework that guided this study.

2.2 Theoretical Framework and supporting literature

Furlong and Morrison (2000: 71) have claimed that, "...school violence is a multifaceted construct that involves both criminal acts and aggression in schools, which inhibits development and learning, as well as harming the school's climate". This implies that school violence affects the school in a very negative way. As such, there can be no peace and harmony in a school that is affected by school violence. Theories and models of violence which help to explain the factors which lead to and extent of school violence will guide this study. According to Prinsloo and Neser (2007: 47) "school

violence is regarded as any intentional physical or nonphysical (verbal) condition or act resulting in physical or nonphysical pain being inflicted on the recipient of that act while the recipient is under the school's supervision". These physical and non-physical acts of school violence affect teaching and learning negatively because they result in fights and attacks on the victims. Van Jaarsveld (2008: 178) claimed that, "There are various plausible explanations for the violence that is occurring within schools around the globe". This statement implies that school violence is a global problem because no society is static and therefore new ways of dealing with violence have to be devised. For example, Moore, Petrie, Braga and McLaughlin (2003) found that rapid social changes within communities (whether positive or negative) create instability which in turn could produce acts of violence. This implies that people may react negatively or positively to the changes that are taking place in society.



This study was guided by Bandura's theory of social learning. Bandura's theory of social learning argues that children learn by observing what is happening around them (Schonfeld 2005); therefore, if there are no good role models children will play out the behaviour they have observed, even if it is negative. This implies that children who have been abused or who have witnessed abuse at home may easily be abusive themselves because they may think that violence is the only way to solve problems. Schonfeld (2005: 188) has claimed that, "Because a good deal of human behavior is learned by observation; it is a corollary that aggressive behavior is observable learned". Similarly, Save the Children (2008: 17) found that:

“Research has shown that children who witnessed violence against their mothers by their fathers tend to exhibit more aggressive and anti-social behaviour. Some were also found to show more anxiety, lower self-esteem, depression and anger than children who did not witness violence”.

Research shows that there is a correlation between school violence and political, as well as economic changes that are taking place within society (Van Jaarsveld 2008). For example, in his study, Van Jaarsveld (2008: 178) found that political and economic changes within society have a big impact on education and on children's school attendance. Children from disadvantaged (where parents are not working and children have to go to school on empty stomachs) families may get frustrated and resort to violence because they perceive themselves to be different. In the past, violence has been associated with people from lower income groups (Moore et al., 2003: 252).

Research studies have reported that culture also plays a role in the escalation of school violence (Moore et al., 2003). For example, Moore et al. (2003: 253) claim that “There is a widespread belief that violence in schools is caused by societal cultures which encourage, tolerate, and demand violence”. What this implies is that in some communities and societies people are forced to behave in such a way that their behaviour is accepted by their community or society even if it means being violent. For example, in some cultures a boy is expected to behave differently from a girl, e.g. where a boy is hit it is expected that he must hit back and not cry. This situation is ascribed to the heightened incidence of violence in our country; as a result of this violence

individuals have come to accept and see violence as a normal part of everyday life. Moore et al. (2003: 256) also claimed that, the school is seen as the place where students act out socially, aggressively, and criminally the most because the school premises are the most common social setting for youth. For example, 45 school boys were recently arrested in the King William's Town District for fighting and carrying dangerous weapons en route to school and within the school premises. The fight emanated from cultural values because one group refused to recognize boys who come from the circumcision school as men.

For example, Moore et al. (2003: 313) contend that, "There are various other factors that may also contribute to school violence and these include substance abuse, drug use or abuse, poor performance, drug dealing, mental illness, joining a gang, being abused as a child and poverty". Substance abuse and drug dealing have been linked to high levels of school violence by researchers. These activities are also linked to gang related violence at schools. Various incidents of gang related violence were reported by Vally et al. (2002) in KwaZulu Natal, and the same pattern was reported (Nombembe, 2009) in the Western Cape Province where gang violence has been rampant for some time. It has also been reported (Vally et al., 2002; Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe and Van der Walt, 2004) that learners who have poor academic performance are more likely to engage in violent activities, because they want to be recognised and they bully learners with good academic performance for no apparent reason. Incidents of learners attacking and assaulting other learners at school (sometimes killing them) have been reported in South Africa, only to find that the learner is mentally ill (Vally et al., 2002).

Similarly, Capozzoli and McVey (2000: 24) claim that, “incompetent parents and media influences such as television, movies, books, computer games, music and internet” may contribute to school violence. In a similar vein, Van De Velde (2002: 1) found that violent television programmes and violent video games have a negative effect on the development of children because children can easily act out what they have seen. Van De Velde (2002: 1) claimed that television programmes have the following effects on learners:

“First, it teaches aggressive styles of conduct. Second, it weakens restraints against aggression by glamorizing violence. ... Third, it habituates and desensitizes reactions to cruelty. And finally, it shapes our images of reality; for example, only 10% of major crimes in society are violent, but on TV, 77% of major crimes are violent, which has the effect of making people more fearful of becoming crime victims”.

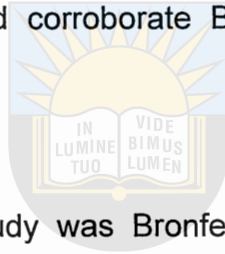
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The above statements imply that children are affected by what they witness on television and can copy it and act it out at school and, therefore, if we want to come up with lasting solutions for fighting school violence the school must not be treated as an island.

The strong point of Bandura's social learning theory is that it can easily handle inconsistencies in the child's behaviour because the behaviour learners display at school may be totally different from the behaviour displayed at home. It can be stressed that Bandura's theory gives an accurate picture of the way behaviours are learned

because can easily copy other learners' behaviour. These are some of the strong points that make Bandura's theory relevant for this study (Van De Velde, 2002).

It has to be pointed out that Bandura's theory has its weaknesses. The theory is criticised for putting too much emphasis on what happens to the child rather than what the child does with the information she/he has (Van De Velde, 2002). Children grow physically and mentally as they mature but Bandura's theory does not take actual developmental changes into account. In order to enhance the credibility of the study the researcher decided to triangulate and corroborate Bandura's theory by also using Bronfenbrenner's theory as a guide.



The other theory that guided this study was Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System's theory. This theory views the individual as developing within a context of "nested ecological structures"; as such the immediate environment the child perceives is embedded within a larger environment such as the home or classroom, which in turn is embedded within yet a larger environment such as the neighborhood or the school (Engler 2007). This implies that the environment has an effect on the behaviour of people. For example, a learner who is exposed to violence all the time will copy what he/she sees and act it out on other learners. According to Engler (2007: 10), "Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory suggests that development is explained in terms of relationships between people and their environments". Bronfenbrenner's theory consists of four systems, or levels that make up a person's surroundings, environment,

and values. These are: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem (Engler, 2007).

The microsystem is described as the closest layer to the child and contains the structures with which the child has direct contact (Paquette and Ryan, 2001). It can be presumed that if a learner is in direct contact with violent people or evil elements the learner will copy that and behave in the same manner. The mesosystem is defined as a set of interrelations between two or more settings in which the developing person becomes an active participant (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to Engler (2007: 11), "Examples of interrelations can be a child and his involvement in school or a child and his active participation in church". The exosystem is defined as consisting of one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in that setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This implies that learners are likely to be affected by what takes place in their immediate environment even if they are not directly involved. For example, learners who witness abuse or assault on a fellow learner may be traumatised although they are not the ones being abused or assaulted.

The macrosystem encompasses all the systems and refers to the consistency observed within a given culture or subculture in the form and content of its microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystems, as well as any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to Engler (2007: 11), "The way in which a culture values the importance of education would be considered an example of

the macrosystem". In terms of this study it may be noted that the ways in which people perceive school violence may have an impact on its prevalence. Engler (2007: 11) found that, "Bronfenbrenner's theory suggests that if a person grows up in a high risk environment that person's development will be strongly influenced in a negative way by that environment, causing that person to potentially lead an unhealthy, unfulfilling life". Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory will therefore make a major contribution in guiding this study.

Bronfenbrenner's theory studies the child holistically, that is, it takes environmental factors into consideration it still has some weaknesses. For example, Bronfenbrenner doesn't explain how children growing up in high risk environments can lead an exceptionally fulfilling and rewarding life. Secondly, Bronfenbrenner does not explain how children who are exposed to neglect and emotional abuse can still be in loving relationships and find the positive in most aspects of life (Engler, 2007). The researcher hopes that Bandura's social learning theory and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory complement each other and make the study more credible and helped to guide this study.

2.3 Nature and extent of school violence in more developed countries

School violence is not only confined to South Africa and the SADC countries, but is also prevalent in developed countries, however, this study also seeks to establish whether the strategies used in more developed countries can be used in South African schools in order to eradicate violence. De Wet (2007: 674) claims that school violence is not a

new phenomenon. For example, in France, some learners went to school armed in the seventeenth century; they feared both their fellow learners and the community (De Wet, 2007). Smit (2007: 54) claims that, "International research on safe schools has focused on the need to improve safety in the school environment." For example, in his study in the United States of America, Smit (2007: 54) found that, "gang violence in schools is regarded as a concern for administrators attempting to create safe school environments". Similarly, Last (2001: 1) reported that "all over America school violence is becoming more than just the bully on the playground. It is escalating to great proportions and this problem must be dealt with by our society". This implies that the problem of school violence has increased to such an extent that it cannot be fought and eradicated by schools alone and needs everybody's involvement. Matsoga (2003) and Garegae (2008) claimed that violence in and around schools in developed countries has become a social plague depriving many young people of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. For example, the *U. S. Department of Education and the U. S. Department of Justice (2006)* found that "school violence does not limit itself to the student population. Eight percent of teachers say they are threatened with violence on school grounds at least once a month. Two percent report being physically attacked each year". As such, school violence varies from school to school.

Males, in the *U. S. Department of Education Study (2006: 1)* reported that "More than any past generation today's kids are far more likely to grow up with parents who abuse drugs, get arrested, go to prison, disappear, or fail to maintain stable families". This implies that the socialisation process is failing to nurture children with good moral values

because children lack good role models. The above studies show that incidents of school violence in America are now on the increase because children have more access to dangerous weapons, such as guns (*U.S. Department of Education 2006*). Similarly, in his study, Mazzuca (2002: 1) identifies school discipline and gun control as well as parental involvement as some of the factors that contribute to the escalation of school violence in schools. As such, Mazzuca (2002: 1) stated that, "Some have argued that increased discipline is critical to preventing school violence". It is clear from the discussion above that school violence is also prevalent in the United States.

2.4 Nature and extent of school violence in the Southern African Development

Community (SADC) countries

The SADC countries are also experiencing problems related to school violence. In a study conducted in Lesotho by De Wet (2006: 11) it was found that "the respondents mostly witnessed learners being threatened, and attacked or assaulted by fellow learners at their respective schools". In this case, learners are perpetrating acts of violence against other learners. The same study found that educators are not only victims of school violence, but that some of them are also perpetrators of violence. De Wet (2006: 11) also reported that "Descriptions of educators initiating strikes and instigating learners to physically and verbally abuse their colleagues paint a harsh picture of rotten collegial relations in some schools in Lesotho". This doesn't only show that relations at some schools are poor, but it also portrays a bleak picture of ethical values within the institutions. It is evident is that learners bring dangerous weapons to school and use them to attack each other. De Wet (2007: 678) cited the following

descriptions that provide insight into the senselessness and severity of some incidents of school violence in Lesotho:

- *“An 18-year-old boy was stabbed to death with a knife and screw-driver after quarrelling about a borrowed pen.*
- *A boy was stabbed to death by his classmate using a knife. The loss of Kaizer Chiefs against Orlando Pirates was the main cause of their fight.”*

It can be deduced from the above incidents of school violence that school violence is a major problem in Lesotho schools. The same study also found that, “Educators are, however, not only the victims of school violence; some of them are the perpetrators of violence ... educators also like to threaten the learners” (De Wet, 2007: 679).

Botswana is not an exception to the problem of indiscipline in schools. For example, in his study, Garegae (2008: 48) found that, “teachers feel disempowered by schools’ discipline regulations and that students take advantage of such regulations to undermine teachers’ authority”. This implies that educators have little control over the learners and, if learners are free to do as they wish incidents of school violence are likely to be more frequent. There is a link between the escalation of school violence and socialisation of children because in a particular culture incidents of violence may be a norm; they may be socially acceptable (Garegae, 2008: 52.). School violence can be alleviated if the disciplinary procedures or methods are more effective; this is not the case in Botswana schools where the, “expulsion procedures make students believe that the school head has no authority over them and so they can mess up in front of her/him

because they know s/he will keep on talking without taking any action” (Garegae, 2008: 52).

Literature (Garegae 2008; Bojuwoye and Narain, 2008) has revealed that violence is prevalent in the Botswana schools. The violence in fact comes as part of the crime that occurs in the larger society. The high incidence of complex incidents of violence in schools shows deterioration in the culture of learning. These studies found that, Botswana, like many other countries around the world faces the problem of school violence. Though for a long time serious school crime in the form of murder was not a concern, recent events in schools indicate that violence is endemic (Garegae, 2008; Bojuwoye and Narain, 2008). The above studies also show that schools are no longer safe places for teaching and learning.



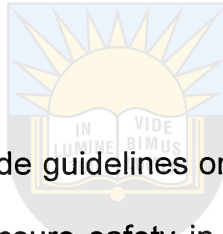
2.5 Violence in the South African context

Research shows that school safety is of paramount importance if any effective learning and teaching is to take place (Prinsloo, 2008; Steyn & Roux, 2009; Van Jaarsveld, 2008). According to Steyn and Roux (2009: 32), “The radical increase in recent media reports on aggression and violence in schools create the impression that the problem of aggression and violence in our schools is becoming uncontrollable”. This implies that the government and communities need to work together in order to eradicate violence in our schools. The South African government prioritises safety in all public schools, and hence, “All public schools are hereby declared drug free and dangerous object free zones” (*Government Gazette 22754, 12 October 2001, 4(1)*). This implies that learners

are not allowed to bring drugs and dangerous weapons to school. The regulations are very clear on what is expected of learners and educators regarding weapons on school premises and the regulations stipulate that:

“No person may –

- (a) allow any dangerous object in the public school premises;
- (b) carry any dangerous object in the public school premises;
- (c) store any dangerous object in the public school premises except in officially designated places identified by the principal” (Government Gazette 22754, 12 October 2001, 4(2)).



The above mentioned regulations provide guidelines on the preventive measures taken by the South African government to ensure safety in all public schools. Although the South African government has these regulations in place, current research shows that school violence is escalating and schools are unsafe (Prinsloo 2008; Van Jaarsveld 2008). The escalation of violence in South African schools has led researchers to conclude that schools are rapidly and increasingly becoming arenas for violence not only between pupils but also between teachers and pupils, interschool rivalries and gang conflict as well (Prinsloo, 2008; Van Jaarsveld, 2008). Consequently, Prinsloo (2008: 27) claims that “Apart from the serious incidents of school violence that have received wide media coverage, there is general concern regarding the increase in incidents of school violence in South Africa”. Because of the high incidence of violence schools are no longer known or seen as safe and secure environments where children can learn, enjoy themselves and feel protected (Van Jaarsveld 2008). Similarly, Zulu et

al. (2004: 173) concluded that "Schools have become highly volatile and unpredictable places. Violence has become a part of every-day life in (some) schools". The above findings clearly show that everybody in the school environment is affected by the escalation of violence in our schools and this, to a large extent, also affects effective learning and teaching. In their study, for example, Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1988: 123) described school violence as "any behavior of learners, educators, administrators or non-school persons, who attempt to inflict physical injury on another person or to damage school property". The above statement implies that school violence causes pain and leads to the disruption of effective teaching and learning in our schools.



2.6 Nature and extent of violence in South African schools

Various studies have found that school violence is one of the major problems in South African public schools (*Human Rights Commission, 2006; Plan, 2008; Townsend et al. (2008)*). The same studies claim that the problem of school violence is not only peculiar to South Africa and it is common to other African countries and in developed countries. For example, in their study of school violence, the Human Rights Commission Report (2006) identified bullying as one of the most common forms of violence in South African schools. Similarly, it has been noticed that bullying is a common behavior in schools across the world and in some schools these illegal acts of bullying seem to be institutionalized (Plan, 2008). Morrison (2001: 1) claims that "In the last decade or so we have become increasingly aware that bullying in schools is a serious, and insidious, form of violence that plagues the school system". This implies that bullying is still on the

increase in most schools and this has been corroborated by the findings of this study. Bullying emerged as a problem in all the schools that participated in this study.

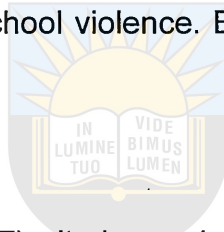
Bullying can be done in many ways. For example, bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological aggression that occurs repeatedly and is marked by an imbalance of power, intent to harm, threat of further aggression, and the creation of terror in the victim (Human Rights Commission, 2006). Townsend et al. (2008: 23) defines bullying "... as largely unprovoked, negative physical or psychological actions perpetrated repeatedly over time between bully/ies and victims". As such, it can be concluded that definitions of bullying vary, but commonly emphasise the importance of repetition, along with harm and unequal power (Plan, 2008). This implies that the perpetrator is usually more dominant and the intention is not just to harm but is also to instill fear in the victim. Bullying, like many other forms of school violence, is a human rights violation.

In their study of the nature and extent of violence in schools, Klewin, Tillmann and Weingart (2003: 863) put emphasis on three clearly distinguishable categories of behaviour by learners, namely:

- *Physical compulsion and physical injury. This category always involves conflict between two or more individuals in which at least one side uses physical means (bodily force or weapons) to cause intentional harm, or at threaten such harm, to the other side.*

- *Verbal aggression and mental cruelty. This category involves the marginalisation or degradation of an individual by use of insults, humiliation, or emotional blackmail.*
- *Bullying. This term refers to a special variation of violence, encompassing both the physical and mental components. It involves a victim/perpetrator relationship, in which the weaker individual is regularly taunted and oppressed.*

The above implies that the school environment can be very traumatic and dangerous because of the nature and extent of school violence. Both educators and learners find themselves at risk of school violence.



In his study, Van Jaarsveld (2008: 177) cited a series of serious incidents of school violence in South African schools and stated that:

- *“During the time period between May and September 2006, five high school students were killed by other schoolmates in Gauteng (Momborg, 2007:2).*
- *In March 2007 a teacher was stabbed to death by a pupil in her classroom at Thornwood Secondary in Mariannhill, Durban (Naidoo, 2007:2).*
- *On 6 April 2007 two students of Umlazi Commercial High (Kwa-Zulu-Natal) were gang raped while attending holiday classes (Mboto, 2007:2).*
- *In May 2007, two boys aged seven and twelve brutally beat (with a belt) and then chopped up a school friend, eight year old Wilfred Kriel, with a home made axe while walking home from school. They all attended Nieuwoudt Primary school at Klawer, Cape Town (Prince, 2007).*

- *Also in May 2007, a Grade nine pupil (aged 17) stabbed a classmate, also 17, to death with a pair of scissors in the neck at Eerste River High School on the school premises (Dolley, 2007)".*

It is clear from the above series of incidents of school violence that both learners and educators are victims of school violence because it took place in the classroom, school grounds and on the way to school. For example, Vally et al. (2002: 80) claim that school violence affects everybody and reported that:

"...educators, parents and students alike have been murdered in South African schools: a school principal murdered in Soweto; a pre-school teacher murdered in full view of sixty children in Gauteng; Rose Mnisi murdered as she walked home from her school in the Northern Province; a school bus driver murdered in the presence of 85 learners; a Grade 12 pupil stabbed by a fellow student; and a parent shot while waiting in his car for his daughter outside her secondary school after the principal and his deputy shot at pupils who allegedly intended to attack teachers".

This implies that the school environment is no longer safe and that anyone in the school premises can easily become a victim of school violence. School violence has taken a new turn recently and this is evidenced by a series of stabbings that have taken place in Eastern Cape schools. For example, a matric boy was stabbed to death at a school party on Tuesday, 10 November 2009 at Gqukesi Junior Secondary School during a farewell function (Ngcukana, 2009). During the same week "Another boy was injured when stabbed in the neck at a school in Port Elizabeth on Monday 9 November 2009;

another boy was injured after being stabbed on Thursday the previous week in Queenstown when a fight among school pupils took place” (Ngcukana, 2009: 1). This shows that school violence is getting out of hand in our schools and the Provincial Department of Education realises that it cannot win the battle alone but everybody should be involved in rooting out school violence. “It is a worrying trend. The truth is that a more communal effort is needed. It cannot only be left to the department to fight this school violence problem”, the provincial education spokesperson conceded (cited by Ngcukana, 2009:1).

According to De Wet (2007: 675), “sexual abuse and violence are inextricably linked to other forms of physical violence in school, in particular to widespread bullying by learners and corporal punishment by educators and also to verbal abuse”. In a similar vein, Leach (2003: 389) argues that “Gender-based violence is violence involving men and women, in which the female is usually the victim; and which is derived from unequal power relationships between men and women”. Other studies have shown that girls are always victims when it comes to gender-based violence and sexual abuse in schools (Mati, 2001; Smith, 2005). For example, Smith (2005: 1) claims that, “While all forms of violence need to be eradicated, perhaps it is gender-based violence that needs the most urgent attention in that it is such a serious risk factor in the transmission of HIV and AIDS, and because of the way it serves as a barrier to the full participation of learners, girls in particular, in schooling”. This implies that girls are sexually abused by both boys and educators and, in some instances, boys also fall victim to sexual abuse. In a report presented to the Provincial Legislature (Eastern Cape) by the Education

Standing Committee (2001) it was alleged that a teacher deliberately infected a learner with HIV and “another teacher allegedly impregnated about 20 schoolgirls” (cited by Mati 2001). This implies that girls are more vulnerable to sexual abuse as a form of school violence. The Premier of the Eastern Cape, Noxolo Kiviet (2009: 9), summed this up by saying that “The abuse of women, children, the aged and people with disabilities is by and large not a reflection of the inability of the government to deal with these matters, but instead the absence of moral rectitude within our communities”. This implies that moral degeneration amongst the members of our communities makes them turn a blind eye on wrong things and, as a result, people just keep quiet rather than condemning what is wrong or fighting for their rights. This is also true of abused learners because they would rather keep quiet than blow the whistle on the perpetrators of school violence as they fear reprisals. There is a general feeling that women’s rights are still undermined and as a result women are constantly exposed to killings and abuse. Ngcukana (Daily Dispatch, 26/8/2010) quotes the Eastern Cape MEC for the Department of Human Settlements, Nombulelo Mabandla as having said: “I feel we as women are still struggling. Gender-based violence is still a real threat and danger in our communities. We need to fight for our rights as women”. This implies that violence is a community problem and schools will struggle to eradicate it because, to many learners violence seems to be a way of life.

Some of these forms of abuse are not reported by the school authorities because authorities are more concerned about the images of their schools. For example, a learner was suspended in Port Alfred High School in the Eastern Cape Province for

going public about and exposing incidents of school violence that were allegedly not taken seriously by the school management (Daily Dispatch 2008). Such cases could make those who witness incidents of school violence keep quiet out of fear of being victimized by the authorities.

A report by the Human Rights Watch (2001) alleges that “On a daily basis in schools across the nation, South African girls of every race and economic class encounter sexual violence and harassment at school that impedes their realization of the right to education”. The above paints a gloomy picture and shows that school violence is escalating and girls continue to be victims of sexual abuse from both male learners and educators. Leach (2002: 100) claims that “Many schools are in fact the site of high levels of gender violence, most of it directed at girls”. As such, the plight of the girl child is so abhorrent that girls are victimized by their classmates or people with whom they are familiar. This is also highlighted by the *Plan* (2008: 22) who say, “We do know that such violence is usually carried out by people known to the child (for example, relatives, teachers and peers) and that school-based sexual abuse is a major problem in many countries and regions”. In a similar vein, Amunga et al (2009: 119) cited Farhana and reported that “Children in the African society are often subjected to abuse, exploitation and violence from those who are meant to protect them: the state, their families, their teachers and employers”. The above scenario implies that moral values have degenerated to such an extent that it is not only strangers who are a threat to the girl child but those who are expected to provide protection. *Plan* (2008: 22) claims that “Studies show that girls are most likely to be abused on their journey to or from school,

in or near toilets, empty classrooms, computer rooms, libraries or dormitories or near the perimeter of school grounds". Plan (2008) points fingers at educators as the main perpetrators of sexual violence and abuse in schools.

In their research, conducted in the Western Cape, Biersteker and Erlank (2000) found that the most common crime and violence problems in secondary schools were vandalism, drugs, fighting, theft, and gang related violence. For example, learners carry weapons such as knives and guns, and stabbing, bullying, and fighting took place in the playgrounds, and drug abuse also takes place (Sathiparsad, 2003: 101). The above study clearly shows that school violence is a reality in South African schools. The current Education MEC in the Western Cape recently reported the escalation of school violence in Western Cape schools and revealed that there were 80 reported incidents of stabbings in Western Cape schools in 2008 (Sathiparsad 2003). The same province has already recorded 60 incidents from January to July this year. In one case, a learner was viciously attacked and stabbed in front of classmates in the classroom at Usasazo High School and as a result of this the teachers' work is affected (Sathiparsad 2003). In another case in the same province, a 13 year old learner attacked an educator with a hammer and this had devastating effects on the educator. In a similar vein, Makwabe (2009: 7) claimed that "Jacobs's life fell apart eight years ago at Rhodes High School in Mowbray, Cape Town, when a 13-year-old pupil mercilessly bludgeoned her on the head with a hammer in front of his horrified grade 8 classmates". A similar situation was reported by Mutume (1998) of a school in Gauteng where teachers have been viciously

attacked, and where pupils have been found with guns, and young boys and girls were sexually molested.

The above situation of school violence clearly shows that educators have lost control and live in constant fear of being attacked. Such incidents of violence result in unnecessary conflicts that impact negatively on teaching and learning. Sathiparsad (2003: 102) stated that "The primary goal of a school is to educate learners. Conflict, which ranges from unresolved disagreements to violent acts, interrupts the educational process and interferes with the student's ability to learn". This implies that conflicts in the school can lead to unnecessary loss of life and leave everyone in the school environment traumatized. For example, the acting principal of Sithembele Matiso High School in Crossroads, on the Cape Flats, was recently gunned down and this is testimony to the severity of violence in our schools (Nombembe 2009). Reflecting on the conflicts at the school, Nombembe (2009: 9) alleged that "There were cliques at the school. A cold war. Not too long ago she expressed fear for her life but felt that the department was handling the matter". The above examples paint a gloomy picture that our schools are not safe at all and as a result teaching and learning is compromised.

2.7 Factors related to violence in South African schools

Researchers have identified a number of factors which lead to violence at schools; for example, the *Human Rights Commission (2006)* has identified bullying and intolerance as one of the major contributors to school violence. Morrel (2002) has also seen school violence as part of broader social patterns. This implies that it comes as no surprise that

there is prevalence of school violence in South African schools because police reports have revealed that the crime rate is very high in South Africa. Educators find it very difficult to handle ill-disciplined learners at school. Fishbaugh, Berkeley, and Schroth (2003) ascribed this to the disintegration of traditional family values; as a result children fight back when hit or cautioned by their parents and are able to get away with it. Poverty and unemployment also contribute to school violence. Girls are seen as being more vulnerable to sexual exploitation because women, who are often financially dependent on men, are easily enticed (Leach 2002). It is against this background that this study seeks to determine the nature and causes of school violence in Buffalo City high schools.



De Wet (2007: 62) claims that, "...the causes of violence are multifaceted, complex and even conflicting, and include community and social factors, individual attributes, familial contexts, as well as educational factors". Some of these causes may "stem from larger societal factors over which the school has no control" (De Wet, 2007: 62). The World Report on *Violence against Children* (2005) found that "...about half of all children involved in bullying are both victims and perpetrators, and that they are most troubled of all children involved in bullying". This implies that children who have been exposed to abuse are likely to be abusive. Hence, we can say that violence breeds violence.

In their study, Zulu, et al. (2004: 170), reported that:

"School violence and disruption remain realities, and are even gaining momentum in certain areas. It seems as if, as a result of the historical culture of

violence and disruption in South African education, children have become socialised to deal with their problems in aggressive violent ways”.

The above findings show that school violence is caused by the historical culture of violence in South African education. Mlisa et al (2008: 261) claim that “Intuitively, in such a violent society, it makes sense that there would also be high rates of bullying at school, since bullying is a subtype of violent behavior”. Similarly, Sathiparsad (2003: 99) blames the escalation of violence in schools on apartheid and points out that:

“In South Africa, the apartheid era political, social and economic policies have led to the denial of basic human rights such as the rights to education, health and housing. State sponsored violence was a constant feature of the apartheid regime, and for many South African children, schools have long been sites of violence”.

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Other studies have highlighted overcrowding as having an effect on school violence (Human Rights Commission 2006), as a shortage of educators often results in inadequate supervision. In his study, De Wet (2007: 62-63) found that “...the most frequently cited community causes of school violence are the deterioration of living conditions accompanied by poverty, unemployment, overcrowding, a high population turnover, and racial and ethnic heterogeneity”. Similarly Nxumalo, cited in Zulu et al. (2004: 171), found that “overcrowded classrooms, high early drop-out rates, learners coming from disadvantaged back-grounds affected by poverty, overcrowding, unemployment, lack of recreational facilities and violence” contribute to school violence.

Similarly, De Wet, Jacobs, and Palm-Forster (2008: 97) found that the school size has a statistically significant influence on learners' exposure to different forms of sexual harassment, and that children attending large schools are exposed to more forms of sexual harassment than those attending smaller schools. This implies that overcrowded and large schools may experience more forms of school violence than less crowded schools and that some of these incidents may not be reported by learners due to fear of victimisation. This also implies that some forms of school violence may easily be seen as normal because they are accepted by the community or society. As such, victims may suffer psychologically and see no reason or need to share their experiences with others, because they believe that no one is going to take them seriously.

Other researchers on school violence have come up with a myriad of causes. For example, the International Medical Health Organisation (2008: 21) claims that school violence is caused primarily by intolerance (against anybody who is different in any way from those around them), bullies, teasing, and hazing. The severity of the problem is never realised until the victim has reacted in a very drastic manner (Plan 2008). The perpetrators are also very quick to read the situation and use any opportunity that is of advantage to them.

In his study, Smit (2007: 53) found that "The physical environment may be the optimal place to start. Securing the school premises and being strict about who is admitted to the school grounds is a practical problem that demands practical solutions". This implies that if access to and from the school is not controlled learners and educators may be

vulnerable to violence and gang activities. In a similar vein, Anderson and Bushman, cited by Steyn and Roux (2009: 32), claimed that, “the pandemic levels of violence can be attributed to lack of self-control and wisdom to handle their own violent impulses”.

It has to be realised that the problems of violence experienced in the school cannot be divorced from what is taking place in the community in which the school operates. For example, Morrell (2002: 39) claimed that “Violence in schools is only part of the broader social patterns and need to be considered in conjunction with literatures that attempt to make sense of this reality (in its totality) and in terms of debates about the school as site of violence and as a starting point for ending violence”. This implies that schools can make a significant contribution in changing the mindsets of learners, and the way they see things can permeate into the community for the better.



In their study, Fishbaugh, Berkeley, and Schroth (2003: 19) attributed learner indiscipline to “The disintegration of the traditional family and its values, and apathy, disorganization and hostility of the close-knit neighbourhood are mirrored in the schools”. In a similar vein, De Wet (2007: 63) found that:

“Children who show a marked deviance in their behaviour are often found to come from homes where the discipline of the father is lax, over-strict or erratic; the supervision of the mother is only fair or inadequate; parents are indifferent or even hostile towards their children; family members are scattered in diverse activities and do not operate as a family unit; parents find it difficult to talk about their children; and husband-wife relationships lack closeness and equality”.

The above statement implies that the family unit can make a major contribution in fighting school violence because, if everything is normal at home, parental involvement in the activities of the school would make a positive contribution. Last (2001: 2) claims that:

“The consequence of having both parents out of the house results in a lack of supervision for the children. There is a breakdown in the general governing system of the home allowing the child to make decisions that would not be those of the parent. The child in essence becomes his own boss”.

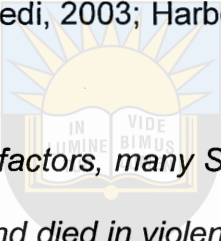
This implies that children who are allowed to make their decisions at an early age are likely to be disobedient because they are used to making their own decisions.

Smit (2007: 54) claims that “The increased presence of ill-discipline, bullying, sexual abuse, and violence in our schools points to a deep malaise that requires determined and urgent action”. This implies that school violence makes our schools uncontrollable and this affects effective teaching and learning. Smit (2007: 53) claims that, educators are frustrated by school violence and as a result some of them would rather sacrifice their time with their families or go to work abroad.

Unemployment is another factor that may also contribute towards many acts of violence; learners who come to school without any pocket money will have to find illicit ways of getting money, such as stealing other learners' possessions to sell (*Human Rights Commission 2006*). For example, in some instances learners go for days without having any food. The Department of Education has included only the primary schools in their school nutrition programme but, if one looks at the gravity of the situation, one

cannot help but feel that many learners need help. According to Harber (2001: 261), "Other factors contributing to the prevalence of violence in South Africa are high levels of unemployment, extremes in wealth and poverty, continuing racism, the easy availability of guns and patriarchal values and behaviours". This implies that the causes of school violence may come in many forms and learners may be entrapped in situations from which they cannot escape.

Research has also revealed that apartheid has contributed to the escalation of school violence in South African schools (Chabedi, 2003; Harber, 2001; Ntshoe, 2002). Harber, 2001: 262) reported that,



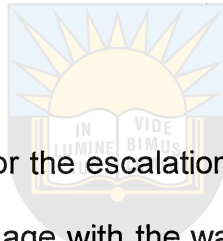
"Owing to a number of historical factors, many South African children were born, reared, have matured, married and died in violent situations. Some have become so immune to violent actions that they see violence as an acceptable form of expression and as a way of channeling their emotions".

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This implies that learners are so used to violence that they see it as a correct way of settling their differences. In his study, Chabedi (2003: 369) made reference to the Soweto uprisings in 1976 and how this has affected people's lives. He reported that:

"Soweto today is a violence-ridden place, in which ordinary people make their lives, but in which powerful forces continue to create ungovernability where the political call for ungovernability no longer exists. Here the lethal cultural cocktails of militancy, a culture of boycotting, and a high level of tolerance of violent behaviour are shaping the new order in destructive ways".

This suggests that one may use violence in a situation where there is no need for it, because, to many people, violence has become a norm. Violence is so prevalent in our schools that it has become a norm and learners assault and stab each other without any provocation. It is noted that during the 1970s and 80s education became the centre of political struggle in South Africa when fierce and often violent anti-apartheid protests were held in schools throughout South Africa (Ntshoe, 2002). During the apartheid regime school violence was used to make our schools ungovernable and learners disobeyed instructions from educators. It now seems that educators have lost control since then.



Violence on television is also blamed for the escalation of violence because it exposes the youth to violence from a very early age with the watching of cartoons. These funny harmless half-hour shows that make us laugh are the first viewing of violence that our children see (Last, 2001). The exposure to violence at a very early age manifests itself in violent acts later in the lives of children. Studies have shown that even the type of music children listen to, mock authority, glorify guns, and portray women as victims of violence, often mentioning them as deserving of punishment (Last 2001). "Music plays an even bigger role in the influencing of today's youth with its violent lyrics and cult like following" (Last 2001: 2).

2.8 Effects of violence on teaching and learning

School violence has effects on the teaching and learning process in schools. For example, De Wet (2007: 673) claims that:

“... violent incidents and fear of violence have a profound effect on the educational process. Schools with high rates of crime and violence are less effective in educating learners. These schools have lower levels of learner achievement, higher rates of absenteeism, and more dropouts”.

Research shows that school violence has devastating effects on learners because the victims may have impaired concentration, decreased academic performance, increased school truancy (may be to prevent bullying from occurring), or absence from special school activities or certain classes (De Wet 2005; De Wet, 2007). This implies that school violence has a deleterious effect on the morale of both learners and educators as it destroys the proper teaching and learning environment and thus adversely affect the academic performance of the learners. For example, a lot of time is lost trying to solve conflicts either between learners, or between learners and educators. As a result of incidents of school violence, learners, educators, and principals are prevented from meeting their responsibilities for creating a culture of teaching and learning in schools (Zulu et al., 2004).

In his study, Prinsloo (2008:30) claimed that peer victimisation has harmful psychological effects on learners and found that a “lack of sufficient self-esteem, proneness to depression, and feelings of anxiety as well as low levels of self-restraint are associated with peer victimisation”. This implies that school violence causes permanent scars on the victims who end up having poor interpersonal relationships with their fellow learners.

It has been found by a number of researchers that school violence has negative effects on education; for example, Amunga, Maiyoo, Achokaa and Ashioya (2009: 121) found that “neglect and sexual abuse contribute to dropping out of school”. As such, “Girls bear the brunt of sexual abuse because they are generally vulnerable and there are many sex pests on the prowl” (Amunga et al. 2009: 121). This study was conducted in Kenya and it reported that girls are more vulnerable to sexual abuse because “Girls interact with fathers and step-fathers, brothers and step-brothers, uncles, teachers, and employers whose seniority they learn to respect and whose authority they have to obey” (Amunga et al. 2009: 121). This implies that socialisation of girls teaches them to be submissive and as a result they do not know how to say “no” and fight for their rights. The effects of violence against girls force them to give up schooling because they can no longer endure being laughing stocks because of the abuse they have been subjected to. As such, De We, Jacobs, and Palm-Forster (2008: 97), citing Winters, Clift, and Maloney (2004), found that, “There is, for example, a positive correlation between experiencing verbal, physical, or sexual assault (including sexual harassment) and suicidal ideation and emotional problems among adolescents”. This implies that the effects of school violence are very serious and can have fatal results.

2.9 Summary

Studies show that school violence is a ubiquitous problem. These types of school violence are not only common in South African schools but the whole African continent, as well as many other countries worldwide. It is important that theories of violence are studied so that the behaviour of learners in school settings is clearly understood.

Theorists of social learning, like Bandura, Akers, and Bronfenbrenner, provided guidance and made a major contribution to this study. Studies have also thrown some light on the causes of school violence, and victims as well as perpetrators have been identified. The study seeks to establish whether the same is true in the Buffalo City high schools that have been sampled.



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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this section is to make the reader aware of how the study was carried out. The methodology chapter covers the research approach; research design; population, sample, and sampling; research instrument/s; validity/reliability, or trustworthiness; data collection and analysis methods; and ethical considerations. The chapter concludes by giving a summary of what has been addressed.

3.2 The paradigm and approach of the study

Although there are various theoretical paradigms explored in literature this study was guided and conducted within the post-positivist paradigm. Researchers (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998) define a paradigm as a cluster of beliefs, ubiquitous entities and dictates, which inquirers or researchers need to make commitment to guiding how the research should be done and how results should be interpreted. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 9), "Post-positivism relies on multiple methods as a way of capturing as much of reality as possible. At the same time, emphasis is placed on the discovery and verification of theories". This implied that the post-positivist paradigm would be appropriate in this study because multiple methods were used to collect as much data as possible. It was also crucial to understand that data collected presented a multiplicity of realities and therefore the

researcher did not rely on one truth. The post-positivist paradigm aligns in one way or another with the constructivist paradigm because the post-positivists see the world as ambiguous, variable and multiple in realities (O'Leary, 2004). The post-positivist paradigm adds more value to this study because it values and encourages different approaches and does not confine itself to absolute truths. Stressing the value of the post-positivist paradigm Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 9) pointed out that this paradigm makes use of:

“Traditional evaluation criteria, such as internal and external validity, are stressed, as is the use of qualitative procedures that lend themselves to structured (sometimes statistical) analysis. Computer-assisted methods of analysis that permit frequency counts, tabulations, and low-level statistical analyses may also be employed” (Denzin & Lincoln 2000: 9).

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The study made use of the mixed method approach. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) stated that the mixed method approach is the collection or analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially. Similarly, De Vos, Strydom, Fouche' and Delport (2005: 360) stated that “Mixed-method studies are those that combine the qualitative and quantitative approaches into the research methodology of a single study or multiphase study”. Other researchers refer to the mixed method research design as the combined methods and the advantages of this strategy are thus spelt out by researchers like Creswell (1994). For example, Creswell (1994: 174) says, “A combined method study is one in which the researcher uses multiple methods of data collection and analysis”. This implies that both

quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to collect and analyse data. The use of a combination of different data collection and analysis strategies, approaches and methods is likely to result in complementary strengths that minimize weaknesses and biases of the qualitative and quantitative methods and result in trustworthy data that brings confidence to the researcher with regard to the findings of the study. Expounding on the differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches Berg (1998: 3) pointed out that,

“Qualitative research thus refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things. In contrast, quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things”.

The above statement implies that it was convenient to use both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection because the focus was not on counting and measurement of things but acknowledgement of multiple realities in the collection of data and interpretation of phenomena.

This study made use of questionnaires and used quantitative data analysis methods. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) defined a questionnaire as a group of written questions used to gather information from respondents, and is regarded as one of the most common tools for gathering data in the social sciences. This implies that use of questionnaires was an important data collection strategy and helped the researcher to collect as much data as possible. The questionnaire also gave the respondents an

opportunity to reflect on their own experiences and thus provided the researcher with primary data on incidents of school violence.

3.3 Research design

Most researchers describe the research design as the plan for how the study will be conducted. It is a matter of thinking about, imagining, and visualizing how the research study will be undertaken (Berg, 1998). The research design provides sign posts on the route to be followed by the researcher when collecting data. Creswell (2003) identified six mixed method designs, namely, sequential exploratory model; sequential exploratory design; sequential transformative design; concurrent triangulation design; concurrent nested design and concurrent transformative design. The design to be used by a researcher to larger extent is determined by the paradigm in which the study is based.



The study used concurrent triangulation design. It is worth noting that in a mixed method approach data collection can either be sequential or concurrent. Concurrent methods of data collection mean that both qualitative and qualitative data are collected at the same time. This design enables the researcher to confirm, cross-validate, or corroborate findings within a single study. Babbie and Mouton (2001: 275) defined triangulation as

“a plan of action that will raise sociologists [and other social science researchers] above the personal biases that stem from single methodologies. By combining methods and investigators in the same study, observers can partially overcome the deficiencies that flow from one investigator or method”.

It is implied in the above quote that the concurrent triangulation design added more value to this study because triangulation is generally considered to be one of the best ways to enhance validity and reliability in qualitative research (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). Thus, it was pointed out that "Recognizing that all methods have limitations, researchers felt that biases inherent in any single method could neutralize or cancel the biases of other methods" (Creswell 2003: 15). The above quotation also emphasised the credibility of the study because bias towards a particular method of data collection and analysis might distort the information received from the participants in order to serve the interests of the researcher. It is worth mentioning that the mixed method approach calls for extensive data collection and it is time consuming in terms of analysing both qualitative and quantitative data. Creswell (2003) emphasises that a researcher who uses the mixed method approach needs to be familiar with both qualitative and quantitative forms of research. However, the use of the mixed method approach helped the researcher to get a deeper understanding of the nature and factors which lead to violence in schools. The concurrent triangulation design was appropriate for this study because it reduced time for data collection and enabled the researcher to complete the study within the stipulated time.

This study used both questionnaires and interviews to collect data. The questionnaires allowed the researcher to analyse data numerically (frequencies) and interviews provided non-numerical data. Themes were used to analyse qualitative data from interviews.

3.4 Population, sample, and sampling

The population studied comprised of educators and high school learners in the Buffalo City Municipal area. Four public high schools (government) were purposively sampled in this study. Expanding on the definition of the term 'population', Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) described the population as the larger pool from which our sampling elements are drawn, and to which we want to generalise our findings. By implication the larger pool in this study would comprise of all Buffalo City high schools. A sample, then, is quite simply those units or elements that are included into a study (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). With regard to this study the sample was the four schools that participated in it. For the purposes of this study, the characteristics of the sample would not be generalised over the population because the sample used was very small. Judd, Smith and Kindler (1991: 129) pointed out that, "In every piece of research a crucial issue is whether the conclusions can be generalized beyond the immediate settings and samples that have been studied".

The researcher made use of purposive sampling because the schools that were targeted were schools that had a history of school violence. According to De Vos et al. (2005: 202), "This type of sample is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher, in that a sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population". The rationale behind this was to give the researcher an opportunity to access the required primary data. The participants gave first hand information based on their experiences. Yin (1994) pointed out that purposive sampling is the process of selecting individuals who can offer an authentic

account of the research topic and who might be considered to share sufficient common experiences with others as to represent a group.

In this study, 5 educators and 20 learners per school were purposively sampled from four high schools. Learners who participated in resolving problems of learners, that is, Representative Council of Learners (RCL) members and those who were directed affected by incidents of violence were included in the sample. This implied that 20 educators and 80 learners comprised the study sample. The principal or the deputy principal and an educator who is a member of the disciplinary committee were included in the sample of 5 educators that was sampled at each school. The rationale to include them was because they were in charge of what went on in the school. Members of the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) were included in the sample of learners that was used in this study because they were supposed to be in charge of the welfare of other learners.

3.5 Instrumentation

The following instruments were used to collect data:

3.5.1 Questionnaires

In this study, questionnaires were used to collect data on educators' and learners' experience of school violence. According to De Vos et al. (2005: 166), "The basic objective of a questionnaire is to obtain facts and opinions about a phenomenon from people who are informed on the particular issue". Questions were based on the research questions in order to get all the relevant information. The questions were short

and clear to make sure that the respondents understood them easily. The questionnaires comprised of both close-ended and open-ended questions. This implied that both qualitative and quantitative data was collected in this study. The advantage of asking open-ended questions was that open-ended questions allowed respondents to communicate their experiences or opinions about a specific issue in their own words, without any restriction (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The researcher had to be careful when formulating the questionnaire because closed questions do not allow respondents to provide answers in their own words, but force respondents to select one or more choices from fixed list of answers provided (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). In the same vein, Creswell (1994: 1) said:

"This study is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting".

The researcher administered the questionnaires personally so as to make sure that the return rate was high. It has to be noted that unclear questions were explained during the pilot study and not during the main study. The questionnaires, therefore, was self-administered. Elaborating on self-administered questionnaire, De Vos et al. (2005: 168) said, "In this case, the questionnaire is handed to the respondent, who completes it on his own, but the researcher is available in case problems are experienced." In this study, the questionnaire was administered to learners and an interview schedule was used with educators.

The sample of comprised of four (4) learners per grade, with two (2) girls and two (2) boys, purposively selected from grade eight to grade twelve, per school. The researcher administered the questionnaire to all twenty (20) learners in one room in each school. Table 1 below illustrates the number of participants to whom the questionnaire was administered.

Table 1 illustrates the number of participants who completed the questionnaire.

SCHOOL	EDUCATORS	LEARNERS
SCHOOL A	5	20
SCHOOL B	5	20
SCHOOL C	5	20
SCHOOL D	5	20
TOTALS	20	80

The questionnaire was pilot studied to an equivalent sample of 20 learners in a school in another district. The rationale behind a pilot study was to check if the language used was clear to all the participants. It is also true that a pilot study is used to save time and money in the main study because it allows space for revision, reworking, complete overhaul or potentially, abandonment of the project (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The implications of the above is that it had to be realised from the beginning that research studies can be very expensive and time consuming and therefore it is of paramount importance that the purpose of a pilot study, and what a pilot is, is known. The

researcher, therefore, made sure that the sampled schools were in close proximity in order to save on transport costs and time.

3.5.2 Interviews

After administering the questionnaire, in-depth follow-up interviews were conducted with learners and educators participating in the study. The study made use of semi-structured interviews as a tool to collect data. This gave the researcher an opportunity to interact with the respondents face-to-face and allowed the researcher to observe all the reactions of the respondents through verbal communication or body language. Cannell and Kahn, cited by Cohen et al. (2000: 269) described the interview as, "... a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information ...". The interview as a data collection tool is also very relevant for this study because "... it allows for greater depth than is the case with other methods of data collection" (Cohen et al., 2000: 269). In a similar vein, Kumar (2005: 123) defined an interview as, "Any person-to-person interaction between two or more individuals with a specific purpose in mind ...". The interview gave the researcher a better chance of getting more data because more probing questions could be asked. In other words, the interview complemented the questionnaire. Elaborating on this view Arksey and Knight (1999: 32) highlighted the contribution of interviews and pointed out that:

"...interviews allow answers to be clarified, which is not the case with self-completion questionnaires. Furthermore, interviews, especially qualitative interviews, allow for understanding and meanings to be explored in depth".

The interview, as a data collection tool, served the above purpose and allowed the researcher to collect in-depth data because the use of open-ended questions did not restrict the participants. In this study, 5 educators (including the principal or deputy principal) and four (4) learners who served in the RCL were interviewed because they knew the problems faced by their school and, in some instances, they were likely to have been involved in the resolution of school violence. The interview questions were based on the forms, nature and factors which lead to violence in schools. There were also questions on the policies and procedures that were followed when incidents of violence are reported or dealt with.



3.6 Validity/reliability or trustworthiness

The researcher constructed a questionnaire based on other studies on school violence. To ensure validity and reliability the questionnaire was given to three experts in educational psychology to check if the language used was clear to the respondents. These experts knew the language used in research and were familiar with research problems. A pilot study was done in a school outside Buffalo City to check the validity and reliability of content of the questionnaire and interview questions. Researchers have to be aware that "Reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated. In other words, if the study were repeated would it yield the same results?" (Merriam et al., 2002: 27). However, researchers must also be aware that replication is not possible in the social sciences, but this doesn't make social science research less credible. "Replication of a qualitative study will not yield the same results, but this does

not discredit the results of any particular study; there can be numerous interpretations of the same data” (Merriam et al., 2002: 27).

Stressing the view of carrying out a pilot study, Smith (1981) stated that it is necessary then to pretest questions adequately in order to see if the researcher’s and respondent’s frames of reference correspond. Similarly, De Vos et al. (2005: 82) described a pilot study as follows: “The pilot study can be viewed as the ‘dress rehearsal’ for the main investigation – a small-scale implementation of the planned investigation in an attempt to bring possible deficiencies to the fore timeously”. Mouton (1996: 103) referred to pilot studies as exploratory studies and stresses that “The aim of such studies, which include pilot studies and other kinds of qualitative research, is to establish the ‘facts’, to gather new data and to determine whether there are interesting patterns in the data”. All the above highlighted the importance of a pilot study before a main study is undertaken in order to ensure that not only time but also money is saved. It has to be pointed out that the participants did not encounter any problems with the questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A dealt with demographic details; Section B dealt with forms of violence experienced at school; Section C dealt with the effects of school violence. The interview schedule was divided into Section A and Section B. Section A dealt with demographic details and Section B dealt with forms and factors which lead to school violence as well as effects of violence.

Validity and reliability add more value to a research study. According to Polit and Beck (2004: 428), “Validity and reliability are the two most important criteria for evaluating

qualitative instruments. High validity and reliability are necessary, although not sufficient condition for good qualitative research". Generally, there are many types of validity, viz, internal validity; external validity; measurement validity; interpretive validity; and statistical validity but "In its broadest sense, validity refers to the degree to which the research conclusions are sound" (Terre Blanche et al., 2006: 90).

There are various procedures which can be followed to ensure credibility of the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to these procedures as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy and member checking. This study employed cross-checking, triangulation and pilot testing procedures to ensure trustworthiness and credibility of the study. Cross-checking means that, once data is collected, it is very important that the researcher goes back to the respondents and make, sure that what they said is not misrepresented. Cross-checking was done before analyzing data in the study. Some researchers refer to cross-checking as member checks. "That is, you take your tentative findings back to some of the participants (from whom you derived the raw data through interviews or observations) and ask whether your interpretation 'rings true' " (Merriam et al., 2002: 26). Ensuring that all these requirements were taken care of would reduce biases and make the study more reliable and ensure its internal validity. Thus, "Reliability refers to the dependability of a measurement instrument, that is, the extent to which the instrument yields the same results on repeated trials" (Terre Blanche et al., 2006: 152). For the purposes of this research study the focus was not on measurement or consistency thereof, but credibility and ensuring sound findings of the study. "Just as

a quantitative study cannot be considered valid unless it is reliable, a qualitative study cannot be transferable unless it is credible, and it cannot be deemed credible unless it is dependable” (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:277)

3.7 Data analysis

The research questions were taken into consideration when data analysis was done. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods were used because the study had adopted a mixed method design in order to validate and cross-check the findings. Data were analysed according to the way participants interpreted and gave meaning to their experiences. The qualitative data were coded to develop units, themes, sub-themes and categories while the quantitative data were analysed using frequency distribution. The analysis adopted the univariate analysis form using frequency counts and percentages.



3.8 Ethical considerations

The researcher was bound by the research code of ethics as spelt out in the University of Fort Hare Faculty of Education’s *Handbook on Postgraduate Qualifications Policies and Procedures 2008*. In addition to these guides, it was ensured that the participants were treated with respect and their dignity was not compromised. It was ascertained that the participants were not coerced to take part in the study but would do so freely. Stressing this issue, Smith (1981: 16) said, “Practically speaking, the researcher is obligated to ensure that any participant understands what participation in the study will involve and that consent to participate is obtained without coercion”. The participants

were guaranteed of anonymity and that the information gathered from them would be kept confidential; thus enhancing a positive relationship between them and the researcher.

Since learners and educators were used in the study, permission was sought from the Department of Education, through the District Director (see Appendix 5). Similarly, permission was sought from the principals of the schools involved in the study to administer the questionnaire and to interview both learners and educators. Since learners are minors, informed consent was sought from parents or guardians before involving any learner in the study. The learners also signed consent forms after written consent for them to participate in the study was granted by their parents or guardians. When conducting interviews, the interviewer first explained the purpose of the study and what help it was going to be for the interviewee, and therefore it is crucial that promises be kept so that the element of trust is strengthened between the two partners. Tape recorders were used and consent for this was sought from the respondents. It is also very important that information is verified with the interviewee so that misrepresentation is kept to a minimum. De Vos (1998: 33) said, "Making the research report available in simpler language is another way in which the project can be rounded off ethically, so that subjects can know exactly what has happened to the information". Again it is also of paramount importance that the feedback on the findings is given to the interviewees and, if problems were identified, some corrective measures are taken in order to improve the situation at the institution. The researcher adhered to all issues related to

research ethics, not only to protect the participants, but also to ensure that the study was not questionable at a later stage.

3.9 Summary

The research design that had been selected is the mixed-method approach. Use of positivist and interpretive paradigms seemed most appropriate in this research study and these have been discussed in detail. The population, sample, as well as sampling methods have also been discussed in detail. Questionnaires and interviews have been elaborated on and were used as instruments to collect data. Both of these instruments were piloted to ensure reliability and validity, and to a greater extent, trustworthiness of the study. Triangulation is mentioned and discussed as a means of enhancing the credibility of the study. Discussion of the data and analysis methods are mentioned and elaborated on. The chapter which follows seeks to present the results of analysis of data from the two research tools.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The main objective of this chapter is to present the data collected from the learners and educators regarding how they view school violence. As stated in the methodology chapter, 80 learners and 20 educators participated in this study. These educators were from the same schools used to collect data for learners. Five educators were selected from each school. The questionnaire was filled by the learners themselves but the researcher was present when the learners filled it. All the eighty learners (100%) returned the questionnaires because the researcher self-administered the questionnaire, that is, he was on hand to assist and clarify some of the questions for the respondents. The questionnaire is attached as Appendix 1 in this study. All educators were interviewed in order to get in-depth information on the nature, extent and effects of violence in Buffalo City high schools.

4.2 Geographic location of purposive sample

The study was conducted in the Eastern Cape Province in the Republic of South Africa. Four high schools with a history of school violence were targeted in the East London District in Buffalo City, in the Mdantsane Township. These four high schools will be referred to as, School A, School B, School C, and School D throughout this study because anonymity and confidentiality has been guaranteed to all the participants. Twenty learners per school were conveniently sampled and those who served in the

RCL were targeted and included in the sample. Purposive sampling was used to select the sample in this study. As such, four learners per grade from grade 8 to grade 12 were used. The researcher also made sure that both sexes are equally represented: two girls and two boys per grade.

Five educators per school, including the principal or deputy principal or heads of department, were targeted. The researcher struggled to get equal representation of both sexes. The chance of sitting down and interviewing the educators was more challenging and the interviewer had to set many appointment dates to interview a single educator but in the end all 20 educators were interviewed. It was even more of a challenge to interview school principals and in some schools this role was delegated to either the deputy principals or heads of department. The data gathered from learners and educators is presented and analysed in the ensuing sections. It is critical to get first hand accounts of the meaning that participants ascribe to school violence and factors which lead to it.

4.3 Respondents' understanding of school violence

The learners gave various accounts of school violence but it can be deduced that they had a clear understanding of what school violence is. They gave convincing accounts of their understating of school violence. For example, a learner from School A described school violence in this manner: *"Ndicingela ukuba zizinto ezenzekayo esikolweni 'like' ukubethana, ukuhlabana kunye nokudubulana nokubethwa kootishala ngabafundi"* (I think that school violence refers to things that happen at school, like students assaulting

each other, stabbing and shooting each other and also educators being assaulted by learners). In a similar vein, an educator from school D described school violence as, *“School violence means lawlessness, disorder and any unethical behaviour that instills fear, uneasiness and intimidation on both learners and educators – the element of fear is so disruptive that it negatively impacts on learning and teaching”*. Both of these definitions of school violence reveal the seriousness of the problem at our schools and how it impacts teaching and learning.

Another learner from School B said, *“School violence it’s whereby learners are bullying, and teachers are doing corporal punishment to the learners. Also when learners are smoking or braking school rules”*. There may be some grammatical and spelling errors but this is the learner’s account of his/her understanding of school violence. On the other hand an educator from school A saw violence as a *“Physical attack or harm on people at school, that is, learners, educators and non-teaching staff”*. Both of these versions refer to the infliction of pain and this can be physical or emotional.

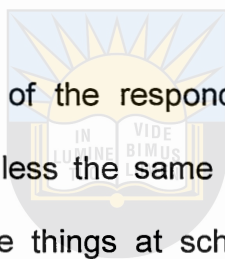
School C learner: *“My understanding of school violence is whereby students fight with each other or maybe they fight with teachers. I believe it’s whereby students carry weapons at school to fight with them or maybe to bully others using them”*.

School D learner: *“School violence is when other learners punish others by hitting them and smoking drugs”*.

Another learner from School A said, *“School violence refers to the nullifying of human rights whereby bullying, vandalism, fighting, and much more. This is usually done by a teacher, a learner to each other, and by community members in the school premises”*.

Similarly, an educator from School A indicated that vandalism is a major problem in his school. The educator said, *“There is a lot of physical violence. I mean learner on learner violence. There is a lot of fighting among learners. The major problem in my school is vandalism. Learners destroy everything, toilets, doors, and many other things are damaged intentionally by the learners”*.

It appears from the above accounts of the respondents' understanding of school violence that their views are more or less the same because they all point out that learners or educators do unacceptable things at school and that these affect both learners and educators.



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4.4 The nature of violence experienced or witnessed by learners and educators in schools

Data collected on the forms of violence experienced in high schools highlight the prevalent forms of school violence reported by learners. For example, all the learners in School A identified bullying as a major cause of violence in their school. This seemed to be common in all the four schools with 15 out of 20 learners in School B, 16 out of 20 in School C, and 16 out of 20 learners in School D identifying bullying as the most common form of violence. This translates to over 66 (83 %) of the participants reporting that bullying is prevalent in their schools. An educator from School C corroborated the above

assertion and said, *“Bullying is most common in our school. The bullies take money from other kids, eat their lunch and when the learners don’t have money or lunch they are beaten and harassed”*. The above statements confirm that bullying is prevalent in many Buffalo City high schools. The following table shows the frequency of the different forms of violence prevalent in schools as perceived by learners:

Table 2 Frequency of the different forms of school violence and % as perceived by the learners (N = 80)

Forms of violence	School A	School B	School C	School D	Total	%
Bullying	20	15	16	16	67	83.75
Corporal punishment	15	13	10	10	48	60
Sexual harassment	8	1	2	6	17	21.25
Gangsterism	13	3	7	7	30	37.5
Vandalism	4	7	16	15	42	52.5
Discrimination	1	—	—	—	1	1.25
Drug dealing and smoking	2	—	—	1	3	3.75
Gossiping	—	1	—	—	1	1.25
Swearing or vulgar language	—	—	1	—	1	1.25

Corporal punishment was reported as the second most prevalent form of violence in the four schools as shown in Table 2, with 48 (60 %) of the participants pointing out that corporal punishment is still practised in their schools. It is interesting to note that corporal punishment is still taking place even though the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) has banned it in all public schools. The educators who participated in this study seemed to be aware that the use of corporal punishment is illegal but some of them pointed out that they had no alternative but to resort to corporal punishment when they had to restore order and discipline in the schools. An educator from School B said, *"According to the Constitution corporal punishment by educators is not allowed. As professionals educators are supposed to know the rules and regulations because they are enshrined in the Constitution of the country"*. Some of the reasons coming forth were that when parents were called to report to school to resolve learner's behavioural problems they did not come. However, learners seemed to be unhappy about the use of corporal punishment and some of them were aware that its use is illegal. An educator from School A acknowledged that "corporal punishment is used by educators in exceptional cases but I have done my best to stop it because it is unlawful".

From the data collected from learners it appears that educators are the perpetrators with regard to the administration of corporal punishment. For example a learner from School B said, "The teachers are the most perpetrators at school by punishing learners in a bad way". The researcher found that corporal punishment is still used in schools although it has been abolished under the provisions of the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996). Learners from School C made reference to "Discrimination and

criticism by teachers to learners that are not having good academic performance, or not coming to school regularly". Learners may defy the educators because they are emotionally abused and subjected to ridicule on a daily basis.

According to the data collected from learners, vandalism (breaking and damaging school property) is also a major problem in the schools; this was confirmed by more than 42 (52 %) of the learners who participated in this study. The same trend prevails in all four of the schools sampled in Buffalo City with participants reporting that they constantly lose their textbooks and calculators due to theft by their peers. The situation is aggravated by the fact that those who lost their text books have to pay for them irrespective of what has happened. It is implied here that the learners are both perpetrators and victims. On the other hand, the school is also a victim because school property is either stolen or vandalized and as a result unnecessary expenditure is incurred. *"Vandalism is very rife in our school. In the past two six year olds entered our school, painted everything black and green, even books were painted. It was such a mess that you won't believe that it was done by people of that age"*, an educator from School D said.

In School C, 16 (80 %) of the learners reported that vandalism is a major problem in their school. *"Our calculators and text books get stolen and sometimes our books are torn up. Learners break doors and steal door locks. As a result it is difficult to close doors and when it is cold we are exposed to a lot of cold"*, one of the learners claimed. Through the researcher's observations it was evident that what they reported is true

because some classes had broken windows and most doors could hardly be locked as the door locks were vandalized. The same observation was true for School D where learners also reported that vandalism is a problem; 15 (75 %) of the learners reported that vandalism is high in their school. One of them also reported that there is drug abuse in the school. As shown in Table 2 below, drug abuse or drug dealing is a problem in the four schools, and with more than 2 (3 %) of the participants reporting that drug abuse or dealing is taking place in the schools there is cause for concern. An educator stated that, *“Possession or using alcohol or being drunk at school, disrupting the whole school; being drunk at school functions or on school tours by pupils is very common”*.



The study has also revealed that gangsterism is still rife in the schools; with more than 29 (37 %) of the participants confirming that gangs still operate in their schools. The learners reported that this was even more serious when their schools were not fenced but almost all the schools that participated in this study are now fenced and as a result there is an improvement on the prevalence of gangsterism. *“When our school was not fenced people just came from outside and threatened us. I have seen some of them selling drugs and cigarettes behind the toilets. I got scared and didn’t go out during break time”*, one of the learners reported. However, the crime rate is still high in our communities and as a result violence easily spills into our schools. With three of the four schools having no security personnel to man the gates, access to schools is still very easy and people from outside enter the school premises and cause trouble in the school or conduct their business, e. g. selling of drugs. An educator from one of the schools

summarised the whole scenario by saying, *“Abuse of learners by other learners, fighting, beating (especially of female learners by male learners), stabbing of learners by others and sometimes by hooligans who enter the school premises without permission or unnoticed”*.

The perpetrators of school violence in most cases are boys, but the learners reported that there are also girls who smoke and engage in drug use. The learners also reported that gangs operating in the community work hand in hand with troublesome boys in the school. *“Some gangster members visited their friends at school during break time. I have seen some of them giving their friends drugs to sell at our school. These learners would harass us at school but we would not retaliate because we are scared of what their gangster friends would do to us after school”* a learner from School D said. This implies that learners are exposed to a lot of violence during school hours but they feel powerless to do anything. An educator from School A went on to mention that the perpetrators are, *“Unruly learners (especially boys) and thugs who come uninvited”*.

Learners from School A also reported that sexual harassment takes place in their schools. *“There is a lot of sexual harassment taking place at our school. It is the old boys and boys coming from the bush (new initiates) who demand sexual relations with girls. Girls in Grade 9 are normally targeted. We have two girls in our class who became pregnant”*, a learner from School A reported. Just above 16 (21 %) of the participants reported that they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment at their schools. In most cases they alleged that it was the older boys who harassed them and that new

initiates or circumcised boys were the major culprits. For example, in School A 8 (40 %) of the participants reported that sexual harassment is rife in their school. Similarly, 6 (30 %) of the participants in School D also reported that there are cases of sexual harassment in their school. This seems to be in agreement with many studies (such as Matsoga, 2003) that have portrayed the girl child as the major victim of sexual harassment which leads to dropping out of school.

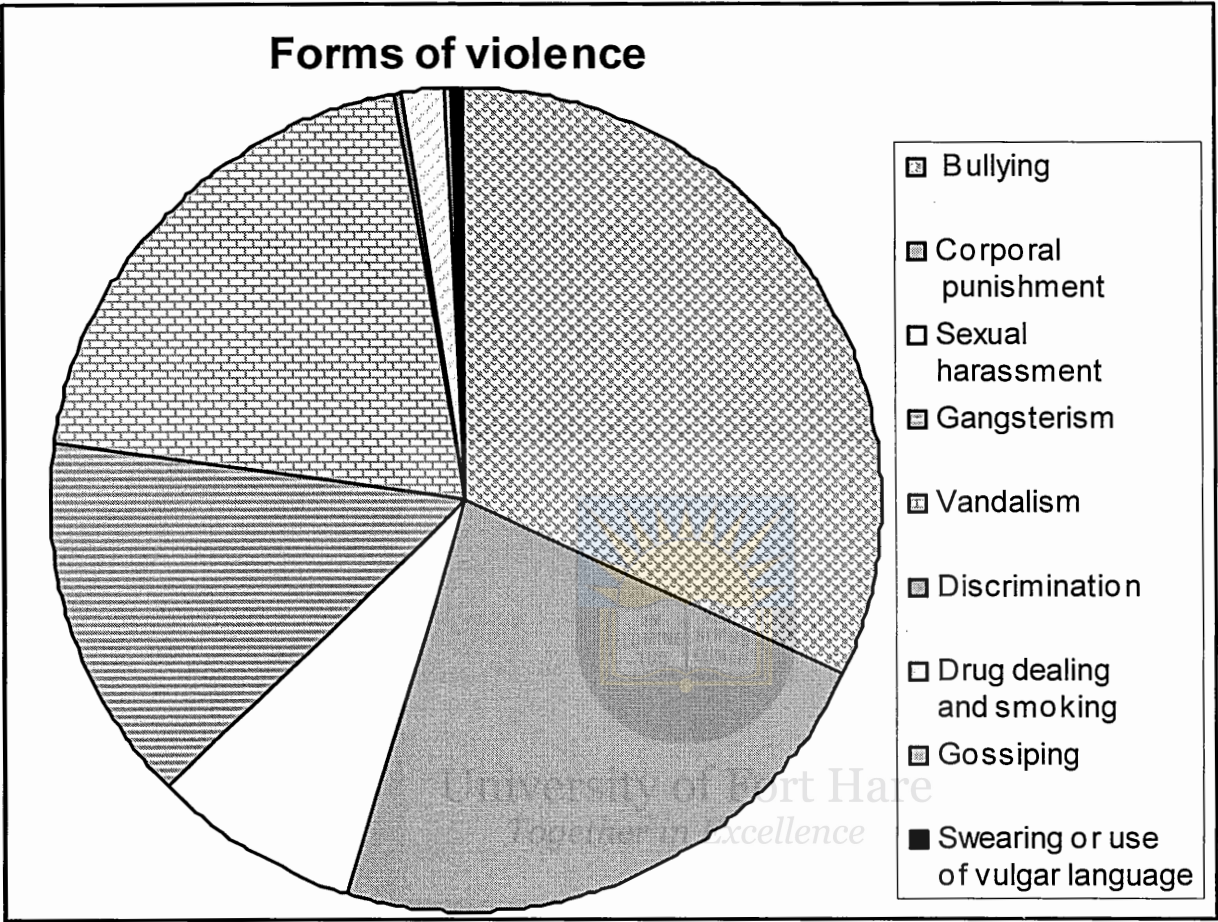
Other forms of violence reported by the learners from School D are: discrimination, drug dealing and smoking, gossiping, and swearing or use of vulgar language by other learners. A learner from School D said, *"Using drugs at school leads to violence. And when other learners talk about you (gossip) it leads to violence"*. Another learner from School A said, *"Alcohol in school can cause violence. Students who are smoking at school can cause violence"*. According to the learners, these forms of violence lead to fighting and loss of time because they have to go to the office and report so that their problems are sorted out. An educator from School C said, *"It is also because learners don't value their school properties. Learners lack self-control so they don't know how to behave"*.

It appears from the data collected from learners that girls are victims of sexual harassment whilst both girls and younger boys are the victims of bullying. The perpetrators of school violence are usually older boys. It appears that these older boys take advantage of the younger boys and girls because they are physically weaker. This suggests that grades 8 and 9 learners are more likely to be victims of violence at

school. The age of learners in these grades ranges between 13 and 15 years and they comprised 16 (20 %) of the learners who participated in this study. Of the total number of learners who participated in this study 36 (45 %) of them complained that they are victimised and abused by older boys and new initiates. *“Violent acts by boys on girls, like taking their lunch or money by force, boys on boys, e.g. demanding money to buy drugs and cigarettes, boys forcing themselves on girls are very common”*, said an educator from School B.

The frequencies of the forms of school violence presented in Table 2 are also shown in Figure 1 below in the form of a pie chart. It can be seen from the pie chart that bullying is the most prevalent form of violence reported by the learners. All the other forms of violence are also shown and by looking at Figure 1 it can be seen which form of violence is more prevalent.

Figure 1: Forms of school violence prevalent in schools



The following forms of violence have also been identified by the respondents:

- Fighting, hitting others, teasing others, and stealing others' belongings/property.
- Physical violence: learners fighting with each other, vandalism – learners destroying everything e. g. class doors and door locks, window panes, toilets, and many other things intentionally.
- Fighting in classrooms or on the school premises. Vandalising school bags and books.

- One of the educators said the most common form of school violence is fighting amongst learners.
- Learners stabbing each other with pens or knives. Learner hitting another learner with fists several times.
- Fights within the school premises where knives and guns are used. Learners using vulgar language and swearing at each other. *“The most common form is fighting amongst the learners”*, one of the educators alleged.
- Learners arguing and pointing a gun at a teacher and stabbing another learner. An educator from School D said, *“Guns and weapons are used – whereby a teacher will be killed or injured in the school premises, and a learner from another school come and stab another learner in front of the educators and other learners”*.
- Teenage girls fighting and using foul language and these are problems the class representatives are faced with almost daily.

It appears from the above forms of school violence that the respondents deal with various forms of school violence. This implies that the respondents have to contend with and deal with problems like these on a daily basis and this affects teaching and learning because a lot of time is lost whilst trying to resolve these problems. School violence is prevalent in our schools and educators and learners need skills to deal with it more effectively. Sometimes educators are not clear about the procedures they have to follow when dealing with incidents of violence.

Serious problems, like stabbings, shootings, etc, are referred to the police immediately.

For example, an educator from School B reported that:

“A learner from my school once stabbed an educator and this was reported to the police and SGB. The learner was arrested and eventually dismissed. The District Office, in collaboration with the police and SGB took the decision to dismiss the learner. This was done after recommendations were made to the Superintendent General of the Provincial Education Department”.

The educators from School A reported that they are not always satisfied with the actions taken against the perpetrators. One of the educators said:

“Educators are powerless. They cannot even punish the learners and have to be careful of what they say to the learners. It seems that learners are more protected by the laws and regulations of this country. They can do what ever they want to do. That is why their academic performance is poor”.

There is too much leniency and it seems that the perpetrators are more protected than the victims. Educators feel threatened and unsafe at school and the school environment is not conducive to teaching and learning.

The extent of violence at the schools that were investigated is alarming and it has been reported that learners bring dangerous weapons to school. There have been incidents of stabbing but none resulted in a fatality. In one stabbing incident, where a learner stabbed his classmate, both learners and educators were not satisfied with the sanction against the perpetrator although the case was referred to the police. *“How can a learner who has nearly killed his classmate be allowed to come back to school without being*

charged and continue to intimidate other learners”, one educator expressed his discontent.

4.5 Factors which lead to school violence as reported by respondents

Both learners and educators reported the existence of the following causes of violence as experienced or witnessed in their schools. Learners and educators reported that poverty; overcrowding; lack of recreational facilities; easy access to school premises; intolerance or discrimination; indiscipline or disobedience; unemployment; and the , among others.



4.5.1 High crime rate and violence in our communities

It can be seen from Table 2 that violence in our communities is taking place at an alarming rate. Over 72 (91 %) of the respondents reported that violence taking place in their communities has a major contribution on school violence. For example, a learner from School B reported that:

“Ubundlobongela yenye yezinto ezixhaphakileyo kwiindawo esihlala kuzo nezisingqongileyo. Lonto iye yenze umonakalo ezikolweni zethu ngokuthi abafundi baphathe izikhali basebenzise neziyobisi ezikolweni” (Violence is very common in our communities and surroundings. This leads to a lot of damage to our schools in that learners come to school carrying weapons and they also indulge in drug abuse).

On the other hand a respondent from School A alleged that, *“Using drugs to school lead to violence. And when other learners talk about you (gossip), it leads to violence”.* This

implies that learners use drugs at school and as a result they become violent and violate other learners' rights. It is also true that unnecessary fights between learners, especially girls, are caused by gossip. These are some of the causes of school violence reported by learners. Similarly, an educator from School C stated that, *"One of the contributing factors is the inability of our learners to solve conflict and the other factor is the social background of our learners as they are exposed to violence in their community"*.

4.5.2 Indiscipline and intolerance

The learners reported that indiscipline is one of the major problems affecting our schools negatively. As such, 72 (90 %) of the respondents reported that school violence is caused by indiscipline because learners become uncontrollable and do as they wish. According to the learners, indiscipline causes the school environment to be more chaotic and as a result fighting and ill-behaviour becomes the order of the day. One of the learners from School D said violence is caused by learners and stated that, *"When a teacher shouts at him, maybe one of the learners talks back and 'says you talk rubbish', it is the violence"*. This language is not acceptable on school premises. According to one of the educators ill-discipline is caused by, *"Disrupted homes and lack of recreational facilities at our schools. As a result of this learners are not engaged all the time. In some instances there is shortage of educators where educators who are on leave are not substituted"*.

4.5.3 Safety and protection of victims of violence on school premises

Accessibility of the school to outsiders is very easy and this also contributes to the escalation of school violence in schools. For example, 58 (72.5 %) of the learner participants blamed easy access to school as a contributing factor in school violence. People from outside easily enter the school premises to conduct business or to commit crime. A learner from School D reported that, *"People from outside give learners weapons and bring them to school to make other children afraid"*. This may start as a game to scare other learners but in the end these pranks may lead to fatal accidents. Another learner, from School B, claimed to have witnessed *"The learner selling drugs in school. And people from outside come and bit learners in schools"*. These are incidents of school violence that disturb learners during school hours and as a result some of the learners find it difficult to concentrate on their studies.



Schools are no longer safe and enjoyable because of *"Teachers discriminating children; usage of drugs at school; carrying weapons at school; and as a result, you feel uncomfortable and not wanting to be with other learners because you feel embarrassed"*, a learner from School D reported. The learners claimed that there are many other forms of violence they are exposed to at school. For example, a learner from School D said, *"Being teased just because I like to read and focus on my books, they call me names that I don't like being called by. These are the other learners who do this"*. This implies that learners are not only exposed to physical abuse but they are also exposed to emotional abuse. School violence is frustrating the learners because some of them would be much happier and perform better in a harmonious environment. For

example, a learner from School A said, *"I feel like I can take part in stopping school violence. I feel like my community could participate in stopping violence"*.

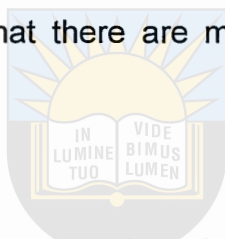
Below are some of the causes of violence that have been identified by the respondents (educators):

- (a) *"Arrogance on the part of educators and use of traditional approach when resolving problems. Educators don't accept and implement the change and transformation of education. Educators don't want to observe and accept the democratic principles enshrined in the Bill of Rights"*, a School B educator said.
- (b) Lack of information and understanding of the basic principles of democracy by the learners.
- (c) General lack of discipline by learners, e. g. abusive language, gender inequalities of the past, etc.
- (d) Girls are sexually abused by learners and in some cases by educators.
- (e) Infiltration of schools by gangsters in the community.
- (f) In some cases politics have an influence on school violence. For example, there were many incidents of school violence in School B and this was instigated by clashes between the ANC and PAC. Both learners and educators belonged to these political movements and their clashes in the community spilled to the school premises affecting teaching and learning.

- (g) Too much violence on TV. One educator pointed out that *“There is too much violence on television and therefore learners copy what they see on television and do it on other learners”*.
- (h) Lack of parental guidance. “Parents do not play their role and give their children the support and encouragement they need”, stated one of the educators.
- (i) Laxity by School Management Teams (SMTs) with regards to departmental policies. *“Policies are not adhered to. We only use the policy once an incident has happened. So there is no continuous interaction with the information so that each and every stakeholder knows what is expected of it”*, an educator from School C stated.
- (j) Doing away with corporal punishment has resulted in laxity as far as discipline is concerned.
- (k) Unemployment and poverty lead to uncontrollable anger which results in domestic violence, and learners who grow up exposed to this type of behaviour end up being violent at school.
- (l) Peer pressure contributes to school violence because some learners do things they never intended to do because of peer pressure.
- (m) Indiscipline at schools is rife and this negatively affects teaching and learning.

- (n) School violence is caused by grudges that emanate from the communities where the learners stay. Drug abuse also plays its part.
- (o) Disrupted homes: parents not acting as good role models to their children; alcohol abuse by parents; domestic violence which leads to divorce in some instances; etc.
- (p) Shortage of educators leading to a disproportionate concentration on grade 12 classes.

It is clear from the above concerns that there are many causes of school violence reported by the respondents.



4.5.4 Perceived effects of school violence on learning and teaching

All the causes of violence identified by the learners range above 50 % and this suggest that there is a lot to be done if school violence is to be eradicated. In this study, 46 (57.5 %) of the learner participants reported that poverty contributes to the escalation of violence in schools. For example, a respondent from School A gave testimony with regards to witnessing a fellow learner taking out a knife and robbing another learner within the school premises (*"Ndabona omnye umfundi ekhuphela omnye imela emgrogrisa efuna imali"* "I saw one of the learners taking out a knife and threatening him, demanding money"). This is blamed on the learners who come to school with dangerous weapons and who also indulge in drug abuse. Poverty contributes to school violence because learners who come from poverty stricken homes end up robbing and

stealing other learners' lunch boxes and money because they are hungry and they also have to satisfy their needs.

Unemployment is linked to poverty and 55 (68.8 %) of the learners who participated in this study asserted that unemployment causes school violence. A learner from School A said, *"I believe that students involve themselves in violence because of poverty, stress, and depression"*. Learners from poverty stricken homes come to school with all their problems and vent their anger on others. A learner from School B reported that, *"Poverty can cause violence because if a learner is hungry the learner can steal other's lunch; when you find out who took your lunch you will be beaten by him/her and it could lead to violence"*. This implies that unemployment contributes to school violence.

3 learners also ascribed school violence to overcrowding or big classes. For example, 46 (57.5 %) of the participants reported that big classes have a contribution to school violence. This has also been confirmed by the educators. Educators from School A said big classes are difficult to control and learners tend to misbehave without being detected and this affects teaching and learning.

The lack of recreation facilities has also been identified as one of the major causes of school violence with 65 (65 %) of the respondents (learners and educators) confirming this assertion. If there were adequate facilities learners who do not excel in class would be given an opportunity to excel on the sports field and earn respect from their classmates. This may change their mindset and perception of schooling as well as their

attitude to their studies. The following table tabulates some of the causes of violence in our schools.

Table 3 Perceived factors which lead to violence as reported by learners (N = 80)

Causes of school violence	School A	School B	School C	School D	Total	%
Poverty	15	14	13	12	54	67.5
Overcrowding	13	15	11	7	46	57.5
Lack of recreation facilities	15	10	13	14	52	65
Easy access to school premises	15	14	13	16	58	72.5
Intolerance	18	16	17	16	67	83.8
Indiscipline	19	18	18	17	72	90
Unemployment	16	15	9	15	55	68.8
Violence/crime in community	18	17	20	18	73	91.3

Table 3 shows the number of respondents who pointed out the causes of school violence in their schools. The four schools were sampled for this investigation and the same 80 learners (20 learners per school) were asked the same questions.

4.6 Perceived effects of school violence on learners

Learners reported that school violence affects them in many ways. The learners reported that school violence makes them loose concentration in class during tuition

time; their academic performance is affected negatively and they end up failing their grades; some of them reported that they sometimes get scared of the perpetrators and as a result they bunk classes; school violence leads to chaos in classes and school and as a result a lot of time is lost trying to resolve problems; the participants also reported that school violence leads to depression and this affects the learners' academic performance. Their responses are summarised in Table 4 below:

Table 4: The number and % of learners who agreed that school violence affects them negatively (N = 79)

Effect of violence	School A	School B	School C	School D	Total	%
Loss of concentration	12	11	10	17	50	63.3
Poor academic performance	12	5	5	14	36	45.6
Get scared and bunk classes	4	2	2	7	15	19
Chaos and lost time	18	16	11	18	63	79.7
Depression	15	14	13	15	57	72.2

It is clear from Table 4 that the majority of the respondents believe that school violence causes chaos and leads to a loss of time because the disruptions demand that the problems should be attended to. In this study, 64 (79.7 %) of respondents reported that when there is a fight in one class almost all learners get out and go to witness what is going on. In most cases the intention is not to go and stop the fight, rather the onlookers would cheer the fighters on. The situation at school becomes very chaotic and

educators have to go and stop the fighting leading to unnecessary loss of learning and tuition time.

Learners who experience or witness incidents of violence may be depressed and this depression may affect their learning in a negative way. The learners, 58 (72.2), reported that they loose concentration because they have to worry about what the perpetrators of school violence are going to do to them during break time or after school. *"I get worried all the time and I cannot concentrate to my studies. This affects my performance in class and sometimes I feel like not coming to school. I am scared of the bullies"*, a learner said.



A substantial number of the learner participants, 51 (63.3 %), reported that they lose concentration on their studies because of school violence. Learners get scared and feel threatened by their peers and sometimes they do things they never intended to do. For example, one of the participants in this study reported that he was once forced to steal by a gang of fellow learners. Fifteen (19 %) of the participants ended up bunking classes, and in some cases learners even drop out of school, because of peer victimisation. For example, 45.6 % (36) of the learner respondents reported that their grades have fallen and that they perform badly because of school violence.

4.7 Effects of school violence as perceived by educators

4.7.1 Effects on learning

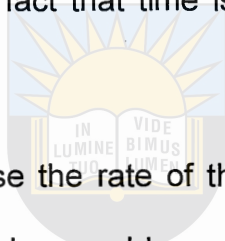
The following are some of the effects of school violence as viewed by educators:

- The environment becomes not conducive to learning.
- There is a lack of effective learning and teaching which leads to poor school attendance and, eventually leads to a high failure rate.
- Learners become uncontrollable and difficult to manage.
- Time is wasted on conflict resolution meetings instead of learning and teaching.
- High absenteeism and dropout rate.
- General lack of discipline at school.
- Disobedience which leads to non-submission to school tasks or not doing homework.
- School violence leads to academic performance which is not on par with the goals and aspirations of the school.
- Learners who are victims of bullying become scared and bunk classes and end up dropping out of school.
- Lack of concentration on the part of the learners because they are scared of the perpetrators.
- Poor results and an unpleasant atmosphere in the classroom.

It appears from the above responses that most of these effects of school violence are common in all of the schools that were investigated in this study.

4.7.2 Effects on teaching

- No effective teaching takes place when learners are uncontrollable, ill-disciplined, and unmanageable.
- The morale of the educators becomes very low and educators are completely demotivated. Sometimes, when they go to class, they find the class empty because learners leave school during tuition time.
- The educators find it difficult to complete the syllabus because of poor attendance by learners and the fact that time is wasted on resolving problems emanating from school violence.
- There are no text books because the rate of theft is very high and books and school property are deliberately damaged by unruly learners and this negatively affects teaching.
- The effect of school violence is reflected by the dilapidated buildings which have been vandalized; the environment is not conducive to teaching.
- Lack of respect of learners by each other results in infighting which affects teaching. Learners are always at loggerheads and the atmosphere in the classroom is unbearable.
- Poor classroom attendance by educators who are not only demotivated but also scared of being attacked by learners.



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- Educators go to class unprepared because they never know what is going to happen the next day.
- Educators cannot take any decisive action against troublesome learners because they fear for their own safety.
- School violence hampers teaching in a negative way.
- Teaching is affected because educators feel helpless, demoralized, and disillusioned.
- School violence disturbs school programmes and the goals and aspirations of the school end up not being achieved.
- School violence also leads to a lack of respect for the elderly and education officials due to the unruly behaviour of the learners. Rules and directives from the department are not implemented and time frames for submission of documents are missed.

As can be seen from the above findings, school violence has various effects on learning and teaching in our schools.

The educators didn't give any clear guidelines or policies that were in place in order to curb school violence and as a result they could not pronounce on the effectiveness of the policies. The departmental policy guidelines categorically point out that no dangerous weapons should be brought to school, but it is clear that learners bring dangerous weapons to school and attack each other using these weapons.

In School B school violence seems to have subsided and the school has become normal in many respects. This is due to political stability in the school's immediate environment, and educators, learners, as well as some community members have attended workshops on how to combat crime in the schools and communities. *"Violence at our school has dropped tremendously and this may be due to the fact that there is political stability in the community in which our school operates"*, an educator from School B expressed his excitement about the progress at his school. The school also reported that the NGO involved in a project known as '*Building Safer Schools*', has made a tremendous contribution to fighting school violence. The project also involves members of the police force and SMT members and as a result there is more police visibility in the area. The school reported that all these efforts have made a major contribution to the academic performance of the school because for the first time in five years the school's pass rate in grade 12 was above 60 %. *"Our school is beginning to reap the benefits of this stability in academic terms"*, the educator said.

4.8 Suggestions by educators on how to eradicate school violence

Educators who participated in this study made the following suggestions on how to eradicate school violence:

- (a) There should be more police visibility and police visits and patrols should be done during break times and after school.
- (b) Schools should have more personnel to man the gates and search learners for dangerous weapons – a permanent person should control the entrance and exit to the

school. Buildings should be clearly marked so that visitors know exactly where to go when they enter the school premises.

(c) Learners should be taught moral values and what their rights are as well as how to respect other people's rights.

(d) Parents should teach their children good values and not use violence to solve their problems because that is how learners copy violence.

(e) Parents should be aware that domestic violence exposes children to violence and learners can exhibit the type of behaviour they are exposed to at school. They can vent their anger on other learners at school drawing from their experiences at home.

(f) Needy children and learners should be catered for in our education system so that they can be assisted with food and finances. More social workers should be employed to assist educators in identifying learners with problems.

(g) The DoE should come with clear proactive plans on how school violence can be eradicated.

(h) Parents must fully participate in their children's school activities and support them at all costs.

(i) Learners should be conscientised regarding the effects school violence and how to cope with it.

(j) Awareness campaigns on how to fight crime and school violence should be conducted by police, community members, and educators, as well as other stakeholders and this should be made a joint effort of all of these stakeholders.

(k) Some educators reported that schools need armed security and visible policing around schools.

- (l) The policies which are used to fight violence and promote safety at schools should be made part of the life orientation learning area which is compulsory at all schools. Parents should be given copies of the school safety rules as well as those pertaining to the fight against school violence so that they can participate in fighting school violence.
- (m) The community and a strong SGB can play a big role in fighting school violence.
- (n) Some educators were so disillusioned by school violence that they suggested that corporal punishment should be brought back.
- (o) Schools should organise regular sessions with psychologists where both learners and educators are taught about the effects of school violence on teaching and learning, as well as personality development.
- (p) Schools should be encouraged to utilise a register where they record all cases of violence and theft so that they can have a track record of all incidents of school violence. This will help in devising new plans regarding how to combat violence at schools.
- (q) Programmes promoting a peaceful society should be included in the life orientation curriculum.
- (r) Peer education programmes should be extended to include causes and effects of school violence on learning and teaching.
- (s) Schools should be encouraged to organise talks by prisoners where they share their experiences about prison life and how it has impacted their lives.
- (t) Laws on selling intoxicating liquor to children should be strengthened and there should be high penalties on those who violate these laws.

- (u) Mechanisms on alternative methods of disciplining learners should be formulated and all stakeholders should be clearly guided on how to implement them.
- (v) Strict and serious approach on dealing with drug and alcohol abuse and drug dealing should be devised and implemented.
- (x) There should be direct and active participation of parents in disciplining their children.

It is clear from the above suggestions and recommendations from educators that school violence is a serious problem which needs to be tackled in partnership with all stakeholders.



4.9 Summary

This chapter dealt with the presentation of data from both learners and educators. The chapter also dealt with the analysis of the data as reported by the learners and thereafter as reported by the educators.

The chapter started with the introduction and thereafter it dealt with the geographic location of the purposive sample. The chapter also dealt with the respondents' understanding of school violence, and forms of school violence prevalent in schools as reported by both learners and educators. The chapter further presented the causes of school violence as reported by the respondents; it made reference to the high crime rate and violence in our communities; as well as discussing indiscipline and intolerance and access to the school premises. The chapter further elaborated on serious interventions

for curbing school violence which have become a priority due to the extent of violence at schools. The chapter proceeded to report on the effects of school violence on learners. The chapter then presented the educators' perception of school violence; forms of violence identified by educators; and effects of school violence as perceived by educators. Finally, the chapter dealt with educators' recommendations regarding how to eradicate school violence. In the next chapter the discussion of the findings will be dealt with.



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CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to discuss the data presented and analysed in the previous chapter. The discussion will be guided by the main research question, namely:

What is the nature and causes of violence in Buffalo City high schools?

The chapter discusses the responses of the participants to the sub-questions regarding the forms of violence prevalent in schools and the perpetrators of these forms of violence. The study seeks to respond to the following sub-questions:

- i. What are the prevailing forms of school violence?
- ii. Who are the perpetrators of school violence?
- iii. What are the causes of school violence?
- iv. What are the effects of school violence on learning and teaching?

Information on the victims of school violence and the gender and age-groups most affected by incidents of school violence have been presented and identified in chapter four. The causes and effects of school violence are the main focus of this chapter. The chapter also discusses the effects of school violence on learning and teaching.

5.2 Discussion of findings

(a) Forms of violence prevalent in schools

Most learners had a clear understanding of school violence and they were able to express themselves in English. Those who had problems were allowed to give their responses in their own language if they so wished; the responses were subsequently translated into English for presentation purposes. Their description of school violence is consistent with the description of school violence given by Crawage (2005) and it confirms that school violence can take many forms, that is, it can both be physical and emotional and involves the exercise of power over others by a single person or group of people. Similarly, Prinsloo (2008: 27) found that "School violence is a broad concept which includes diverse actions and behaviours". This implies that school violence can be committed in many ways; hence it is difficult to have a clear-cut definition of it. However, Prinsloo (2008: 27) concludes by saying that "... school violence comprises a spectrum of actions, and includes verbal (cruel teasing, name-calling, threatening), physical (hitting, kicking, pushing), and relational (social exclusion) aggression". Hence, Furlong and Morrison (2000: 71) reported that, "... school violence is a multifaceted construct that involves both criminal acts and aggression in schools, which inhibits development and learning, as well as harming the school's climate". This implies that the situation at school may become very tense at times and those in administrative positions may be reluctant to act decisively. Similarly, Smit (2007: 53) reported that "The changing climate in schools has led to the need for broader understanding of culture, as well as a need for new skills required to cope with learners who come to school with a host of special needs". The problems faced by the learners can only be

understood and dealt with more effectively if the cultural issues and underlying causes of the violent behaviour are investigated thoroughly. This finding seems to agree with the findings by Moore et al (2003) where they made reference to societal cultures as having an effect on violence, in that "they encourage, tolerate and demand violence".

The study revealed that the most common form of violence in our schools is bullying. This finding is consistent with many studies, for example, Olweus (2000: 10) described bullying in the following way, "... a student is being bullied or victimised when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative action on the part of one or more students". In this study 67 (83.75 %) of the learner respondents reported bullying as a major form of violence in their schools. Older learners, especially boys, are allegedly the perpetrators of this form of school violence.



The study also revealed that corporal punishment is still practised in schools. For example, 48 (60 %) of the learners reported that corporal punishment is used by educators at their schools although its use has been banished in all public schools in South Africa. One of the respondents in this study, an educator from School C, made a recommendation that corporal punishment should be brought back because its banishment has led to ill-discipline at schools and learners feel free to do as they like. However, the researcher suggests that other alternatives to corporal punishment should be devised and implemented because the continued use of corporal punishment is a breach of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) and those educators who continue to use corporal punishment are liable to prosecution and if

found guilty they may be sentenced to a jail term. It is observed that, "Although teachers knew that corporal punishment was not the cure for student problems, many still embraced it" (Matsoga, 2003: 12). Corporal punishment has an effect on the psychological development of learners and one of the respondents in Matsoga's study expressed his/her feelings in this manner: "They forget that like their sons and daughters, we feel pain when they beat us. We get bruised; we bleed just like other human beings. They seem to mistake us for donkeys or some pain resistant monster" (Matsoga, 2003: 122).

Sexual harassment and victimisation of girls and younger boys still takes place in schools. According to Oosthuizen (2005: 75), "The sexual harassment of learners is also in breach of the common law practice known as the *in loco parentis* position of the educator". This implies that educators are expected to take the position of parents and act on their behalf with regard to the safety and protection of children whilst they are in the school premises. A study conducted by the Human Rights Commission (2006: 7) reported that young women are victims of sexual harassment and found that,

"Unfortunately, too many young men use unwelcome conduct and violence in their relationships with young women. These young women become victims of young men calling them names, fondling their breasts, touching their buttocks, physically assaulting them and even raping them".

Girl respondents in this study hinted at being subjected to sexual abuse from male learners in the school and they expressed their discontent with being subjected to this type of behaviour. This agrees with the findings of *Human Rights Watch* (2001) study

that found that “girls of every race and economic class encounter sexual violence and harassment at school that impedes their realization of the right to education”.

Researchers (De Wet, Jacobs and Palm-Forster, 2008; Gwirayi and Shumba, 2008; Amunga, Maiyoo, Achokaa and Ashioya, 2009) report that there are many incidents of sexual harassment, but many of them are not reported by victims fearing further victimisation by the perpetrators. De Wet et al, (2008: 98) reported that, “Despite the serious legal, emotional, health and educational consequences of sexual harassment for perpetrators, victims and educational authorities alike, it seems as if a culture of silence and acceptance surrounds sexual harassment”. Girl-children and younger boys are victims of harassment from older boys and sometimes they are forced to give up their right to education. Consistent with the above notion, Gwirayi and Shumba (2008: 285) also reported that:

“Most respondents did not report their Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) experiences. This is consistent with both local and western studies which have reported that fewer than half of the victims told anyone at the time of sexual abuse, and that, many never revealed their sexual victimisation until asked for research”.

The studies that have addressed secrecy on the part of sexual abuse victims do not elaborate on the reasons for not revealing sexual abuse incidents, thus the researcher feels that this area needs further investigation. However, the findings of a study by Amunga, Maiyoo, Achokaa and Ashioya (2009: 121) found that:

“For most of the female adolescents who had suffered defilement, there is the question of stigma which means they might have been afraid to go back to

school after defilement for fear of becoming laughing stock of a few of their school mates, some are likely to have been hospitalized in the event of injuries or were pursuing court cases against the culprits”.

From this finding it can be deduced that victims of sexual harassment and rape do not get the necessary support from their school mates and educators, as well as from the schooling and justice system. This seems to agree with the data collected because in many instances learners felt that it was not necessary to report incidents of violence because those in authority do not take any action against the perpetrators. For example, learners who reported learners who brought weapons to school ended up being victims because they were attacked in the community. Young girls would rather give up their school career than expose themselves to more torture and ridicule. The above quotation also reveals that girls and young boys are victims of violence. Learners have no refuge because in some cases they are sexually abused by their school mates. For example, Hans (2010: 4) reported that, “Non-governmental organisations say teachers’ sexual relationships with school children, drugs, rape, and poverty are some of the factors to blame”. This implies that these forms of violence have a direct bearing on the learners’ academic performance at school.

Vandalism is one of the major problems in all the schools that were investigated. This seems to be in agreement with the findings of a study conducted by Matsoga (2003: 116) in Botswana where he found that,

“There was a definite lack of concern on the part of students over property vandalized by their peers. Some students suffered extreme emotional distress

over the loss of irreplaceable property such as lecture notes, student files, as well as personal belongings”.

The principal of School A reported that they are faced with this problem at his school, and that learners break doors and door locks as well as window panes. Vandalism is costing the school a lot because time and again they have to use their meager financial resources to replace property that has been deliberately damaged. Consistent with this report,

“In Botswana, many school reports indicate that annually, the government loses thousands of dollars due to vandalizing, property that has been vandalized. Many principal reports point to repeated losses or damaging of books and calculators by students. Schools also lose money in replacing and repairing vandalized furniture” (Matsoga: 2003: 55).

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(b) Perpetrators of violence in schools

The majority of the learners blamed older learners, especially boys, as the alleged perpetrators of violence in schools. The study also revealed that new initiates (amakrwala) are a problem in many schools because they force themselves on girls. The initiates also bully young boys and do not want to be called by their names. The problem is so serious that police have been called to intervene. “Perpetrators are always boys, older boys are the culprits; sometimes violence is committed by boys against girls”, one of the educators noted. Learners are robbed and their possessions are stolen by other learners during school hours. Some learners said they are scared of going out during break time and after school because the perpetrators and their friends

from the community would wait for them outside the school gate. For many learners going to school is no longer enjoyable because they are exposed to many forms of school violence.

It is also clear that educators are the major perpetrators with regards to the use of corporal punishment at schools. This finding is consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Human Rights Watch (2001), "Although corporal punishment is illegal in South Africa, teachers continue to inflict physical violence on learners as they see it as an appropriate tool for discipline" (Sathiparsad: 2003: 101). Many educators do not realise that corporal punishment has some disastrous effects on the development of learner's personality and that learners are not only exposed to physical abuse but also to emotional abuse.



It has also been established that in some instances people from outside of the school are the perpetrators of school violence. This is due to easy accessibility of the school premises because there were no security controls at the main gate in three the schools that participated in the study. This lack of control makes the learners vulnerable to gangsterism and drug dealing within the school premises and causes school violence.

The study has also revealed that young learners, especially those in grade 8 and 9 are most commonly the victims of school violence. The age of the learners who are vulnerable is below 15 years and because of this; they cannot defend themselves from

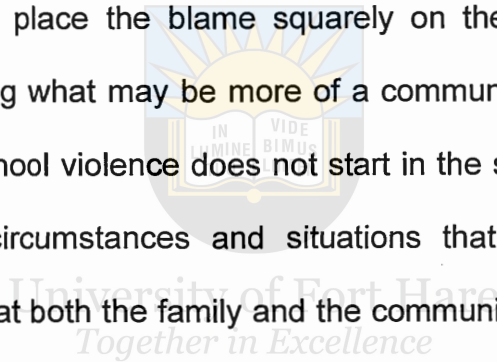
bullies. Girls are also targeted by the perpetrators because they are more vulnerable due to being physically weaker.

(c) Factors which lead to violence in schools

In their study, Zulu et al. (2004: 173) found that “Unfair treatment by teachers, verbal abuse among learners, incidences of racism and discrimination can erupt into school violence”. This implies that there are multiple factors which contribute to school violence and thus school violence cannot be successfully fought at school only, but other stakeholders have to play their part. This seems to agree with Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems theory which points out that an individual develops within a context of nested ecological structures. What this implies is that if there is violence in the community in which the majority of learners reside that violence can easily be copied and played out on the school premises. It is also clear that being strict and sticking to stringent rules and regulations can lead to defiance and disobedience which may eventually lead to a full-blown rebellion by learners and educators. This was also revealed in Matsoga’s study of school violence in Botswana (Matsoga 2003).

Consistent with many other studies on school violence, this study also revealed that learners are exposed to a lot of violence and crime in the community. This seems to agree with literature by some researchers on school violence. For example, Harber (2001) reported that many children in South Africa were born and bred in violent situations and are so used to violence that they think it is a correct way of solving their problems. Chabedi (2003) also reported that violent behavior has become a norm for

many South African young people because during the apartheid era it was used to defy and destroy apartheid. The above report also corroborates what was found by Morrel (2002: 39) when he pointed out that what is observed in schools is only a fraction of what takes place in communities and thus, "violence in schools is only part of the broader social patterns and need to be considered in conjunction with literatures that attempt to make sense of this reality ...". Schools cannot be blamed for the evils of our communities. Hence, a multiplicity of strategies has to be employed if school violence is to be completely eradicated. According to Thomerson (2000: 4), "To view school crime as an internal problem is to place the blame squarely on the schools and to hold schools responsible for solving what may be more of a community problem". Similarly, Last (2001: 1) found that "School violence does not start in the school. Most behaviors are learned responses to circumstances and situations that are exhibited in our everyday life". This implies that both the family and the community have a major role to play if school violence is to be completely eradicated. These findings are in line with a study done by Smit (2007).



Violence and crime in the immediate community in which the school operates has a bearing on school violence. For example, 91 (91 %) of the respondents reported that school violence is linked to violence and crime taking place in the community. This is also consistent with the views expressed by Sathiparsad (1997) and again Sathiparsad (2003: 99) reported that "Where as schools are meant to be safe havens where education and learning can flourish, South African schools have increasingly become sites of violence". The situation seems to be the same even today because violence is

still very rife in South African schools. Van Jaarsveld (2008: 179) also claimed that, "South African schools are rapidly and increasingly becoming arenas for violence not only between pupils but also between teachers and pupils, interschool rivalries and gang conflict as well". This implies that schools are no longer safe and secure and the climate in the school environment has become not conducive to learning and teaching.

The above findings are also consistent with Mutume's report on a school in Gauteng where an educator was viciously attacked, pupils have been found with guns, and young boys and girls were sexually molested (Sathiparsad, 2003). The same scenario has been reported by learners and educators who participated in this study, who claimed that learners bring dangerous weapons to school and attack each other and educators using these weapons. Stabbing incidents have been reported in three of the schools that were investigated. As such, Brener et al (1999: 440) found in their study that "Aggressive behaviors such as fighting and weapon carrying are extremely common in the daily lives of many adolescents". The young adolescents get used to violence and end up believing that it is the right way to resolve problems. Similarly, Lockhat and Van Niekerk (2000: 299) reported that, "While 'politically inspired' violence may be in decline, it would appear that criminal and domestic violence continues to prevail in local communities". What the learners experience and witness in their communities may easily be played out in schools. These are problems the learners are faced with in public schools. Hence Prinsloo (2008: 27) found that "School violence in the form of peer victimisation in public schools is a universal problem and a source of social concern because it is counterproductive and a violation not only of basic

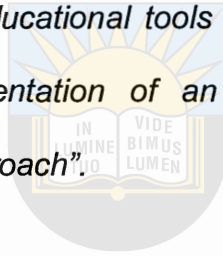
individual rights, but also of scholastic institution's educational and social goals". The main goal of every educational institution is to make sure that learners not only succeed, but excel academically. This goal cannot be attained if school violence is not contained.

The learners' and educators' personal safety can no longer be guaranteed in our schools. Bucher and Manning (2003: 162) found that, "In recent years, issues relating to personal safety have emerged as a primary concern among South African learners, parents, educators, and others". This implies that our schools are no longer safe. School violence presents educators with many challenges and, as a result, teaching is no longer a pleasing profession. This was identified by Smit (2007: 53) and he indicated that "Securing the school premises and being strict about who is admitted to the school grounds is a practical problem that demands practical solutions ...". The researcher observed that the schools visited have no security checks and that this puts valuable teaching aids like computers at risk. E-learning programs are encouraged by the Department of Education as means of ensuring that all learners and educators are computer literate; however, investing in expensive equipments like computers without upgrading the security of the schools is a futile exercise.

The study revealed that learners continue to bring dangerous weapons to school and use them to attack other learners. A learner was stabbed by another learner in the classroom during tuition time. This implies that learners are vulnerable to attacks from their fellow learners who continue to terrorise them on the school premises. The

guidelines and rules on the safety of learners and educators at school clearly stipulate that schools are gun free zones and dangerous weapons are not permissible on the school premises. These rules seem not to be effective because learners and educators continue to be attacked within the school premises. According to De Wet (2006: 24) the fight against the use of and bringing dangerous weapons to school is getting more complicated because:

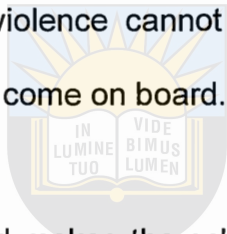
"It seems ...that learners used, among other objects, compasses, stones, pens, sticks and knives to cause bodily harm to their opponents. The use of environmental objects and/or educational tools as weapons of aggression may hinder the successful implementation of an anti-violence programme that emphasises a technological approach".



The perpetrators of school violence are getting more advanced and therefore new strategies have to be devised to successfully fight violence at our schools and crime in our communities.

Easy access to schools by outsiders makes learners and educators easy victims of people who enter the school premises unnoticed and leave after they have done their business, whether it is an assault on learners or educators or illicit business, such as selling drugs. As such, 58 (72.5 %) of the learner respondents who participated in this study voiced their concerns about this problem. Although all of the schools that were visited are fenced they all voiced concern regarding a shortage of personnel to control access and exit from the school. According to Van Jaarsveld (2008: 175), "Schools are

no longer known or seen as safe and secure environments where children can go to learn, enjoy themselves and feel protected. Rather they are being defined as 'dangerous places', 'war zone' and unsafe institutions". Similarly Garegae (2008: 53) reported on what educators say about ill-discipline at schools, "They claim that schools are no longer places of safety and order. They say unless 'we go back to the roots of child socialization, teaching would become a dangerous vocation' because 'when it is time to go to class, you are thinking of your safety". The way children are brought up at home has a direct bearing on the personality development of the children. This also implies that the fight against school violence cannot be won by schools alone, but parents and other stakeholders have to come on board.



Indiscipline causes school violence and makes the school environment non-conducive to learning and teaching. Indiscipline can actually be linked to chaos and loss of time, hence no effective teaching and learning can take place. For example, 64 (79.7 %) of the learner respondents in this study reported that a lot of time is lost whilst trying to resolve school violence related problems. An educator from School C reported that educators sometimes go to class and find the class empty because learners are uncontrollable and they come and go as they wish. This scenario incidentally leads to dysfunctional schools. A clear picture of student indiscipline was drawn by Garegae (2008: 51) when he quoted one of his participants in a study conducted in Botswana:

"Student indiscipline is ubiquitous. It is everywhere and it stinks. Forms of crime that we used to see in movies are acted out in our schools. Perhaps it is through the influence of media, especially TV. We are no longer fighting against laziness

of not finishing homework, but we are dealing with more serious things – Drug abuse; use of knives; alcohol, you name them. They all form school culture. When it is time to go to class, you are thinking of your own safety”.

The above quote summarises the situation at some of our schools, where effective learning and teaching can hardly take place. Van Jaarsveld (2008: 184) found that “The problem does not lie with the objects or weapons, but rather with lack of discipline that the students have who enter the school premises, community factors and lack of security measures in schools”. This implies that, if one is disciplined, one would not harm or attack anyone even if one has a weapon. In this regard, Burnett (1998: 793) recommended, “The identification, implementation, monitoring, and assessment of educational policies, social structures, strategies and disciplinary measures to successfully address the manifestations of poverty-related violence in the school and domestic environment at the macro- and micro-level”. This implies that schools can only be successful in the fight against school violence if they know what they are fighting against and what strategies they can use to eradicate school violence. The above quote also agrees with Bandura’s social learning theory where he asserts that behaviour is learned and therefore in some instances learners can act out what they see on television and harm others in the process.

In some cases educators and administrators feel powerless because according to the regulations and guidelines of the Department of Education they cannot take any decisions without first making recommendations to the Superintendent General (S.G.).

Sometimes as a result of this, the decision of the School Governing Body (SGB) is overturned. Garegae (2008: 52) reported on a similar situation in Botswana where he pointed out that:

“The expulsion regulations sometimes violate the school head’s rights because s/he does not have any say on the final decision for expulsion of the student. But the person who faces the problem is the school head. Expulsion procedures make students believe that the school has no authority over them and so they can mess up in front of her/him because they know s/he will keep on talking without taking any action. If the Permanent Secretary decides that the child should not be expelled, it creates problems for the school as now students will think the school head has no power and can do as they please”.

Educators in South Africa have been exposed to situations like the one expressed above. It is inconceivable that a learner could stab or shoot a classmate and still come back and sit in the same classroom with him. Educators who participated in this study expressed their discontentment with the rules and regulations as imposed by the Department of Education. Vally (2002: 85) found that “The rampant violence against students and school staff has been pervasive, disruptive and has severely impeded South Africa’s schools in their efforts to improve education and address issues of equity in communities where it is most needed”. This implies that the effects of school violence on learning and teaching are devastating and, as a result, the goals of schools cannot be attained. Harber (2001: 262) made reference to harrowing experiences quoted in an

article in *The Teacher* (March 1998), a monthly newspaper for teachers, reporting on the extent of school violence in schools and commented that:

“... schools stand empty while gangs slug it out across playing fields, where youths model themselves on ganglords and where teachers and students learn as they have their eyes warily on the door, half-expecting to be held up by a bunch of gun-wielding thugs”.

This implies that school violence impacts negatively on learning and teaching, and there is no way that this cannot affect the academic performance of learners. If a learner can stroll into a classroom and stab an educator 14 times and kill her while she is writing on the board then the extent of violence in South Africa has reached very high proportions (Smit 2007).



Unemployment and poverty are also linked to school violence. A study by Akiba, LeTendre, Baker and Goesling (2002: 833) stated that “We would expect that in cross-national analyses of school violence GDP would be correlated with overall high rates of school violence. Low GDP or GNP should be associated with higher rates of school violence in nations”. This is consistent with a study conducted by De Wet (2007: 63). This study links high levels of school violence to “poverty, unemployment, overcrowding, a high population turnover, and racial and ethnic heterogeneity”. We live in a very materialistic society in which alcohol and drug abuse by the general populace is prevalent and this in turn, results to lack of parental control on children. Children from these broken homes also want to look fashionable but are unable to fulfill these wishes

because of their financial status and are therefore tempted to steal and rob other people. For, example 54 (67.5 %) of the learner respondents in this study reported that poverty causes school violence. Similarly, 55 (68.8 %) of the respondents reported that unemployment is linked to a high level of school violence. Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe and Van der Walt (2004: 173) stated that "In conditions of poverty, the interest and attention of both parents and children can be drawn away from school; the whole existence of the family can become dedicated to survival". Under these circumstances children are forced to fend for themselves and in some homes children rob people and then go and share their spoils with the members of their family. Harber (2001: 262) found that "Other factors contributing to the prevalence of violence in South Africa are high levels of unemployment, extremes in wealth and poverty, continuing racism, the easy availability of guns and patriarchal values and behaviours". It can be concluded that unemployment and poverty contribute in a major way to school violence.

The South African Human Rights Commission (2006: 18) reported that "Poverty has a disempowering effect on children and plays a significant role in the cultivation of violent means to gain power". This implies that learners from poverty stricken homes are likely to do anything to get what they want or for gain recognition. A learner from School A said, "When you have no friends or you are being bullied at home so you bully other children at school". By implication a learner may easily vent his/her anger on another learner without being provoked. Children like to have what their peers have in terms of fashion and will do anything to obtain the items they want. This is in agreement with the *Human Rights Commission's* (2006) and Harber's (2001) findings on factors that cause

school violence. It is also worth noting that Zulu et al. (2004: 173) found in their study that:

“The high level of unemployment unavoidably leads to a scarcity of money and resources. In conditions of poverty, the interest and attention of both parents and children can be drawn away from school; the whole existence of the family can become dedicated to survival”.

Children who engage in illicit behaviour may get support from their parents and peers because they are also going to benefit from the loot. This also implies that children from poverty stricken homes do not prioritise their education but instead focus on their survival, even if it means infringing other people's rights.

Educators are compelled to deal with large classes (in some instances there are more than 60 learners in one class). Both learners and educators reported that big classes are a problem because a lot of mischief goes unnoticed and the rate of theft is very high. Furthermore, the educators reported that big classes are very difficult to control and this impacts negatively on the academic performance of learners. As such, about 58 (57.5 %) of the participants in this study reported that overcrowding contributes to school violence. Matsoga (2003: 44-45) found that:

“School factors that may be advanced to explain why students become violent are poor performance, existing violent incidents and aggressive behaviour models in schools, aggressive and destructive peer relations, unmanageable class sizes, and predetermined and inflexible curricula irrelevant to the interests and needs of pupils”.

From the above findings, it can be deduced that there is a myriad of factors which cause of school violence, hence it is imperative that joint efforts be engaged if school violence is to be completely eradicated. De Wet et al. (2008: 97) reported that, "It was found, for example, that school size has a statistically significant influence on learners' exposure to different forms of sexual harassment than those attending smaller schools". It is likely that the same thing would happen where classes are very large and difficult to control and manage. Matsoga's study also found that school size and unmanageable classes can lead to school violence and the study found that the larger the school, the higher its per-capita violence rate is likely to be (Matsoga 2003). Although overcrowding is not a major problem it is a contributing factor to school violence. The Department of Education's teacher-pupil ratio in secondary schools is 1:40 at present but some educators have to contend with more than 60 learners in one class and this affects learning and teaching. In the Eastern Cape Province the Department of Education doesn't consider the curriculum followed at each school when school staff establishments are declared and this puts schools under tremendous pressure because a few educators have to deal with large class sizes. Research has proved that overcrowded classes are difficult to control and indiscipline becomes the order of the day. This causes school violence to escalate and negatively affects the school climate.

Literature has also revealed that learners who have physical defects or handicaps are discriminated against, teased, and emotionally tormented (Oluyinka, 2005; De Wet, Jacobs and Palm-Forster, 2008; Garegae, 2008). Over 66 (83 %) of the learner respondents reported that intolerance contributes to the escalation of school violence in

our schools. This implies that people have become more individualistic and materialistic and are only concerned with what is of benefit to them even at the expense of other people's feelings and aspirations. Moral values have declined to such an extent that people no longer care for each other; the spirit of *ubuntu* is waning.

The former Minister of Education, Angie Motshekga (2008) 2008 acknowledged the high rate of crime and violence in South Africa as well as the lack of recreational facilities at schools as major challenges. The lack of facilities is not confined to recreational facilities only but also includes facilities that assist the tuition process, e. g. science laboratories, computer laboratories, etc. Schools are supposed to engage in the holistic development of the learners, but often the lack of recreational facilities means that this goal cannot be achieved. The researcher observed that all the schools that participated in this study have no recreational facilities, e. g. netball courts, soccer and rugby fields, etc. With the high rate of unemployment in our country, sports facilities should be developed in all schools as a matter of priority. It can be assumed that sport can make a major contribution to the alleviation of the high unemployment and poverty rates in South Africa and thus reduce violence in our communities. Clearly a lot still needs to be done in order to convince the Department of Education to provide all schools with proper recreational facilities.

This study also revealed that politics contribute to the escalation of school violence. An educator from School B blamed the violence that has been going on in their school on political intolerance between the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist

Congress. For many years there was instability at the school until conflict between these two political parties was resolved. In a similar vein, Vally, Dolombisa, and Porteus (2002: 81) found that:

“The apartheid education system engineered race, class, gender and ethnic categories to serve and reinforce the political economy of the racial capitalist system. Present-day racism and violence in education in South Africa must be understood with reference to this history and to contemporary political and economic disadvantage and patterns of inequality in society”.

The above finding suggests that in some instances school violence may be sponsored by the political system prevailing at a particular time to serve a particular purpose. Similarly, Lockhat and Van Niekerk (2000: 292) reported that “Clearly, black children during the apartheid era were not afforded any of the protections defined above. Instead it could be argued that the state waged a carefully planned social, economic and political war on its own (black) children in the interest of maintaining white privilege”. This is not politics, but the researcher observes that there are vast differences in terms of material resources in the township and rural schools compared to the ex-model C schools. Hence, in most instances, it is difficult to revive the culture of quality teaching and learning in these disadvantaged areas. In this respect, the government has to play an active role in the eradication of school violence.

(d) Perceived effects of school violence on learning and teaching

The learners, interviewed in this study, reported that bullying affects them in a very negative way and as a result they become scared and lose concentration in class. Consistent with this view, De Wet (2005: 708) reported that "Within the school environment, the victim may thus have impaired concentration, decreased academic performance, truancy from school (to prevent bullying from occurring), or absence from special school activities or certain classes". This finding is consistent with the findings of this study because 51 (63.3 %) of the learners reported that they lose concentration in class because they are scared and worried about what is going to happen during break time and after school.



Similarly, De Wet (2005: 709) highlighted the devastating effects of school violence, particularly bullying, on learners, and further reported that "Bullying thus not only infringes on the child's right to receive education in a safe and secure school environment, but may also have dire consequences for a child's academic, relational, emotional and behavioural development". This is consistent with the findings of this study because learners linked school violence to poor academic performance and depression with 36 (45.6 %) and 58 (72.2 %) reporting that school violence leads to poor academic performance and depression respectively.

The study also revealed that school violence affects the academic performance of learners and the morale of educators. The effect of this is reflected in the poor academic performance of learners and de-motivation and low morale on the part of educators.

Schools with a history of school violence are consistently performing poorly in academic terms and in some instances interventions from the Department of Education do not seem to work (Nzapheza 2008). As such, 36 (45.6 %) of the learners who participated in this study reported that school violence leads to poor academic performance on their part. These findings are also consistent with Mutume's report on a school in Gauteng where an educator was viciously attacked, pupils have been found with guns, and young boys and girls were sexually molested (cited in Sathiparsad, 2003). The same scenario has been reported by learners and educators who participated in this study; learners bring dangerous weapons to school and attack each other and educators using these weapons. Stabbing incidents have been reported in three of the schools that were investigated. Brener et al. (1999: 440) also found that "Aggressive behaviors such as fighting and weapon carrying are extremely common in the daily lives of many adolescents". The young adolescents get used to violence and end up seeing it as the only way of settling their differences. The researcher concludes that these findings are consistent with Bandura's theory of social learning and that violence cannot be eradicated if the school is treated as an island. The problems experienced at school are the manifestation of the problems in the broader community. Accordingly, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System's theory also guides this study.

5.3 Summary

This chapter gave an overview of the findings of the study as reported by both learners and educators. Comments were made on the understanding of school violence by both learners and educators. It was further discussed that bullying and sexual harassment,

as well as corporal punishment, are some of the most common forms of violence experienced and witnessed in schools. An exposition of the link between school violence and the high rate of violence and crime in our communities was given and it was suggested that schools cannot be isolated and dealt with as if they are islands if school violence is to be completely eradicated. Joint efforts by all stakeholders (for example, community members, parents, educators, learners, police, and other interested organisations (NGO and business people) have to be entered into in order to deal with the scourge of school violence successfully.

This chapter also exposed the weaknesses of the schools' security policies and the lack of personnel to strengthen security at schools. It was further highlighted that dealing with ill-disciplined learners is a problem and that there can be no effective learning and teaching if the school environment is chaotic. Ill-discipline is not a problem peculiar to South Africa and other African countries and developed countries are facing the same problem.

The chapter reported on learners' continued breach of rules and regulations by bringing dangerous weapons to school and using them to attack each other or educators. Educators are concerned about their safety because schools have become 'war zones'. It was further highlighted that unemployment and poverty are problems that impact negatively on schooling, but these are societal and state challenges that cannot be solved by the school alone. The chapter further reported on vandalism which is a problem faced by most schools. According to Prinsloo's study (2008: 30), "The research

confirmed the harmful psychological consequences of school violence perpetrated by fellow pupils”. This confirms that school violence has detrimental effects on the learners.

Vandalism is a global problem. Most schools use a lot of money to repair and buy school property, e. g. furniture that has been vandalised by learners who do not value school property. South African schools, especially township and rural schools are faced with the problem of large classes – sometimes due to a shortage of educators. The chapter which follows will present summary, conclusions, and recommendations.



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CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

This study set out to investigate and understand the nature and perceived factors which lead to school violence. Even though the Department of Education has put some measures to curb school violence in place, violence is still a major problem in South African schools. Most high schools in Buffalo City Municipality are faced with the huge problem of combating school violence. In order to understand the causes of school violence and deal with all of its associated problems and challenges it becomes important to identify the forms of violence prevalent in schools. It is also important that the extent and nature of violence in schools be known so that proper strategies of dealing with them can be devised. The researcher set out to gather and study literature dealing with school violence so that a clear understanding of what school violence is and what it entails could be known. Studies on school violence gave many descriptions of school violence with Crawage (2005: 12) describing school violence as “the exercise of power over others in school related settings by some individual, agency, or social process”. Questionnaires and interview schedules, self-administered on learners and educators respectively, were used as tools to collect data. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods were used to analyse data. The responses of all the participants in this study seemed to be consistent with literature as reviewed in chapter two with only a few other forms of school violence reported. Bandura’s social learning

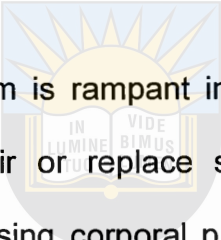
theory, as well as Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory guided this study and the findings of this study are consistent with these theories in many respects. The study ends with a conclusion and recommendations.

6.2 Conclusion

This study has contributed to highlighting the nature and factors which lead to violence in schools. The study has also helped to identify prevalent forms of school violence and thus hope to assist in the fight against school violence in Buffalo City schools. Research on school violence has revealed that school violence is a global problem that cannot be defeated by schools and educators alone; an integrated approach is, therefore, necessary if the scourge of violence and crime is to be completely eradicated. It is also worth noting that this study has contributed in identifying the devastating effects of school violence on learners and educators. The core business of every education institution is to educate learners and make sure that educators are able to teach in an environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning.

Many of the findings of this study support what has been found in previous research, especially with regards to the forms of school violence experienced in schools. The causes of school violence are also common but their nature and extent differ according to the administrative approach of each institution. The most common forms of violence identified by the participants are: bullying, sexual harassment, corporal punishment, vandalism, etc. This is consistent with research studies conducted by De Wet (2005); De Wet et al. (2008); Burnett (1998); Amunga et al. (2009), and many other

researchers. Some of these research studies labelled South Africa “as the most violent country in the world because of the high incidence of violent crime is imputable to the policy and regime of Apartheid (from 1948 to 1994) which contributed to the inducement of structural violence” Burnett (1998: 789). This is also consistent with the reports of educators of School B who alleged that violence in their school was due to political clashes between the members of the Pan African Congress (PAC) and the African National Congress (ANC), not only in the community, but between members of the staff and learners.



The study also revealed that vandalism is rampant in schools, and that schools are using a lot of money to either repair or replace school property that has been vandalised. Many educators are still using corporal punishment more than a decade after its abolition in all schools. Because of all these problems, the effectiveness of the guidelines from the Department of Education has been put under scrutiny.

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The study has also managed to identify the causes of school violence. The participants revealed that overcrowding or large class size, unemployment and poverty, lack of recreational facilities, security of the schools, indiscipline, and violence and crime in the communities all have an effect on the escalation of school violence. All these causes of school violence have a negative impact on learning and teaching. The learners and educators are affected in many ways by incidents of school violence.

The study also revealed that grade 8 and 9 learners are the most common victims of violence in our schools. Learners between 13 and 15 years of age, irrespective of gender are more vulnerable to incidents of school violence. Girls are also victims because they are abused sexually by older boys or initiates, and sometimes even by educators.

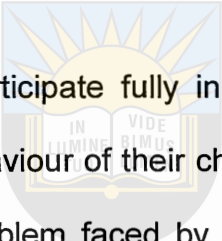
6.3 Recommendations

Projects, like 'Building Safer Schools Project' School B is involved in, should be encouraged so that there are joint efforts by all stakeholders (including community members and the police) to work together and share information regarding the best strategies for fighting school violence in our schools. The project saw the school as a vehicle for reaching youth crime, violence and HIV/AIDS prevention, and to encourage a culture of human rights, gender equity, cultural diversity and tolerance (Sathiparsad 2003). Similarly the NGO involved in 'Building Safer Schools Project' should be expanded to other schools in the East London District and nationally so that learners can be taught ways of coping with and fighting school violence. In some areas the 'Adopt-a-Cop' programme has been effective because the units "visit schools that are part of the programme on a regular basis to speak to the students on topics such as drugs, illegal weapons, or child abuse" (Van Jaarsveld, 2008: 184). This will ensure that police visibility in and around schools is strengthened and thus trouble makers would be scared away.

Consistent with the above findings, Bronfenbrenner (1977: 514) argued that

“...the understanding of human development demands going beyond the direct observation of behaviour on the part of one or two persons in the same place; it requires examination of multiperson systems of interaction not limited to a single setting and must take into account aspects of the environment beyond the immediate situation containing the subject”.

The above findings stress the relevance of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory to this study and this suggests that the problem of school violence can be eradicated if everything is taken into consideration and all stakeholders work together.



Parents should be encouraged to participate fully in the education and disciplinary processes aimed at improving the behaviour of their children. It has been reported that ill-disciplined learners are a major problem faced by educators and our learners are entangled in a destructive wave of school violence. School violence can be successfully dealt with by working together and acknowledging that school violence is a problem. This recommendation is consistent with that of Garegae (2008: 54) who recommends that “A parent-teacher partnership against students' indiscipline should be established. Both parents and teachers should educate students on the impact of indiscipline in the school ...”. The findings this study associate indiscipline with underachievement in the academic sphere, and the majority of the participants reported that schools become chaotic, rendering effective learning and teaching almost impossible. According to Bojuwoye and Narain (2008: 277), “... parental involvement in children's education was positively associated with the children's academic achievement”. It is likely that the behaviour of learners would change in a very positive way if they knew that parents

were up to date with what was happening at school. Bojuwoye and Narain (2008: 277) reported that, “Effective forms of parental involvement are those which engage parents working directly with their children, encouraging them to have high aspirations, or supervising and monitoring their out-of-school activities”. Similarly Bronfenbrenner (1977: 529) suggested that stakeholders should

“Facilitate the transition of children from home to school by acquainting family members and school personnel with each other and by engaging them in joint activities in both school and home settings, as well as on “neutral ground,” a year or more before the child enters school”.

This finding suggests that both parents and educators should work together to achieve the school goals as well as the positive personality development of the child. Bandura’s social learning theory pointed out that “The highest level of observational learning is achieved by first organizing and rehearsing the modeled behaviour symbolically, and then enacting it overtly”. This implies that parents and educators have to be good role models at all times because children can easily copy what they see at home, community, and at school and act it out.

The Department of Education should also come up with more strict measures for dealing with the perpetrators of school violence so that the girl-child is fully protected and able to continue her schooling unhindered. The girl-child, as well as the age group between 13 and 15 should be provided with more coping skills so that they are able to defend themselves rather than resorting to dropping out of school.

Security at all schools should be stepped up and more personnel should be employed to monitor entrances to schools. Some schools have valuable equipment that is used to make learning a pleasant experience; for example, computers that make information accessible on the finger tips of both learners and educators. These expensive pieces of equipment are sometimes donated by companies with a view to improving the academic performance of learners. These companies could easily be discouraged if their donations are lost or damaged as a result of school violence. According to Smit (2007: 53),

“With the involvement of the Education Department, teaching personnel, parents, law enforcement officials, and learners, attempts are being made to create a safe school environment. The physical environment may be the optimal place to start. Securing the school premises and being strict about who is admitted to the school grounds is a practical problem that demands practical solutions”.

The escalation of school violence demands that new strategies and joint efforts be employed and the battle cannot be won by schools alone. Stressing this view, Van Jaarsveld (2008: 185) found that “Previously, the responsibility for safety of learners at schools lay with the individual school itself, i. e. teacher body. However, today it requires the assistance of the school, the School Board of Governors/Governing Body Council, the parents, the police, the Department of Education and the community in general”. It is inconceivable that schools can be expected to provide for their own armed security personnel. As such Vally, Dolombisa, and Porteus (2002: 86) reported that “Cash-strapped provincial education departments offer security services to school with

either inadequate or no security". Schools cannot win the battle against school violence without strong financial resources and therefore the government should invest in this area to assist schools.

Government initiatives encourage communities to fully participate and take responsibility for the schools in their area, but this must be done in full co-operation with the SGB of each school so that unnecessary clashes are avoided. The researcher believes that "The problem of school violence can only be addressed successfully if all these individuals and institutions co-operate and work together in a co-ordinated manner" (Van Jaarsveld, 2008: 185). It would be pleasing to see these suggestions and recommendations being implemented and not just seen on paper. The Government's plan for Section 21 schools (school which are assisted financially and then expected to buy all the requirements of the school on their own) doesn't seem to work to the advantage of cash-strapped rural and township schools. One of the reasons for this is that the funding from the Department of Education falls short of the requirements of the schools; furthermore educators and school administrators are not trained to manage finances and keep proper records of all transactions.

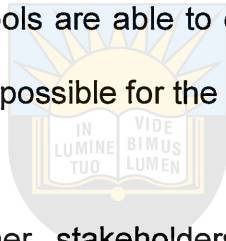
Schools should not be isolated and regarded as islands that have to solve their problems alone. In other words, "School violence is not an isolated problem, but is linked to community factors, the school climate, organization and environment as well" (Van Jaarsveld, 2008: 185). Research has proven that violence and crime taking place in the communities can easily play itself out on school premises. Administrators and

other stakeholders must be cognizant that "... what may appear as an outburst in the school is merely one manifestation of more systematic societal problems" (Henry, 2000: 21). This implies that dealing with the symptoms of a problem is a futile exercise rather the root causes of school violence have to be investigated if we are to succeed in our endeavours to eradicate school violence. According to Van Jaarsveld (2008: 185), "In order to effectively deal with school you must also look at the social context and how student interact in the social setting, identify factors within students that promote violence and aggression and the school and environment needs to be examined which may contribute to disorder and violence". This view illustrates that school violence related incidents may not, necessarily, be problems influenced by the school climate and environment, but they may emanate from the social system. The school, as an agent of change, must be used in a positive way and be an ambassador to change society in a positive way.

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The DoE should come up with clear policies so that strict controls are put in place, and severe penalties are sanctioned against perpetrators of school violence. The rules and regulations should take the needs and aspirations of all learners into consideration. Our justice system should not focus on the protection of the perpetrators and offenders at the expense of the victims of violence and crime. As such, Burnett (1998: 793) recommended that "Interventions to address 'educational violence' should be focused on the formulation and implementation of a humane educational ideology, through related policies and educational strategies". One of the respondents in this study recommended that learners should be taught moral values so that they are in a position

to know what their rights are and in return respect other people's rights. It is imperative that the provisions of the *Bill of Rights* be incorporated into the curriculum so that learners and educators alike know what behaviour patterns are acceptable. Most township schools are overcrowded and this problem could be alleviated if the Department of Education considered the curriculum of each school when staff establishments were declared. If the above recommendation is taken into consideration educators would deal with smaller class sizes, and as a result, it is likely that the academic performance of learners would improve and teaching and learning would be more effective. The more affluent schools are able to employ more educators and pay them from school coffers but this is not possible for the poorer schools.



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In order to assist schools and other stakeholders against school violence the government should start initiatives that assist in the alleviation of unemployment and poverty. Consistent with this recommendation, Vally Dolombisa and Porteus, (2002: 86) found that "Clearly the violent atmosphere in South African schools is a reflection of the broader society. The solution in the long term is to address the socio-economic conditions that engender the problems of violence". It has been noticed that many learners who are violent or troublesome at school come from backgrounds where the family unit is totally disintegrated; where there is no source of income because of unemployment; where there is poverty; and where children are exposed to abuse and violent episodes. Research has proven that "Most gang-related violence in schools is caused by out-of-school; out-of-work youth and they should be given priority attention" (Vally, Dolombisa and Porteus, 2002: 87). Strategies used to fight school violence

should be designed in such a way that learners are not cared for only whilst they are still at school but a plan should be in place where school leavers are provided with job opportunities. To this effect, Burnett (1998: 793) made this recommendation:

“To alleviate the destructive consequences of chronic poverty and limited educational success, essential educational and material resources should be funded or made available through networking between private and public sector and stakeholders such as churches, community centers, and more ‘affluent White schools’ in the metropolitan area”.

This implies that of partnerships are crucial if school violence is to be eradicated. The researcher wishes to stress that it is a waste to accumulate resources in ex-model C schools when these schools are not willing to assist the struggling schools on their doorstep. The Department of Education should open its eyes and accept that schools need more educators as schools in the township and rural areas cannot afford to employ educators from their own coffers. The reality is that even those few rural and township schools that manage to perform excellently in academic terms cannot sustain that excellence without financial injections from the private sector.

The following topics are recommended for further research in order to contribute to the body of knowledge concerning school violence in the South African context:

- The role played by parents in the education and support of their children in their educational pursuits.

- Mechanisms that can be put in place for the more affluent schools to help the struggling schools in the townships and rural areas.
- Consistent with Burnett (1998: 793), "The development, implementation, and evaluation of relevant educational programmes for teachers, parents/guardians, and children within the South African context of poverty". Programmes like the one suggested above would make sure that all the stakeholders are aware of the problems they are faced with and thus participate fully and effectively in the eradication of school violence.
- The contribution of sports and provision of recreational facilities in all schools especially township and rural schools, in order to fight not only school violence but also provide job opportunities for learners after they have finished their schooling. Duncan (2000) and Holloway (2000) reported on the positive academic achievements of learners who partake in extra-curricular activities and their higher attachment and commitment to school.
- The development of learners codes of conduct and their implementation in all schools so that schools are in a position to fight pervasive indiscipline. It has been found that most schools have no clearly defined codes of conduct for learners and this becomes a major challenge when disciplinary measures have to be taken against learners and educators. Schools have to make sure that school policies are developed and implemented and it has to be made sure that these policies can stand the test of the law. This implies that developed policies comply with the Constitution of South Africa as it is the supreme law.

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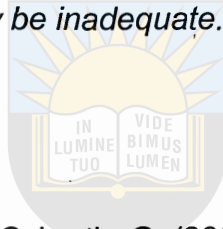
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

SCHOOL VIOLENCE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEARNERS

This study seeks to determine the forms, causes and effects of violence that you have experienced in your school. This is not a test. Do not write your name on the questionnaire. Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for purposes of this study. Thank you in advance for participating in this research study.

Section A: Demographic Details

Instructions: Put a tick against your best answer below.

1. Gender:

A. Male/Boy

☐

B. Female/Girl

☐

2. Age:

A. Below 13 years

☐

B. 13 – 16 years

☐

C. above 16 years

☐

3. My grade:

A. Grade 8

☐

B. Grade 9

☐

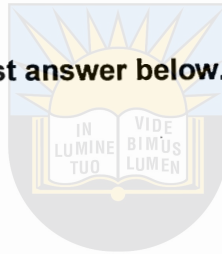
C. Grade 10

☐

D. Grade 11

☐

E. Grade 12

☐

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4. My school is a:

A. Primary school ☐

B. Combined school ☐

C. Secondary school ☐

D. Other (Please specify).....

5. My school is located in a/an:

A. Location ☐

B. Township ☐

C. City ☐

D. Farm ☐

E. Informal settlement ☐

F. Other (Please specify).....



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SECTION B: Forms of violence experienced at school

6. What do you understand by school violence?

7. Tick forms of violence experienced or witnessed in your school:

A. Bullying ☐

B. Corporal punishment ☐

☐

C. Sexual harassment

D. Gangsterism ☐

E. Vandalism ☐

F. Other/s (Please specify)

8. List the perpetrators of the forms of school violence that you mentioned in question 7 above:

A. Bullying.....

B. Corporal punishment.....

C. Sexual harassment.....

D. Gangsterism.....

E. Vandalism.....

F. Others (Please specify).....



9. To whom did you report the school violence in your school?

A. the Principal ☐

B. the Educator ☐

C. the prefect ☐

D. Other (Please specify).....

10. What action was taken against the perpetrator of school violence in your school?

A. was reprimanded ☐

B. was warned ☐

C. was reported to the police ☐

D. Other (Please specify the action taken).....

11. In your opinion, was the action taken against the perpetrator effective? ☐ Yes ☐ No

12. What do you think are the causes of the above forms of school violence in your school?

Please tick the most appropriate answer.

(a) I think that poverty has an effect on school violence ☐ Yes ☐ No

(b) I think that overcrowding (big classes) contributes to school violence ☐ Yes ☐ No

(c) Lack of recreational facilities also contributes to school violence. ☐ Yes ☐ No

(d) Easy access to school premises (school not fenced) causes violence. ☐ Yes ☐ No

(e) Intolerance/discrimination of learners with problems contributes to school violence. ☐ Yes ☐ No

(f) Indiscipline (disobedience) of learners causes school violence. ☐ Yes ☐ No

(g) Unemployment contributes to school violence and violence generally. ☐ Yes ☐ No

(h) High levels of violence in the community lead to school violence. ☐ Yes ☐ No

13. Write down other causes of school violence in your school that are not listed in question 12 above

.....

.....

.....

14. The Table below shows forms of violence that you may have experienced or witnessed once or more in your school. Tick all the ones that apply to you.

Forms of violence experienced or witnessed	Yes	No
A. I was physically assaulted or saw a learner assaulted in a fist fight by another learner.		
B. I was stabbed or saw another learner being stabbed with a sharp object such as a knife, scissors, or a pen.		
C. I was bullied/forced by other learners to join their gang.		
D. I was verbally abused e.g. teased, threatened, swore at or ridiculed by other learners or educators.		
E. I was shot or threatened with a gun or other weapon used for shooting.		
F. I was corporally punished by educator/s at school.		
G. I was sexually assaulted by being touched/fondled or the perpetrator used sexually suggestive language to me.		
H. I was a victim of attempted rape at school: such as having my clothes stripped off me.		
I. Fights are common and take place on a daily basis at my school.		

15. Write in the space below any other forms of school violence not listed above that you suffered or that you witnessed at your school.

16. Who were the perpetrators of these forms of school violence in your school?

SECTION C: EFFECTS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

16. The following are some of the effects of school violence on learners. Tick the most appropriate response to you below.

A. I lose concentration in class because of school violence. ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree

B. My academic performance is affected negatively (low grades achieved). ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree

C. Sometimes I get scared and not attend classes. ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree

D. Violence causes chaos in school and a lot of time is lost because of it. ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree

E. I always feel depressed and worried because of school violence. ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree

17. List any other effects of school violence that you experienced not mentioned in 16 above.

Thank you for participating in this study. Your contribution is invaluable.

Appendix 2

SCHOOL VIOLENCE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR EDUCATORS

This study looks at violence in your school. Thank you for participating in this research study. The questions that I will ask you during this interview are merely seeking your opinions on different forms, causes and effects of violence that you may have experienced or witnessed in your school. Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for purposes of this study.

Section A: Demographic Details

1. Gender:

Male Female

2. Age:

A. 25 – 35

B. 36 – 45

C. 46 – 55

D. 56 – 65

E. 66 and above

3. My position:

A. Educator

B. HOD

C. Deputy Principal

D. Principal

4. My school is a:

A. Combined School

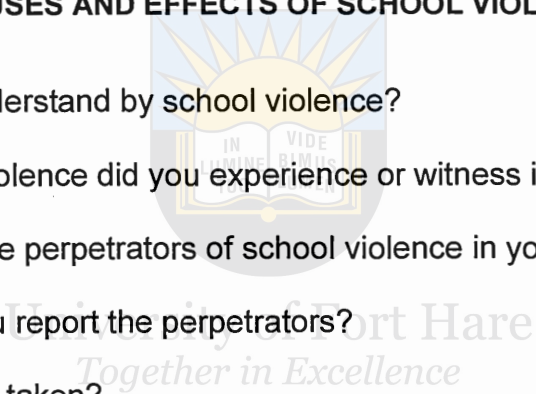
B. Secondary School

C. Other (Please specify).....

5. My school is located in a/an:

A.	Location/Rural	
B.	Township	
C.	City	
D.	Farm	
E.	Informal Settlement	
F.	Other (Please specify).....	

SECTION B: FORMS, CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

- 
6. What do you understand by school violence?
 7. What forms of violence did you experience or witness in your school?
 8. Who are/were the perpetrators of school violence in your school?
 9. To whom did you report the perpetrators?
 10. What action was taken?
 11. By whom was the action taken?
 12. What do you think are the factors that contribute towards school violence in your school?
 13. What do you think are the effects of school violence on learning?
 14. What are the effects of school violence on teaching?
 15. What is the extent of school violence in your school?
 16. How many cases of school violence does your school handle per week/month/year?
 17. What policies are in place in order to curb school violence in your school?

18. Do you think the policies are working/effective?

19. Do you have any suggestions on how school violence can be eradicated?

Thank you for participating in this study.



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Appendix 3: Letter of confirmation as MEd candidate from supervisor



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30 September 2009

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Re: Mr. Vusumzi Ncontsa: Masters Degree Student

This letter serves to confirm that the above mentioned student is pursuing a Master of Education degree (M.Ed.) at the University of Fort Hare, South Africa. The title of his study is: **An Investigation Into the Nature and Causes of School Violence in Buffalo City High Schools**. His proposal has been accepted by the Faculty Research and Higher Degree Committee and subsequently he has also completed the first three chapters of his thesis. He is now supposed to collect data and is required to administer a questionnaire educators and interview School Principals and learners in schools.

I would be grateful if you could allow him to collect data from your schools through interviews. I would like to assure you that any information that will be collected will remain confidential and only used for purposes of this study. The student will ensure that he does not disrupt school activities during the period he will be collecting data.

I thank you for your assistance.

Yours Sincerely

Professor Almon Shumba, PhD
M.Ed. & PhD Supervisor
School of Post Graduate Studies
Faculty of Education, University of Fort Hare
Tel: +27 72 426 8036 (Cell) & +27 (040) 602 2493 (Work)
E-mail: ashumba@ufh.ac.za

Appendix 4

Consent form

I, **Vusumzi Nelson Ncontsa**, a MEd candidate at the University of Fort Hare, School for Post Graduate Studies, as part of my academic programme, am conducting research on *An Investigation into the Nature and Causes of School Violence in Buffalo City High Schools*. As part of this process, I am inviting you to participate in a questionnaire/interview survey.

Should you consent, I wish to guarantee you that any information that you may provide will be confidential. Your identity will not be divulged or made available to anybody other than the researcher.

Thank you.

University of Fort Hare
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Signature:

Date:

I,, hereby give/not give consent to participate in the study on *An Investigation into the Nature and Causes of School Violence in Buffalo City High Schools*.

I understand that I am participating in this study freely without being forced in any way. I also understand that I can stop participating in this study at any time and my decision to do so will not affect me negatively.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 5

Permission letter to the District Director

P. O. Box 12339

Amalinda

5252

13 October 2009

The District Director

East London

Rubusana Training College Building

Mdantsane

5219



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Dear Sir

Re: Permission to conduct a research study in schools

I hereby apply to conduct a research study on school violence in 5 schools in the East London District. This is for the purposes of fulfilling the requirements for a degree of Master of Education at the University of Fort Hare. I will make sure that research ethics are adhered to all the time; hence the need to get permission from the District.

For further perusal please refer to the attached letter from my supervisor.

Yours faithfully

.....

V. N. Ncontsa

Appendix 6



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION EAST LONDON DISTRICT

Dr. WB Rubusana Building * NU 1 Mdantsane* Private Bag X9007 * East London * 5200 * REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA * Tel: +27 (0)43 708 6208 Fax: +27 (0)43 760 0545 *Website: ecprov.gov.za

Date: 22 October 2009

Mr V Ncontsa
P O Box 12339
AMALINDA
5252



Dear Sir

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS IN THE EAST LONDON DISTRICT

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research in five high schools of your choice in the East London District for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements for a degree of Master of Education at the University of Fort Hare.

Please be informed that permission is only granted provided that school activities are not disrupted.

We wish you well in your endeavours.

Yours faithfully


W M NGWANYA
DISTRICT DIRECTOR