

**DIMENSIONS, COPING STRATEGIES AND MANAGEMENT OF
SCHOOL-BASED VIOLENCE**

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DIMENSIONS, COPING STRATEGIES AND MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL-BASED VIOLENCE

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MAGISTER SOCIETATIS SCIENTIAE

in the Faculty of Humanities

(Department of Criminology)

University of the Free State

December 2010

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Declaration

I declare that the dissertation hereby submitted by me for the MAGISTER SOCIETATIS SCIENTIAE degree at the University of the Free State is my own independent work and has not been previously submitted by me at another university/faculty. I furthermore cede copyright of the dissertation in favour of the University of the Free State.

Acknowledgments

I would like to extend sincere gratitude to the following for their assistance and support in the completion of this dissertation:

- Francois Steyn (Lecturer: Department of Social Work and Criminology, University of Pretoria) for his endless dedication, patience, inspiration and mentorship, often beyond the borders of professional duty, and for demonstrating a passion for research and social responsibility.
- Herma Foster (Lecturer: Department of Criminology, University of the Free State) for her creative input and advice throughout the research process, and for inspiring me to do social research.
- Jerome McCarthy and AVP Free State staff, for their unwavering dedication towards the creation of peaceful school environments, their incalculable investment in future generations, as well as their assistance with the fieldwork process which informed this dissertation.
- The staff and learners from the participating schools for their patience and honesty. and willingness to be part of this undertaking.
- The Free State Department of Education, for facilitating the research process by providing the necessary permission.
- The Faculty of Humanities, University of the Free State, for providing valuable financial backing to the AVP project.
- My colleagues at the Centre for Health Systems Research and Development, University of the Free State, for their various forms of advice, motivation and support throughout this research endeavour.
- Melody Mentz, for her selfless support and assistance with the data analysis.
- My friends and family for keeping up my morale, boosting my confidence and providing the occasional mental break.
- Lize du Plessis, for her relentless belief, support, patience, encouragement and love, for creating an environment conducive to creativity, and for always being my best buddy.
- My parents, for their endless love and support, wisdom and belief in me.
- My Creator, for life, love and free will.

André Janse van Rensburg
Bloemfontein
December 2010

Table of contents

Sections	Page
Declaration	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Table of contents	iii
List of tables	vii
List of figures	viii
List of abbreviations	ix
 CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION, AIM AND OBJECTIVES	
1. Introduction	1
2. Origin of the study	1
3. Rationale for the study	2
4. Aim and objectives	4
5. Definitions of key concepts	4
6. Layout of the dissertation	6
7. Summary	7
 CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW	
1. Introduction	8
2. A brief history of research of school-based violence	8
3. The extent of school-based violence	9
3.1 Media reports on school-based violence	9
3.2 International and national surveys	10
3.3 Area-specific and small-scale studies	12
4. Understanding school-based violence	13
4.1 The concept “school-based violence”	13
4.2 Typology of school-based violence	15
4.3 Aetiology of school-based violence	18
4.3.1 Individual characteristics	21
Biological factors	21
Psychosocial factors	21
4.3.2 Micro system factors	22
Family factors	23
Parental factors	23
Peer factors	24
School factors	24
4.3.3 Meso system factors	25

4.3.4	Exo system factors	25
4.3.5	Macro system factors	26
4.3.6	Chrono system factors	26
4.4	The effects of school-based violence	27
5.	Coping with school-based violence	29
5.1	Coping and coping strategies	30
5.2	Transactional model of coping and stress	31
5.2.1	Problem-focused strategies	32
5.2.2	Emotion-focused strategies	33
5.2.3	Gender differences in the use of coping strategies	33
6.	Managing of school-based violence	34
6.1	Overview of school-based violence prevention and initiatives	35
6.2	Discipline as violence prevention tool	36
6.3	School management and school-based violence	39
6.4	Challenges faced by administrators in managing school-based violence	41
6.5	Strategies in preventing school-based violence	42
7.	Summary	44

CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH METHODS

1.	Introduction	45
2.	Research approach	45
3.	Research design	46
4.	Research strategy	47
4.1	Selection of research respondents and participants	47
4.2	Data collection	48
4.2.1	Survey instrument	48
4.2.2	Conducting the survey	51
4.2.3	Conducting the personal interviews	51
4.3	Data analysis	52
4.4	Data presentation	53
4.5	Validity and reliability	53
4.6	Ethical considerations	54
5.	Limitations	55
6.	Summary	56

CHAPTER 4 – RESULTS

1.	Introduction	57
2.	Biographical and background data	57
3.	Dimensions of school-based violence	59
3.1	Incidence of school-based violence	59

3.2	Types and frequency of violence	60
3.3	Victimisation	62
3.4	Perpetration	63
3.5	Causes of school-based violence	63
3.6	Effects of school-based violence	65
4.	Coping strategies used with school-based violence	67
5.	Management of school-based violence	69
6.	Summary	72

CHAPTER 5 – RESULTS

1.	Introduction	73
2.	The extent and nature of school-based violence	73
2.1	The incidence of school-based violence	73
2.2	Types of school-based violence between learners	73
2.3	Types of school-based violence between learners and educators	74
2.4	Victims of school-based violence	74
2.5	Perpetrators of school-based violence	75
3.	The causes of school-based violence	75
3.1	Individual level causes	76
3.2	Micro system causes	76
3.3	Meso system causes	77
3.4	Exo system causes	77
3.5	Macro system causes	78
3.6	Chrono system causes	78
4.	The effects of school-based violence on victims	79
4.1	Effects on the school	80
4.2	Fear of school	80
4.3	Long term effects for individuals	80
5.	Coping strategies for school-based violence	81
5.1	Behaviour-focused coping strategies	81
5.2	Cognitive-focused coping strategies	81
5.3	Emotion-focused coping strategies	82
5.4	Gender differences and coping strategies	82
6.	The management of school-based violence	83
6.1	Perceptions on the schools' ability to deal with violent behaviour	83
6.2	Lack of learner supervision	83
6.3	Lack of school security	83
6.4	Educators dealing with violence	84
6.5	Relationships with stakeholders	85
7.	Recommendations	85

8.	Conclusion	87
	References	88
	Synopsis/Opsomming	105
	List of key terms	109
	Appendix	
1.	FDoE Letter of permission	
2.	Survey instrument	
3.	Qualitative interview schedule	
4.	Qualitative interview information letter	
5.	Code of Conduct (School B)	
6.	School Safety Policy (School A)	

List of tables

	Page
Table 1	11
Table 2	16
Table 3	31
Table 4	37
Table 5	50
Table 6	58
Table 7	58
Table 8	60
Table 9	60
Table 10	62
Table 11	62
Table 12	63
Table 13	63
Table 14	63
Table 15	64
Table 16	65
Table 17	66
Table 18	67
Table 19	67
Table 20	67
Table 21	68
Table 22	68
Table 23	68
Table 24	69

List of Figures

	Page
Figure 1	The ecological systems model 20
Figure 2	The transactional model of coping and stress 32
Figure 3	Age distribution of survey respondents 57
Figure 4	Presence of criminal gangs in the community 58
Figure 5	Have they harmed you/your family? 58
Figure 6	Violence in school 59
Figure 7	Compared to other schools 59
Figure 8	Frequency of corporal punishment 61
Figure 9	Victims becoming more argumentative 66
Figure 10	Victims having difficulty sleeping 66
Figure 11	Schools' ability to deal with violence 69
Figure 12	Learners who received training in conflict resolution 70
Figure 13	Source of training in conflict resolution 70
Figure 14	EST causes from the present results 79

List of abbreviations

ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
AVP	Alternatives to Violence Project
CHSR&D	Centre for Health Systems Research and Development
EST	Ecological Systems Theory
FSDoE	Free State Department of Education
IPT	Independent Projects Trust
NDoE	National Department of Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSVS	National School Violence Study
NYRBS	National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey
NYVS	National Youth Violence Study
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SAIRR	South African Institute for Race Relations
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governance Body
SRC	School Representative Council
SSC	School Security Committee
UFS	University of the Free State
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WHO	World Health Organization

"Peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of creative alternatives for responding to conflict – alternatives to passive aggressive responses, alternatives to violence." – Dorothy Thompson

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION, AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1. Introduction

School represents a critical phase in an individual's life. Apart from educational gain, learners are socialised to become productive members of society. Violence in the school environment has a range of negative consequences for learners and educators alike. It harms the fabric of education and limits the prospect of functional human capital. In South Africa, school-based violence has been attributed to the country's socio-political past, and the adverse conditions in which many children grow up. Efforts have been launched across the globe to determine, manage and prevent the complexities of school-based violence. South African institutions have added to this literature, although several aspects of school-based violence remain outside the academic spotlight.

Despite the prominence of Victimology and victims' rights in South Africa, there is a general lack of empirical evidence on the mental health and psychosocial behaviour of victims of school-based violence. In addition, limited knowledge exists about school-level practices and strategies relating to the management and prevention of school-based violence. Also, little is known about the outcomes of current policies aimed at violence at schools. This dissertation sets out to describe and explore the nature, extent, coping strategies and management of school-based violence in two schools in Moakeng, Kroonstad, Free State province. In this chapter, the origin of the study will be discussed, followed by the rationale for the research, its aim and objectives, and definitions of key concepts.

2. Origin of the study

The dissertation forms part of a larger research project which investigate the effectiveness of the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) in addressing school-based violence. AVP is a conflict-resolution programme founded by the Quaker Organisation in the USA. Initially, the programme focused on the rehabilitation of violent inmates in New York correctional facilities. Its scope was later broadened to other institutions in need of conflict resolution training, including schools. Since its conception, AVP has grown to a global organisation and currently has several branches in South Africa. The programme functions on the premise that people in poor areas are frequently exposed to violence on psychological and physical levels. It is taken that these individuals, families and communities are often ill-equipped to deal with conflict in an effective and non-violent way. In AVP workshops, participants receive training through experiential learning in assertiveness, life skills and leadership, thereby transferring capacity to effectively resolve conflict (Quaker Peace Centre, 2008).

In 2007, AVP Free State (with its headquarters in Kroonstad) approached the Free State Department of Education (FSDoE) for financial support to broaden its reach in the province. However, no evidence existed about the effectiveness of the programme in local settings. In order to bridge this information gap, a research partnership was established between AVP Free State and the Centre for Health Systems Research and Development (CHSR&D) and the Department of Criminology at the University of the Free State (UFS).

The Department of Criminology and CHSR&D were tasked with developing the research instruments, gathering and analysing of information, and writing of the research reports. AVP Free State was responsible for implementing its violence prevention programme, while all three partners were involved in the planning and management of the project. A pre-post intervention research design was opted for, which entailed a baseline survey in 2008, the implementation of the AVP intervention over a six month time frame, and a follow-up survey in 2009. The research took place at two schools in Maokeng, an informal settlement on the outskirts of Kroonstad. Funding for the research component was provided by the Faculty of Humanities (UFS), while the FSDoE funded the AVP workshops. This dissertation reports on aspects of the baseline study.

3. Rationale for the study

School-based violence is a global phenomenon. Countries such as the USA, Germany, Sweden, Holland, Japan and Scotland faced numerous challenges in ensuring school safety during the past two decades (Orr, 2003:29-32). Events such as the Columbine and Virginia Tech shootings added to public pressure to address violence in schools. In South Africa, similar calls were made following a number of violent incidents at schools, most notably the Krugersdorp sword killing (Du Plessis & Roestoff, 2008). Public concern for school safety is backed by recent studies. An international survey showed that less than a quarter (23%) of South African learners felt safe while attending school (Mullis *et al.*, 2006:277). A national study showed that 15.3% of learners were victimised at school during the twelve months leading up to the survey (Burton, 2008:16). The study also found that nearly a third (31.2%) of secondary learners indicated it easy to obtain a knife at school. In addition, more than half (57.4%) of the school principals interviewed felt that certain areas on their school grounds were unsafe.

In addition to the physical effects of school-based violence, victims may suffer from a range of psychological consequences, including fear, stress, anxiety, anger, depression, withdrawal, shame, guilt, and low self-esteem (Crawage, 2005:54). School-based violence also has a detrimental impact on education and may lead to the collapse of a learning culture (De Wet, 2003:89). Resources to secure schools shift funds away from critical areas such as study material and equipment (Bemak & Keys,

2000:11). Moreover, negative media coverage of education in South Africa creates the impression that funds are squandered on ineffective programmes (Schreiner, 2009:8).

In addressing these concerns, school administrators are expected to develop and implement effective policies and programmes aimed at school safety (Leinhardt & Willert, 2002:33). Statute and common law dictate that learners receive education in hostile-free spaces, and that school management have the required safety systems in place (Rossouw & Stewart, 2008:250; IPT, 1999:3; Aitken & Seedat, 2007:vii). However, many schools face challenges in realising this imperative (Frank, 2006). Educators often do not have the skills to control disruptive and aggressive behaviour (Bemak & Keys, 2000:10) which results in a climate of ill-discipline (Smit, 2007:54). Similarly, some learners lack the ability to resolve conflict in a positive manner, and they often resort to violent techniques observed in the media (Vogel *et al.*, 2003:28).

Very little evidence exists as to how learners respond to violence in the school environment. More specifically, research is yet to explore the feelings and cognitive understanding that victims held of violent events at school (Avi Astor *et al.*, 2002:717). This includes how they make sense of and interpret school-based violence in their overall coping strategies (Parkes, 2007:401-402). Despite the substantial body of knowledge on coping in paediatric situations, there is “*surprising*” little evidence regarding adolescents’ coping with violence and danger (Rasmussen, 2004:63). The shortfall in the literature concerning possible gender differences in coping with school-based violence further underlines this point.

The creation of a system which is adequately equipped to deal with these challenges depends on comprehensive baseline data about the nature and extent of violence in schools (Burton, 2006:12). Such an assessment should include all forms of violence, including sexual harassment, bullying and verbal victimisation (Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002:351). This type of research has been conducted in many developed countries, but falls short in the developing world, including South Africa (Liang *et al.*, 2007:162-163). In addition, the bulk of local evidence on school-based violence stems from studies in highly urbanised and metropolitan areas, while small town and rural areas receive little attention.

South African studies on school-based violence have tended to focus on isolated, single aspects and role-players (the matter is fully discussed in the Literature Review). Such a view has since been replaced by the realisation that school-based violence involves more than victims and perpetrators. Multidimensional aspects need to be considered, thereby producing a holistic picture of school-based violence as a social challenge (Furlong & Morrison, 2000:79). In this vein, the present study aims to integrate central concerns as identified in existing literature. While the approach is by no means unique, it is a resolute step towards the formation of a holistic view of school-based violence in a specific South African setting. At any rate, school-based violence research should be regarded as an incessant process

of growth and deeper understanding, in due course leading to the attainment of considerable progress in reducing its incidence (Battaglio, 2008:46, 190).

With the above and the origin of the study in mind, the following summarises the rationale for the study:

- Baseline data is needed about the nature and extent of school-based violence when interventions are planned. In addition, definitions must be operationalised with local settings in mind.
- Most local studies on school-based violence have been conducted in highly urbanised and metropolitan settings, thereby neglecting the realities in small-town and more rural areas.
- Context and understanding are needed to determine, from a gendered perspective, how adolescents cope with school-based violence.

4. Aim and objectives

The aim of the study is to explore and describe the dimensions, coping strategies and management of school-based violence in two schools in Kroonstad, Free State province. In pursuit of this aim, the research objectives are to:

- Describe the extent and nature, as well as the experiences of learners, educators and principals of school-based violence.
- Investigate coping strategies applied by victims of school-based violence, along with possible gender differences.
- Articulate the views and approaches of principals and educators in managing school-based violence.

5. Definitions of key concepts

Coping: The capacity to respond and to recover from something stressful (World Health Organization [WHO], 1999). Coping can also be defined as a person's continuously changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to deal with specific external and/or internal strain that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the person's resources (Lazarus, 1993:237). The present study will refer to coping as a learner's capacity to manage external or internal demands brought on by school-based victimisation, which is appraised as taxing or exceeding his/her resources.

Coping strategies:	Remedial actions or strategies applied in an attempt to redefine stressful events with the purpose of minimising adversity, by a person whose well-being is threatened (Agnew, 2001:326; WHO, 1999). Coping strategies is defined in this study as remedial actions or strategies applied by victimised learners in an attempt to redefine school-based victimisation and to subsequently reduce its adverse effects.
Educator:	Any person whose job entails teaching or educating people, whether full-time at an education institution, or assisting in rendering education auxiliary or support services provided by or in an education department (National Education Policy Act, 1996: 2). In this study an educator will be referred to as any person rendering formal educational services, whether on a part-time or full-time basis, to learners at a school.
Learner:	A learner is any person who receives education or is obliged to receive education in terms of the South African Schools Act (SASA) (84 of 1996) (SASA, 1996:2). In the present study, a learner is referred to as a person formally enrolled in and actively receives education from a school.
Physical violence:	Any form of physical aggression, which may include hitting, pushing, shoving, kicking, squeezing, burning and/or the causing of injury with or without weapons, as well as any form of property damage (O' Moore, 2003; McCann, 2002:18). This study will refer to physical violence as any form of intentional physical aggression, manifested as hitting, pushing or kicking, as well as property damage, between learners or between learners and educators.
Principal:	An educator appointed to be in charge of or acting as the head of a school (SASA, 1996:2). In the present study a principal is an educator who is formally tasked with the responsibility to manage and coordinate the day-to-day activities of a school, while also being involved in strategic decisions such as disciplinary measures taken for misbehaviour and violence prevention.
Relational violence:	The purposeful exclusion of a learner from a peer group activity, and/or the targeting of a learner through rumours or gossip, and/or the systematic isolation of a learner from his/her peer group (Smith, 2005; Young <i>et al.</i> 2006:297-298). The present study will refer to relational violence as any form of purposeful exclusion, systematic isolation or spreading of rumours about a learner, by learners or educators.
School:	A physical place where children receive formal instruction by trained educators, typically within school buildings (Howard, 2004:112). A school can be public or independent, and enrolls learners in one or more grades between grade zero

and grade twelve (SASA, 1996:2). In this study a school will be referred to as a formal place of instruction, which provides educational services to learners within a particular timeframe, while having an *in loco parentis* responsibility over learners' well-being.

Sexual violence: Conduct which abuses, humiliates, degrades or otherwise violates the sexual integrity of a person (South African Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998:7). Such conduct may include a completed or attempted sexual act (any kind of penetration of the vulva, anus or mouth with a body part or object), abusive sexual contact (intentional touching of genitalia, buttocks, anus, breast, inner thigh or groin) and non-contact sexual abuse (voyeurism, exhibitionism, unwanted exposure to pornography, verbal or behavioural sexual harassment and threats) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010). In the present study, sexual violence or abuse will adopt this definition and include these actions in the school environment, focussing on both learners and educators as perpetrators and victims of such acts.

Verbal violence: Any form of verbal victimisation, including threats, insults, provocation, swearing, foul language and name-calling (McCann, 2002: 18). Such victimisation may be administered by oral, textual or electronic means (Smith, 2005). Verbal violence is defined in the present study as any form of verbal victimisation, by any means, between learners and between learners and educators.

6. Layout of the dissertation

Chapter 1: Introduction, aim and objectives describes the background and rationale for the study. In addition, the aim and objectives are laid out and key concepts of the study are defined. **Chapter 2: Literature review** provides a brief history and conceptualisation of school-based violence, followed by the extent, types, effects and possible causes of school-based violence. A description of coping and coping strategies is provided, as well as a synopsis of contemporary issues related to the management of school-based violence. **Chapter 3: Research methods** describes the scientific methods applied in the study. The use of mixed methods research is explained, along with the QUAN→qual research design opted for. The procedure of selecting respondents and participants, data collection and analysis of the quantitative and qualitative information are described, followed by a discussion of the validity and reliability, ethical considerations and limitations of the study. **Chapter 4: Results** portrays the findings of the study by means of tables, figures and text. Biographical information of the informants is provided, followed by a portrayal of the types and frequencies, victimisation and perpetration levels, effects and

causes of school-based violence. In addition to coping strategies and gender differences, the management of school-based violence is illustrated. **Chapter 5: Discussion** synthesises the results and the literature. Recommendations for policy and practice are also provided. The **appendix** includes the letter of permission by the FDoE, the survey instrument, the personal interview schedule, and copies of official policy documents of the selected schools.

7. Summary

The study originates from a research project that investigates the impact of a school-based violence prevention programme. The research is motivated by recent evidence painting a bleak picture of school safety in South Africa. The lack of empirical knowledge on gendered coping in the context of school-based violence provides further justification for the study. In addition, insight is needed into how schools address violence. The chapter reflected on the aim and objectives of the study, while key concepts were defined. In the next chapter, a review of relevant literature on school-based violence is presented.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Introduction

In this chapter a review of literature relevant to the aim and objectives of the study is discussed. The extent of violence in South African schools is depicted by reflecting on the results of prominent international and local studies. This is followed by an exploration of what is understood by the concept “school-based violence”. The types of violence that make up school-based violence as a construct is explored by discussing suggestions made in literature, as well as visiting the typologies of past investigations. The aetiology of school-based violence is articulated within an ecological framework. It will be demonstrated that school-based violence stem from and impact on multiple levels, which is backed by various sources of literature.

The experience and aftermath of school-based violence have consequences for the mental well-being of victims. Coping strategies are explored against the background of the transactional model of coping and stress. However, seeing as learners face victimisation in an assumedly protective environment, school administrators have an important role to play in ensuring a safe schooling environment. Therefore, the strategies available to principals and educators in dealing with school-based violence will also be discussed. To begin with, however, a short history of the study of school-based violence will be presented.

2. A brief history of research on school-based violence

School-based violence is by no means a new phenomenon. Depictions of violent learner misbehaviour have been found on Sumerian clay tables dating back to 2000 B.C. (Van Jaarsveld 2008:176; De Wet, 2007a:15). Today, school-based violence is a well-recorded, global occurrence. Academic interest emerged with Dan Olweus’s studies in Norway during the 1970s, which is still a source of reference for contemporary research on youth (e.g. Vreeman & Carroll, 2007; Greeff & Grobler, 2008; Dussich & Maekoya, 2007; Swearer & Espelage, 2004; Leff *et al.*, 2004; Limber, 2004; Pellegrini & Long, 2004). During the 1970s, Scandinavia experienced wide public concern regarding bullying behaviour (natively known as mobbning [‘mobbing’]) (Olweus, 1993:9). Olweus consequently launched school aggression studies in 1978, which was a pioneering step towards the empirical investigation of school-based violence (Greeff & Grobler, 2008:127). The interest in school-based violence was largely focused in Europe until school shootings in other regions prompted scientific investigation. This was especially underlined by the Columbine (20 April, 1999) and Virginia Tech (16 April, 2007) shootings in the USA. These events, among others, necessitated in-depth enquiry and sparked international interest among scholars (Rossouw & Stewart, 2008:250).

Locally, school-based violence received attention primarily because of apartheid-related conflict. It has been argued that pro-violence norms fostered among the youth during this period transcended South Africa's transition to democracy (Simpson, 2001). Even though political violence among youths has decreased since the early 1990s, violence continues to be problematic (Morojele & Brook, 2006:1164). In the early 2000's, sporadic studies on school-based violence were conducted mainly in the Gauteng and Western Cape provinces. Interest in the study of school-based violence was renewed in 2006 by an international study which suggested that, among all participating countries, South African learners feel the most unsafe in school (Rossouw & Stewart, 2008:250). The South African Institute for Race Relations (SAIRR) (2006) commented that the South African school system has consistently underperformed in school quality surveys. It was also noted that conditions in schools are "*downright dangerous*". Wide media interest prompted the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) to conduct public hearings on school-based violence in 2007 (Rossouw & Stewart, 2008:250). Along with the first National School Violence Study (NSVS) (Burton, 2008), the need intensified for the comprehensive study of school-based violence.

3. The extent of school-based violence

Recent studies explored school-based violence from an array of perspectives, and provide valuable insight into the extent of violence in South African schools. These include, most prominently, an international survey, national studies and several localised, small-scale investigations. Existing studies vary in scope, size and method, thus creating a rich background to the present investigation. Firstly, the use of the media as a source of evidence for school-based violence is discussed.

3.1 Media reports on school-based violence

Extreme forms of school-based violence, notwithstanding widespread media coverage, are relatively rare (Greene, 2005:239). Nevertheless, violence in schools account for more than a quarter of international school-related news (Schreiner, 2009:8). Locally, crime and violence represent more than ten percent of news on schools. In the period of January 2007 to April 2009, school-based violence was covered on a monthly basis on South African television news. Overall, 0.8% of television news in South Africa deals with education, which is mostly negative. Nearly 60% of education news on public television gives a critical view of schools, and 15% of stories focus specifically on school violence (Schreiner, 2009:8).

Many authors (*cf.* Vogel *et al.* 2003:27; De Wet, 2003:89; Maree, 2005:15; Naser, 2006:119; Khan, 2008:1) have used media reports as rationale for school-based violence research. Newspapers have especially been singled out as a useful source of "*current, retrospective, and supplementary information*" (Smit, 2007:53). Apart from qualitative studies (*cf.* De Wet, 2009; Andersson & Lundström, 2007), the use of the media to portray the seriousness of school-based violence could be problematic. The media has been noted to have the ability to influence people's views by defining

problems and how they should be perceived (Clark *et al.*, 2008:22; Andersson & Lundström, 2007:175). It has been argued that the media tends to depict school-based violence through alarmist headlines and reports (Males, 2008:53). Incidents involving children are illustrated subjectively through the interpretations of journalists (Andersson & Lundström, 2007:175). Some newspaper articles portray perpetrators and victims as 'faceless', thus without background information. Others reduce the perpetrator to demographic variables, and depict the victim in a sympathetic, humane way (De Wet, 2009:51). In addition, more attention is usually paid to adolescents than children, and more to offenders than to victims (Andersson & Lundström, 2007:175). Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that children are safer in school than in the community (Jimerson *et al.*, 2006:3). Serious forms of violence such as assault, robbery and sexual transgressions occur more in the community than in school (Leoschut & Burton, 2006:51-61). Still, the public should not be surprised that schools are not violence-free (Males, 2008:53). As this discussion and the subsequent account of the understanding of school-based violence will show, school-based violence is present in all societies.

3.2 International and national surveys

Even though a national database for school-based violence is largely absent, recent surveys give a montage of the state of school-based violence in South Africa. Studies which covered the phenomenon (in part or whole) in the past decade include the First (2002) and Second (2008) South African National Youth Risk Behaviour Surveys, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (2006), the National Youth Victimisation Study (NYVS) (2006) and the National School Violence Study (NSVS) (2007).

The PIRLS survey was conducted to assess the state of learning and reading literacy among 40 nations. The questionnaire included questions about school safety, which caused considerable interest from the South African media. The country had the largest sample, with 397 schools and 14 657 Grade 4 learners taking part in the survey. Less than a quarter (23%) of learners reported feeling safe in school, which was well below the international average of 47%. In addition, 36% of school principals felt that their schools are very safe, again below the international average of 60% (Mullis *et al.*, 2006:277-279).

The first national school-based violence data in recent years derives from the First South African National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (NYRBS) conducted in 2002. In terms of sample size, 207 schools and 10 699 learners (Grade 8 to 11) took part in the survey (Reddy *et al.*, 2003:14). The second NYRBS was conducted in 2008 and used similar sampling methods; 251 schools and 10 270 learners (Grade 8 to 11) were included (Reddy *et al.*, 2010:10). Important results from the two surveys were found to be largely similar (see Table 1).

Table 1: Selected results from the first and second NYRBS

Variable	2002	2008
Belong to a gang (past six months)	18.1%	19.4%
Carried a weapon (past month)	9.2%	9.0%
Threatened/injured with a weapon (past six months)	14.9%	15.7%
Threatened/injured someone with a weapon (past six months)	9.2%	11.0%
Involved in a physical fight (past six months)	19.3%	21.0%
Felt unsafe at school (past month)	31.7%	27.0%

Source: Reddy *et al.* (2003); (2010).

The NYVS was a national study among 4 409 youths aged 12 to 22 to gauge aspects of youth victimisation. One in five (20.9%) respondents reported that they have been threatened or hurt by someone at their school. Of these respondents, more than a third (33.4%) reported being victimised two to three times. Almost a third (32.8%) reported being verbally abused at school. Describing their most recent victimisation incident, more than half (55.2%) reported threats of assault, while more than a third (38.3%) had been physically assaulted. In addition, corporal punishment was found to be “*rampant*” in schools (Leoschut & Burton, 2006:67).

In 2007, the first national study with an exclusive focus on school-based violence was conducted. A survey was administered among 12 794 primary and secondary learners, while 260 principals and 521 educators were interviewed. The NSVS found that one in seven (15.3%) learners experienced some form of violence at school during the twelve months preceding the study (Burton, 2008:16). Physical assault (4.3%), threats (14.5%), robbery (5.9%) and sexual assault (3.1%) were among the reported types of victimisation. More than a fifth (21.5%) of secondary learners reported victimisation more than three times, while more than a quarter (25.1%) was threatened more than three times. The most reported place of incidents was the classroom.

The place most feared by secondary learners proved to be toilets (50.5%), while one in eight (12.5%) reported fearing a particular place in school. Overall, 85.5% of secondary learners reported feeling safe while at school. The results found that gangs sometimes gain access to school grounds via holes in the fence or unattended gates, causing a variety of problems. Nearly one in three (31.2%) secondary learners indicated it easy to obtain a knife at school, while more than one in ten (11.0%) felt that it is easy to obtain drugs at school. In terms of school employees, 68.0% of secondary school educators believed that learners feel safe at school, while 57.4% felt that there are certain areas in school which are unsafe. Principals from secondary schools felt that secondary schools exhibit higher levels of violence than their primary counterparts. Nearly nine in ten (85.6%) principals received reports of physical violence during the twelve months leading up to the study (Burton, 2008:26).

3.3 Area-specific and small-scale studies

Studies on smaller scale have been conducted sporadically, and mostly by tertiary education institutions. In 2002, a bullying survey was conducted among 1 873 learners (Grade 6 – 11) in 19 schools in the southern part of the Tshwane metropolitan area. Two out in five (41.7%) learners perceived bullying to take place on a daily basis. The playground (29.8%) was cited as the place where violence occurs most, followed by the classroom (20.2%) (Neser *et al.*, 2004:142,144). Furthermore, teasing (38.2%), hurtful name-calling (45.1%), being left out of relationships (22.6%), threats (17.7%) and assault (26.1%) were reported to take place daily. Nearly one in three (29.2%) learners reported feeling unsafe in school (Neser, 2005:69).

In 2002, a qualitative study among 37 schools in the Soutpansberg area of the North West province investigated the extent to which learner safety was ensured (Netshitahame & Van Vollenhoven, 2002:314). Continued fights on school property during class hours, substance and alcohol abuse, unruly behaviour, carrying of weapons and witchcraft was cited as impediments to the safety of learners. Most of the schools had no written school safety policy or programmes, and the principals interviewed were seemingly uninformed in this matter. The presence of safety committees, as well as the application of classroom discipline was found to be absent.

In 2002, a study was conducted among 561 secondary school males in KwaZulu-Natal to examine aetiological pathways to violence (Collings & Magojo, 2003:127). The majority (78.8%) of respondents reported a history of violent behaviour, while 8.2% reported having murdered someone. Nearly two thirds (63.6%) stated that they have assaulted someone, with 16.4% reporting to have assaulted someone with a weapon. Furthermore, the results showed that respondents were more inclined to act alone than in a group when assaulting someone.

Also in 2002, a school safety survey was conducted among 250 Eastern Cape educators to explore their perceptions on school-based violence (De Wet, 2003:94). A quarter (25.5%) of respondents felt that certain areas in school are fairly or very unsafe. The most unsafe place in school was perceived to be the playground. The most forms of victimisation reported by learners were bullying, assault and robbery. More than a fifth (22.3%) of educators indicated that learners were assaulted by fellow learners to a large or very large degree. A third (33.4%) reported that learners were bullied to a large or very large degree.

In 2007, another study in the Eastern Cape showed that 17.1% of educators had a colleague who was physically attacked by a learner (De Wet, 2007a:41). In addition, more than a quarter (27.09%) reported that educators physically assaulted learners (both these results ranged from daily to once or twice a year). A recent school safety survey among 1 514 learners in Isipingo, KwaZulu-Natal, suggested that 29.6% of learners do not enjoy school due to a lack of safety (Steyn & Naicker, 2007:13). More than half (52.6%) reported their peers bringing drugs, weapons and alcohol to school, while almost two in five (38.62%) witnessed peers being physically and verbally assaulted.

In 2008, a study was conducted among schools in the Xhariep district of the Free State province. The study made use of two research methods. First, census-type research was conducted among the principals and life orientation educators of 97 public schools in the district. In addition, a survey was administered among 968 randomly selected Grade 6 learners. According to the school results, one in three (34.0%) schools experienced violence in the two years leading up to the study. Of these schools, 15.2% experienced violence very often and 36.4% had learners being seriously injured due to violence. Forms of violence cited were physical fights among learners (34.0%), conflict involving weapons (15.5%), and conflict between educators and learners (6.2 %). Violence reportedly occurred on playgrounds (81.8%), followed by the classroom (45.5%), sports grounds (33.3%) and toilettes (27.3%) (Steyn & Janse van Rensburg, 2010: in progress).

4. Understanding school-based violence

In order to provide a comprehensive background to the present investigation, important concepts of school-based violence as a construct should be discussed. This includes first and foremost a conceptualisation of school-based violence by exploring different terms and definitions, followed by an exploration of the different types of violence described in the literature. Due to its complexity, the aetiology of school-based violence is described alongside ecological systems theory, which explains violent behaviour as a result of several factors interacting across multiple levels. A discussion of its effects on the physical and psychological well-being of individuals, together with the consequences it holds for the school and broader society, rounds off the understanding of school-based violence.

4.1 The concept “school-based violence”

Before one attempts to study violence within a school environment, a detailed definition of the concept is critical (Tapper Strawhacker, 2002:68). Violence derives from the Latin root *vio*, which refers to a “*physical force used to inflict injury or damage*” (Harper, 2001). According to the WHO (2002:5), violence is the intentional use of physical force. This can be threatened or actual, aimed against oneself, others, a group or community. In addition, violence can result in or likely result in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation. Most forms of violence are seen as deviant acts, which offend collective norms and expectations, break the laws of society, and are punishable by formal sanctions (Ferrante, 2003:215).

Some forms of violence, such as violent sport, is often approved and even encouraged, especially in schools (*cf.* Bryant *et al.* 2003). Other forms can be seen as a part of normal socialisation and maturation processes (Vogel *et al.*, 2003:27). For instance, it is not unusual for adolescents to take part in rough and tumble play, a type of reciprocal interaction with the aim of entertainment and friendship-strengthening (Doll *et al.*, 2004:162; Greene, 2005:237). Once the interaction transitions into hurtful behaviour, the actors usually desist (Burton, 2008:17). On the other hand, violent

interactions marked by maliciousness and intent to harm are also a reality to many children during their time spent in school.

Violence in schools have been described as “*bullying*” (e.g. Battaglio, 2008), “*school violence*” (e.g. Henry, 2000), “*peer victimization and harassment*” (e.g. Prinsloo & Naser, 2007a) and “*school-based violence*” (e.g. Burton, 2008). The use of these terms usually depends on the specificity of the investigations. It can be assumed that bullying, school violence, and school-based violence refer to acts related to the school environment, while peer victimisation and harassment suggest acts potentially occurring in domestic and community areas as well. Bullying could easily be confused with school-based violence, especially since the former often occur in school. However, the two concepts can be differentiated by several aspects.

Bullying has been defined as a situation where “*a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students*” (Olweus, 1993:9). Bullying is considered a dynamic process, occurring in the context of a relationship. In a bullying relationship, certain criteria must be present (Leff *et al.*, 2004:270):

- The bully demonstrates hurtful, harmful and damaging behaviour toward the victim.
- This behaviour results in physical, social and emotional harm.
- The nature of the relationship is one of imbalance between the parties concerned.
- The bully-behaviour occurs repeatedly over time.

Bullying can thus be more comprehensibly defined as a negative, manipulative, abusive act or acts by one or more people against another person or people, typically over a period of time, while being based on an imbalance of power (Sullivan *et al.*, 2005:3). Given the scope of bullying behaviours, some forms of violence are excluded (e.g. isolated incidents of victimisation which is not repeated, conflict between equal parties, etc.). Also, bullying is not necessarily confined to the parameters of the school environment. Consequently, bullying should rather be regarded as a subset of school-based violence (De Wet, 2007b:676).

Both ‘school violence’ and ‘school-based violence’ refers to violence occurring in the school setting. The term ‘school’ derives from the Latin root *schola*, meaning “*place of instruction*” (Harper, 2001). A school can be considered as a physical place where children receive formal instruction by trained educators, typically within school buildings (Howard, 2004:112). A school can be public or independent, and enrolls learners in one or more grades between grade zero and grade twelve (SASA, 1996:2). However, since ‘school’ is an ambiguous term which also refers to “*people united by a general similarity of principles and methods*” (e.g. school of thought) (Harper, 2001), ‘school violence’ could create confusion.

'School-based violence' suggests that violent incidents occur within the social, legal and physical parameters of the school. It is important to discern between 'school' as a physical location for violence which has its roots in the community, and 'school' as a system which causes or aggravates problems experienced by learners and educators (Furlong & Morrison, 2000:73). When referring to 'school-based violence', the insinuation exists that violence is separate from the school, but takes place due to certain factors (not necessarily attributed to the school). Violence is thus based in the school, but does not necessarily form part of the school. Also, the term suggests that the violence takes place within the physical (e.g. fences and buildings) and socio-legal (e.g. supervision on school trips) domain of the school (Henry, 2000:21). For this reason, the present study will make use of the term 'school-based violence' throughout the research report.

As authors use different terms to refer to violence in schools according to the scope of inquiry, a range of definitions have been conceptualised in recent literature. For instance, violence in schools may describe intentional harmful behaviour by educators and learners towards other educators and learners (De Wet, 2007b:676). It can also be described as an intentional physical or non-physical act, which results in physical or psychological pain being inflicted on the victim of that act, while the victim is under the school's supervision (Prinsloo & Naser, 2007a:47). School-based violence has also been defined as an exercise of power over others in school-related settings, which could be instigated by an individual, group or social group (e.g. racial classification in schools during apartheid). This denies the victim their humanity by failing to make a difference, reducing them from what they are and limiting them from reaching their potential (Henry, 2000:21). School-based violence could further refer to institutional violence committed by iatrogenic policies and practices, which is affected by structural inequities at neighbourhood, regional and national levels (Greene, 2005:237). For the purposes of the present study, school-based violence is considered the intentional exercise of power over others by any means, either by a learner or educator, while both parties are under school supervision. This results in physical, emotional and relational harm. School-based violence is considered an umbrella-term, encompassing traditional views of violence and bullying behaviours.

4.2 Typology of school-based violence

School-based violence is characterised by a range of actions. Different authors have proposed different conceptualisations in this regard. For instance, some have identified hitting, shouting, forms of initiation and corporal punishment in their typology of school-based violence (Burton, 2008:4). Olweus (1993:9) distinguishes between direct (verbal or physical) and indirect (making faces, group exclusion, refusing to comply with wishes) negative actions. A distinction has also been drawn between violence, aggression and antisocial behaviour. The latter two are usually thought to be predecessors of violence, and include behaviours that are intended to inflict psychological and physical harm (Miller & Krauss, 2008:19).

It has been suggested that school-based violence should include physical fighting, hidden (relational) violence, systemic violence (state-sanctioned forms of oppression) and suicide¹ (Casella, 2001:19). There has also been a focus on specific violent behaviours (see Table 2), which includes verbal violence, self-directed physical violence, physical violence towards property or objects, and physical violence towards others (McCann, 2002:18). Roper (2002:68) distinguishes between five types of violence, differing in terms of the perpetrator and the victim, as well as whether the assault is physical or sexual in nature:

- Physical assault between learners.
- Sexual assault perpetrated by boy learners on girl learners.
- Assault (physical and sexual) by those outside of the school on learners or teachers.
- Assault by teachers on learners.
- Assault by learners on teachers.

Table 2: Violent behaviours in school

1. Verbal violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swearing and foul language • Insults, name-calling, verbal provocation • Verbal threats of violence • Suicidal threats or comments • Written messages or threats 	2. Physical violence toward self <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicide gesture or attempt • Self-mutilation or intentionally harming self • Risk taking behaviour which result in self-harm
3. Vandalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical violence toward property or objects • Breaking furniture or objects • Arson • Slamming objects 	4. Physical violence toward others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatening with a weapon • Hitting, pushing or physical assault • Causing physical injury to another • Injuring with a weapon

Source: Adapted from McCann (2002:18).

School-based violence can also be categorised through an ecological perspective, according to the perpetrator's level within social structure. In this way, different types of violence can be distinguished across five levels (Henry 2000:25):

1. Learner on learner, learner on educator, and learner on school.
2. Educator on learner, administrator on learner, administrator on educator, educator or administrator on parent, and parent on educator or administrator.
3. School board on school or parent, school district on school or parent, community on school or parent, and local political decisions on school or parent.

¹ Even though some authors include self-directed violence in their typology of school-based violence, the present study will only focus on violence directed toward others. The inclusion of Table 2 serves only as illustration to the variety of violent actions which can be part of the spectrum of school-based violence.

4. State and national educational policy on school, state and national crime policy on learner, media on learner and administrator, corporate exploitation on learner, and national and state policies on drugs.
5. Harmful social processes and practices which are present throughout the other levels. These processes are patterns of interaction which, in time, become a social reality which exists above the individuals whose actions constitute that structure.

After holding public hearings on school-based violence in South Africa, the SAHRC (2008:6-13) concluded that school-based violence can be distinguished by the following types of violent interactions:

- Learners against learners (e.g. bullying, sexual violence and sexual harassment, accidental and psychological violence and discrimination).
- Learners against educators (e.g. physical attacks, psychological violence, verbal attacks, discriminatory and sexist incidents).
- Educators toward learners (e.g. sexual violence and harassment, physical assault, corporal punishment).
- External persons against learners and educators (e.g. assaults and robberies, attacks on school facilities and vandalism).

When considering empirical investigations, researchers tend to vary on the typology of school-based violence since they draw distinctions along the lines of their particular research focus. For example, both the NSVS and NYVS focused on verbal threats, physical assaults, robbery, and sexual assault (Burton, 2008:16; Leoschut & Burton, 2006:68). The NYVS additionally included theft of personal property in their understanding of school-based violence (Leoschut & Burton, 2006:68). Some researchers have made distinctions between physical, relational and verbal aggression. Verbal aggression has been sub-divided into repeated name-calling, teasing and threats of physical violence (Prinsloo & Naser, 2007b:326). Other categorisations focus on physical attacks or verbal threats by learners or educators against the learner, his or her peers, or educators (De Wet, 2007b:679-680).

Differentiations may be broad, for instance general, physical, and relational victimisation (Paul & Cillessen, 2007:34). There has been a focus on more serious types of offences, such as punching and kicking, attacks with a weapon, rape, attempted murder and murder (Collings & Magojo, 2003:134; De Wet, 2006:20). Moreover, gang fights, robbery, kidnapping, rape by educators and learners, assault by educators and learners and political violence have been studied (De Wet, 2003:103). In this regard, it has been argued that a sole focus on so-called serious forms of violence can be problematic, as low level school-based violence could subsequently be neglected (Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002:350).

Some researchers make use of standard psychometric instruments to test for different types of victimisation. For instance, the Social Experiences Questionnaire measures types of relational violence (e.g. being excluded from a group) and physical violence (e.g. being hit) (Woods *et al.*, 2007:379). The Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire assesses various aspects of the bullying phenomenon. Five dimensions of bullying behaviour are explored, i.e. physical, verbal, indirect, racial or sexual bullying. In addition, various forms of bullying as defined by the pupils are included (Greef & Grobler, 2008:132).

School-based violence thus includes, without being limited to, learner and school staff victimisation; learner and school staff perpetration; physical, psychological and relational exploitation; physical and verbal fights and bullying; classroom disorder; sexual and other boundary violations; and the use of weapons in the school environment (Miller & Krauss, 2008:15). The present study will include physical violence (with and without weapons), verbal and relational violence, sexual abuse and vandalism between learners. Physical, verbal, relational violence and sexual abuse between learners and educators are also included, as well as corporal punishment as a form of physical abuse. Subsequent to the different types of school-based violence, an understanding of the root causes of school-based violence is warranted.

4.3 Aetiology of school-based violence

School-based violence studies have traditionally focused on individual-level, psycho-social models of causation, while often disregarding system-level variables and socio-structural frameworks (Akiba *et al.*, 2002:830; Furlong & Morison, 2000:19). As Leinhardt and Willert (2002:33) point out, school-based violence is a complex phenomenon and a product of many factors, with no single cause existing in isolation. In this regard, some researchers moved beyond individual focus to investigate the social, cultural, political and economic environment in which school-based violence occurs (Watts & Erevelles, 2004:272).

Henry (2000:26-27) posits that one should look at the individual and the context of his or her life, including characteristics such as family, race and gender. In essence, individual choice and morality should be explored in the context of the social processes that shape human thinking. This line of argument derives from a social ecological perspective, and has in recent years been abundantly applied in the study of school-based violence (e.g. Maree 2008:57-76; De Wet 2003:91-94; Henry, 2000:26-27; Battaglio, 2008:161; Bemak & Keys, 2000:16-22; Swearer & Espelage, 2004:2-10; McWhirter *et al.*, 2004:21).

There are currently several versions of the ecological perspective, but arguably the most widely used is Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (EST). EST was originally intended for developmental psychology (Bronfenbrenner, 1977:513). Since its conception, it has been adapted and simplified to explain the causes of a range of problem behaviours, including school-based

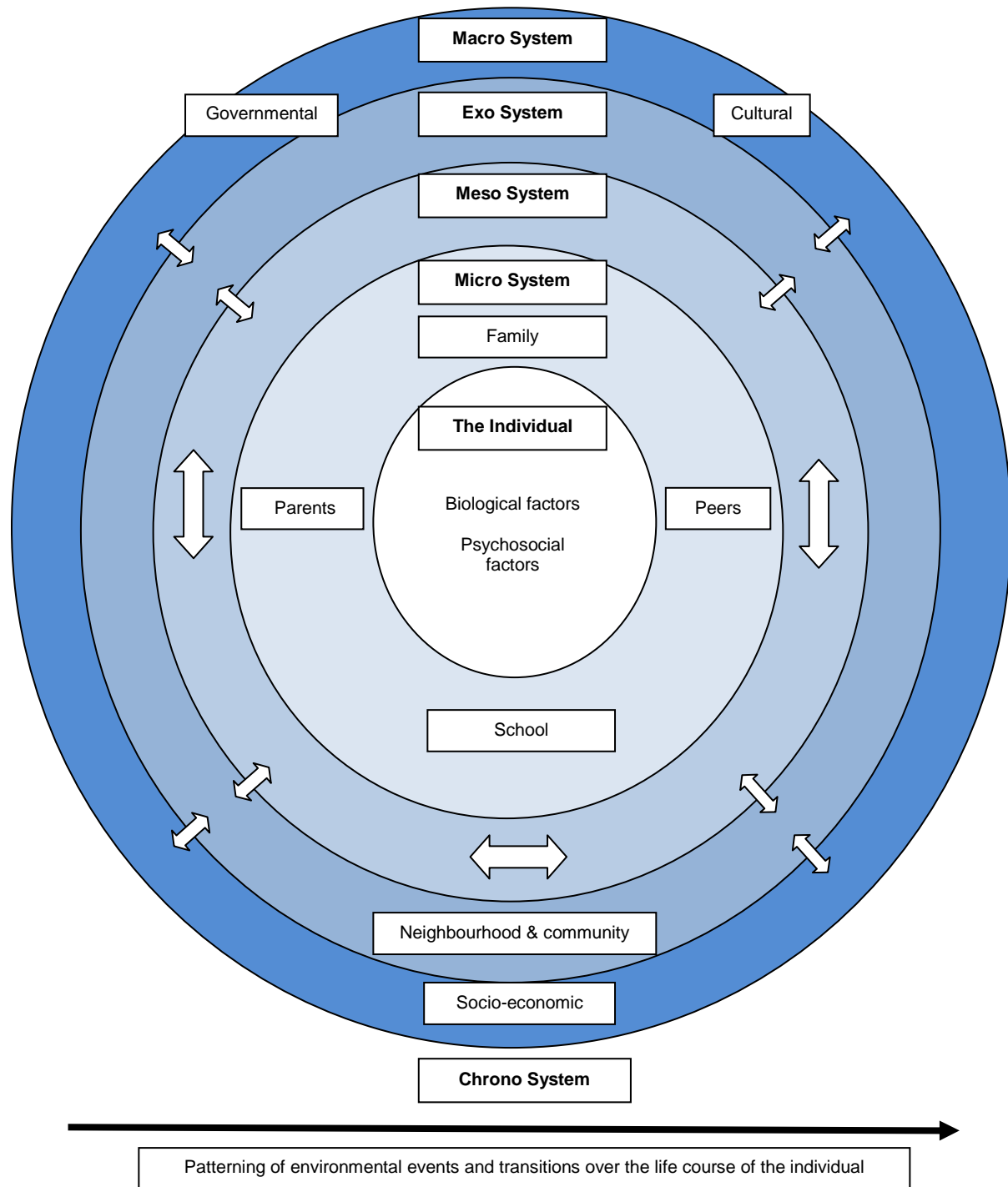
violence (e.g. Ward, 2007:12-27). According to EST, the presence or lack of school-based violence can be ascribed to reciprocal relationships and interchange between factors in different structures, all within in an ecological environment (Ungar, 2004:342).

In the EST framework, the individual exists in an ecological environment which consists of a set of nested structures, each located inside the other (similar to Russian babushka dolls) (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:39; see Figure 1). Apart from the individual level, five structures are included, which is referred to as the micro, meso, exo, macro and chrono levels (Ryan & Paquette, 2001:2). Each of these structures contains risk factors and represents causal relations pertaining to school-based violence. They also have a rippling effect on surrounding systems (Ward, 2007:13). The boundaries of these systems are assumed to be semi-permeable, thus allowing causal interaction. Accordingly, school-based violence can be caused by interacting factors across multiple levels (Moore, 2003:472).

A challenge of ecological systems models is the lack of specificity in guiding the conceptualisation of the variables under scrutiny (McLeroy *et al.*, 1988:355). This presents difficulty in categorising causal factors across the different ecological levels, and could easily lead to confusion. For example, some authors group school attributes at the micro level (e.g. Ward, 2007:13), while others classify them under the meso level (e.g. Henry, 2000:27). Therefore, clarification is needed to lay out the logic behind the pairing of causal factors across the ecological levels. As mentioned, the individual is nested in a set of structures, which differs in relation to their relative proximity to the individual. The micro level presents factors with the highest proximity to the individual, followed by the other levels each representing factors lower in proximity to the individual.

For instance, strong predictors of violent behaviour in adolescents include an association with gang members and the presence of gangs in schools and the community (Miller & Krauss, 2008:17-18). In ecological systems, these factors would constitute causes existing in three levels according to their proximity to the individual. An association with gang members would be categorised in the micro system, as the micro system encompass highly influential, proximal relationships in face-to-face settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:39). On the other hand, the presence of gangs could affect the individual in a more indirect manner, e.g. in both the school and the community, but not necessarily in face-to-face settings. For instance, the presence of gangs in a certain setting could foster the existence of other factors which also have been linked to violent behaviour, e.g. substance abuse (Chisholm & Ward, 2005:64). However, it is assumed that there are differing levels according to how a factor influences an individual. With this in mind, the reader should be aware that a causal factor could exist on more than one level. It is acknowledged that any categorisation of causal factors is open to criticism.

Figure 1: The ecological systems model



Source: Adapted from Ward (2007:13).

4.3.1 Individual characteristics

Characteristics such as biological and psychosocial traits are likely to influence how the individual interacts with other contexts (Ward, 2007:14). These traits are thought to manipulate the way in which those contexts contribute to an outcome. It includes genetic, neurological, behavioural and psychological factors, which mutually influence each other, within a systems framework.

- Biological factors

In terms of gender, males are more likely than females to show and engage in violent behaviour (Prinsloo & Naser, 2007a:50). This can be attributed to a range of factors, including social roles, genetics and hormonal differences (Flores, 2005: 75; Van der Merwe & Dawes, 2007:100). Biosocial variables have also been linked to violent behaviour in young people. For instance, antisocial tendencies have been shown to be inherited (Loeber & Pardini, 2008:2495). The MAO genotype has also recently been linked to violence and weapons use (Beaver *et al.*, 2010:133).

Certain neurophysiological factors have been identified as causes for violent behaviour (Tremblay & LeMarquand, 2001:151-161; Vogel, 2002:23). Birth complications, such as oxygen deficiencies and trauma during labour have been suggested to influence aggression levels during later life (Almond, 2008:68). Furthermore, psychological disorders such as psychopathy (McCann, 2002:51), the use of psychotropic drugs (Almond, 2008:68), attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (Bemak & Keys, 2000:16) and cognitive dysfunction (Flores, 2005:75) have been linked to aggression.

- Psychosocial factors

In terms of psychosocial variables, a range of factors have been identified which could contribute to violence. Low self-esteem (Sutherland & Sheperd, 2002:439), and depression and anxiety (Prinsloo & Naser, 2007a:53) have been indicated as a cause for violent behaviour. Individuals' negative perceptions of their self-control, self-efficacy, cognitive abilities and social problem-solving could affect their coping with and subsequent exhibition of violence (Jimerson *et al.*, 2006:12). A history of delinquency (Tremblay & LeMarquand, 2001:140), which is often associated with a general lack of self-concern (Sutherland & Sheperd, 2002:439), is an additional predictor of violent behaviour.

Learners involved in acts of school-based violence are often socially isolated. They tend to be unwilling to support others, have few friends and have difficulty making new friends (Prinsloo & Naser, 2007a:53). They are also inclined to be jealous and tend to seek attention, popularity, entitlement, domination and control (Parault *et al.*, 2007:149; Randall, 2006:15). A sense of loneliness, disconnection, social dissatisfaction and sadness have all been shown to be typical traits of bullies (Orr, 2003:67; Prinsloo & Naser, 2007a:53). Emotional immaturity (Randall, 2006: 16) and the belief

that certain factors are beyond their control (Bemak & Keys, 2000:16) have further been associated with bullying behaviour.

Low levels of self-restraint and a weak internal locus of control (Sullivan *et al.*, 2007:317; Vogel, 2002:24), along with high frustration levels (De Wet, 2003:92), also serve as risk factors for violent behaviour. Response styles which are characterised by volatility, short fuses and a tendency to over attribute hostile intent to other people's behaviour have been shown to be present in violent offenders (Bemak & Keys, 2000:18). Certain personality traits and temperament (e.g. impulsivity) have consistently shown strong links with violent behaviour (Almond, 2008: 68; Bemak & Keys, 2000:16; Miller & Krauss, 2008:17; Randall, 2006:16; Sutherland & Sheperd, 2002:439; Warner *et al.*, 1999:60; Van der Merwe & Dawes, 2007:100).

Some debate exists around the role of intelligence in school-based violence. While some argue that low intelligence can lead to acts of violence (Almond, 2008:68), others argue that the focus should rather fall on academic performance (Maree, 2005:76). As such, attention problems (Ward, 2007:15), poor academic performance (Osborne, 2004:51) and truancy (Kallus, 2004:217) have been linked to violent behaviour. The types of after-school and leisure activities learners take part in have shown a profound effect on their behaviour (Flores, 2005: 82; Ward, 2007:23). This is especially the case in gang-related activities (Van der Merwe & Dawes, 2007:100) and alcohol and substance abuse (McDonald *et al.*, 2005:1509).

Being constantly victimised, teased and bullied may provoke thoughts and actions of retribution (Bemak & Keys, 2000:16; Miller & Krauss, 2008:18; Orr, 2003:37; Prinsloo & Naser, 2007a:53; Randall, 2006:16). Individuals with a low sense of guilt (Ward, 2007:17) and a lack of empathy (Bemak & Keys, 2000:16; Vogel, 2002:25) have been associated with the victimisation of others. Favourable attitudes toward deviant behaviour (Kallus, 2004:217), as well as poor conflict resolution skills (Oosthuizen & De Waal, 2005:4; Randall, 2006:16) are further linked to violent behaviour.

4.3.2 Micro system factors

Individuals are nested within micro systems, which are proximal relationships that provide continuous and highly influential direct interaction (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:39). Micro systems are patterns of activities, social roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting (Ward, 2007:12). These systems, which most prominently include family, parents, peers and school, have particular physical, social and symbolic features that invite, permit or inhibit engagement. Such engagement leads to sustained, progressively more complex interaction with and activity in the immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:39).

- Family factors

The socio-economic status of the family show links with antisocial behaviour of children and young people (Maree, 2008:62). Families of bullies exhibit a lack of warmth and high levels of sibling rivalry (Duncan, 2004:239). Children who come from families with high frustration levels due to overcrowding tend to demonstrate high levels of aggression (Van der Merwe & Dawes, 2007:100). Similarly, the loss of homes and other forms of social disorganisation have been suggested to produce violent youth (Vogel, 2002:25). In these circumstances, families' energy levels are drained by the search for basic needs (Bemak & Keys, 2000:22). As postulated by Maslow's theory of self-actualisation, this leaves little time for higher level needs such as love and togetherness (Sheehy, 2004:164).

A dysfunctional family (Oosthuizen & De Waal, 2005:4) and a family marked by low levels of cohesion between its members is more likely to produce violent youth than a close-knit family (Ward, 2007:14). High levels of conflict between family members (Duncan, 2004:241) along with poor coping skills put young people at risk of becoming violent (Warner *et al.*, 1999:60). This outcome has also been suggested in a general breakdown in family structure (Orr, 2003:37). Families with alcoholism, mental and other illnesses tend to promote aggression (Randall, 2006:16). In addition, family members with criminal tendencies could cause children to conform to violent criminal behaviour (Almond, 2008:68; Wasserman & Seracini, 2001:167-169).

- Parental factors

Parents who show indifference, lack of warmth, lack of bonding and who are poor at setting limits could prove to be detrimental to their children's behaviour (Flores, 2005:75; Randall, 2006:16). Abusive and harsh treatment of an infant could foster antisocial behaviour, as opposed to the bond created by a caring primary relationship (Neser, 2005:61). Poor parental supervision, along with absent and violent parents with poor self control, has been recognised as risk factors for youth offending (Almond, 2008:68; Bemak & Keys, 2000:17; De Wet 2003:93; Oosthuizen & De Waal, 2005:4; Prinsloo & Neser, 2007a:53; Vogel, 2002:25). Also, parents who have low or no expectations of a child may foster frustration and aggression (Almond, 2008:68).

Harsh, erratic and inconsistent discipline used by parents could lead to violent behaviour (Bemak & Keys, 2000:17; Duncan, 2004:241; Miller & Krauss, 2008:17; Randall, 2006:16; Van der Merwe & Dawes, 2007:100). Parents with derisory conflict management skills and overall inadequate modelling could contribute to their children's aggression levels (Bemak & Keys, 2000:17). Poor parenting techniques lead to a lack of bonding between child and parent, which could prompt future antisocial behaviour, including acts of violence (Roper, 2002:69).

Parental child abuse, similar to bullying, can embed violent behaviour in victims (Almond, 2008:68; Bemak & Keys, 2000:18; Maree, 2008:65; Randall, 2006:16). Parental substance abuse serves as a

poor example for children and can lead to aggression and abuse (Bemak & Keys, 2000:17). Also, it impairs parents' ability to adequately supervise their children. Growing up in these circumstances constrains positive influences outside of the school and violent behaviour becomes more likely. These conditions provide limited responses to a child when feeling angry, provoked or dissatisfied (Bemak & Keys, 2000:17).

- Peer risk factors

Antisocial peer associations, whether with friends or siblings or as part of a gang, could lead to violent behaviour toward others (Bemak & Keys, 2000:17; De Wet, 2003:92; Kallus, 2004:217; Karcher, 2004:9; Miller & Krauss, 2008:17; Oosthuizen & De Waal, 2005:4; Randall, 2006:16; Ward, 2007:22). This has especially been shown in the tendency of school-based violence incidents to occur in group context. Violence committed in a group context is associated with more extreme violent attitudes (attitudes reflecting core attitudes toward a culture of violence) than violence committed by an individual (Bemak & Keys, 2000:17). In order to be part of a group sometimes means that violent behaviour is a necessary initiation rite (Bemak & Keys, 2000:17; Parault *et al.*, 2007:149).

- School risk factors

Schools are, next to family, one of the most important socialising agents and have prominence in violence prevention (Neser, 2005:61). Nevertheless, there are several risk factors for violent behaviour that have been associated with school characteristics. Poor physical conditions of a school could cause frustration and feelings of disrespect, and may subsequently lead to acts of violence. This includes a lack of infrastructure, narrow hallways, broken-down buildings, a lack of greenery and a lack of cleanliness (Bemak & Keys, 2000:19; Maree, 2008:67). Larger schools also have higher levels of violence than their smaller counterparts (i.e. overcrowding leads to frustration, high levels of competition and aggression) (Warner *et al.*, 1999:61).

A dysfunctional school system with a lack of proper organisation and discipline could create opportunities for antisocial behaviour (Herrenkohl *et al.*, 2001:219). Schools marked by high levels of conflict have been shown to perpetuate both externalising and internalising problem behaviours (Kasen *et al.*, 2004:204). Under-funded, poorly staffed and over-regimented schools are also more likely to exhibit school-based violence (Almond, 2008:68). School-based violence is furthermore likely to occur regularly in a school with low overall academic achievement (Lee & Cohen, 2008:118).

Schools with high levels of educator dissatisfaction, suspension rates, drop-outs and a high toleration of bullying behaviour are likely to experience higher levels of school-based violence (Chisholm & Ward, 2005:64). Certain school staff factors have been suggested to influence the school climate and subsequent likelihood for violent behaviour. This includes poor educator role models, the effectiveness and attitudes of principals, and the training levels of staff (Bemak & Keys, 2000:ix;

Oosthuizen & De Waal, 2005:4; Lee & Cohen, 2008:118). In addition, schools with pro-drug environments foster violent behaviour (Ellickson & McGuigan, 2000:571), which could be attributed to gang activities (Chisholm & Ward, 2005:64).

4.3.3 Meso system factors

The meso system refers to the linkages and processes taking place between two or more levels containing the developing person (e.g. the relations between home and school, school and peers etc.) (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:39). It essentially entails the interaction between different micro systems, and the influence this interaction has on the individual (Ward, 2007:12).

When violence is used regularly as a problem-solving strategy at home, violent norms are created and condoned. This could clash with norms taught by the school and possibly lead to anti-social behaviour and aggression (Bemak & Keys, 2000:18; Randall, 2006:16). Similarly, peer pressure could create conflict between norms taught at home and school and those of peers. The latter has a powerful influence on the individual during adolescence and could lead to the condoning of violent behaviour (Almond, 2008:68). This is especially possible in the case of gang involvement in school (Miller & Krauss, 2008:17).

Harsh or too lenient punishment in school could add to the problematic nature of disciplinary methods applied at home (Bemak & Keys, 2000:1). A low level of parental involvement in school creates a risk of experiencing school-based violence. This outcome can also be anticipated in the case of adversarial relationships between the school and the parents of perpetrators (Chisholm & Ward, 2005:64). It could also lead to weak bonds between the learner and the school, which in itself is a major risk factor for school-based violence (Ellickson & McGuigan, 2000:571; Herrenkohl *et al.*, 2001:218; Miller & Krauss, 2008:17; Randall, 2006:16).

4.3.4 Exo system factors

In an exo system, there are linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings. In such a system events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:39). It includes those domains children have little direct access to but which nonetheless influence them and the people with whom they have close relationships (Ward, 2007:13). This may include aspects such as the neighbourhood and the wider community which contain the individual.

Certain features of a neighbourhood could lead to violent behaviour. Factors such as the availability of drugs, alcohol and weapons, neighbourhood members who are involved in crime, the presence of gangs and high levels of violence have often been associated with violence (Chisholm & Ward, 2005:60; Flores, 2005:75; Miller & Krauss, 2008:17; Oosthuizen & De Waal, 2005:4; Orr, 2003:37;

Roper, 2002:69; Van der Merwe & Dawes, 2007:100). Concentrated urban areas are also more likely to experience problems with violent crime (Almond, 2008:68).

Transient and disorganised communities with inadequate housing, high levels of unemployment, broken homes, economic deprivation and few or non-existent community-based services (such as job training, day care, recreation and public transportation) are characterised by violent crime (Bemak & Keys, 2000:22; Almond, 2008:68; McWhirter *et al.*, 2004:22-30; Miller & Krauss, 2008:17; Oosthuizen & De Waal, 2005:4). Exposure to community violence has especially been shown to have a major negative effect on young people's behaviour (Brandt *et al.*, 2005:327; Leoschut, 2006:4; Sullivan *et al.*, 2007:297; Ward *et al.*, 2001:300).

4.3.5 Macro system factors

The macrosystem may be thought of as a societal blueprint for a particular culture or subculture. It refers to the overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems characteristics of a given culture or subculture. There is a particular reference to the belief systems, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, life-styles, opportunity structures, hazards and life course options that are embedded in each of the broader systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:39-40).

A culture of violence and moral degeneration of society could lead to violent behaviour among children and youth (De Wet, 2003:93; Flores, 2005:76; Maree, 2008:62; Oosthuizen & De Waal, 2005:4). Such a culture may be influenced by media and sports violence, which has repeatedly been cited as risk factors for aggression and violence (Bemak & Keys, 2000:22; Miller & Krauss, 2008:17; Orr, 2003:37). Political role models who condone violence in public could also add to the creation of pro-violence attitudes (De Wet, 2003:93; Roper, 2002: 69; Ward, 2007:27).

Government role players who show disregard for the law set poor examples for young people and add to moral degeneration (Maree, 2008:62). Socio-economic factors, such as social disorganisation, further add to the risk of violence (Ward, 2007:25). Poverty or low socio-economic status has been shown to foster crime (Kallus, 2004:217; Flores, 2005:76). However, it must be stressed that it's rather the perception of being relatively poor than actual poverty which contributes to criminal activity (Bemak & Keys, 2000:21).

4.3.6 Chrono system factors

The chrono system encompasses change or consistency over time - not only in the characteristics of the person, but also in the environment in which that person lives. This includes changes over the life course of family structure, socioeconomic status, employment, place of residence and the degree of ability in everyday life (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:40). For instance, chronological events such as death or divorce in the family could lead to aggressive and violent behaviour (Ryan & Paquette, 2001:2).

Furthermore, as risk factors differ in occurrence according to certain points in the life-span, family-level factors especially influence younger children. In a similar way, peer group and neighbourhood factors hold greater prominence for older children (Miller & Krauss, 2008:16).

As a child develops, certain individual changes take place due to biological, intellectual, physical and social influences (Flores, 2005:80). Older adolescents are more violent than younger ones (Maree, 2008:73), more specifically, middle and late adolescence (Prinsloo & Naser, 2007a:52). Aggressive and impulsive children are more likely to develop violent behaviour during adolescence (Bemak & Keys, 2000:16; Kallus, 2004:217; McCann, 2002:47; Ward, 2007:15). Learners in more senior school settings (Grade 9 and 10, more specifically) appear more prone to violence (Prinsloo & Naser, 2007a:52). Older learners have also shown to be more confrontational in their use of body language than younger learners (Bemak & Keys, 2000:18).

In a broader sense, it has been suggested that time-bound societal events contribute to the risk for violence. In this regard, South Africa has a violent and conflict-ridden past. Apartheid has had a profound effect on aspects such as heritage, family structure and education (Engelbrecht, 2006:253). Social disintegration was partly brought on, especially in the post-1983 period, by youths implementing a policy to make South Africa “*ungovernable*” (Vogel, 2002:25). Such an ideology is thought to have created a violent culture among young people (Engelbrecht, 2006:253). This culture was fostered by violent campaigns against the government with young people as agents who gained tremendous power with widespread use of violence (Vogel, 2002:25).

The apartheid system also resulted in high levels of unemployment, extremes in health and poverty, ongoing racism and patriarchal values and behaviours (Harber, 2001:261). The government segregated races, which led to many black people being forced to live in townships outside town and city borders. The social disintegration brought on by this mobilisation caused substantial frustration, poverty and high levels of crime. Straker *et al.* (1996:52) notes that “*adversity and violence are permanent features of South African township life*”. In addition, it has been argued that, in the transition to democracy, the implementation of post-modern policies with a focus on human rights has led to lax discipline in schools (Badenhorst *et al.*, 2007:304).

4.4 The effects of school-based violence

As discussed, school-based violence is a multifaceted construct. Thus it can be anticipated that a range of consequences can be associated with victimisation in schools. It also impacts on school administrators, the overall image of the school, as well as the community as a whole (Kollapan, 2006; Rossouw & Steward, 2008:246). Victims of school-based violence suffer emotionally, physically and financially (Wallace, 1998:137), and experience short and long term effects (SAHRC, 2008:14). Short term effects (that occur shortly after an attack) are generally viewed as less serious and constitute physical aspects of victimisation. Wounds, scars and pains will heal, of course depending on the

severity of the assault (SAHRC, 2008:14). However, iatrogenic consequences should not be taken lightly, as serious physical injury could result in long term disability or, in extreme cases, death. Being victimised sexually also exposes victims to sexually transmitted diseases (Crawage, 2005:54).

Long-term effects are psychosocial and developmental in nature (Albus *et al.*, 2004:550). The experience of violence at a young age has been shown to impact negatively on individual development, as well as the development of pro-social behaviour (Burton, 2008: 2; Maree, 2005:18). These early experiences could also result in adolescent substance use and suicide (Crawage, 2005:32). Adults who were victims of school bullying have been shown to exhibit problematic behaviour such as depression, physical abuse and feelings of alienation (Neser, 2005:64). Long-term psychological effects of school-based violence may include symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), attention deficit disorder (ADD), anxiety and depression (Crawage, 2005:54; Maree, 2005:17; Albus *et al.* 2004:54).

Long-term outcomes are usually grouped into internalising and externalising consequences (SAHRC, 2008:14). The former includes sadness, shame, guilt, loneliness, anxiety, fear, insomnia, withdrawal, humiliation, feelings of helplessness, self-blame, changes in eating patterns, loss of concentration, lack of self-esteem and ego-functional damage (Burton 2008:14; Crawage, 2005:54; Maree, 2005:18; Neser, 2006:139). Internalising consequences also refer to feelings of powerlessness, hostility and revulsion (Parkes, 2007:411). Externalising behaviours include a lack of self-restraint, drug use, distrust of people, aggression, truancy, school drop-out and isolation and neglect from school and school-related activities (Crawage, 2005:54; Maree, 2008:18; Neser, 2006:139; Prinsloo & Neser, 2007a:52; SAHRC, 2008:14; Sullivan *et al.*, 2007:297). Victims of violence are more likely than non-victims to be victimised again, as well as to 'act out' violently (Burton 2008:14; Crawage, 2005:54; SAHRC, 2008:14).

Results from the aforementioned southern Tshwane study suggest that male victims are likely to experience feelings of rage, in contrast with female victims experiencing sadness and unhappiness. Learners who reported feeling unsafe in school were more likely to experience loneliness, social dissatisfaction, disliking school and school avoidance. Overall, it was found that victims of school-based violence experienced rage (51.0%), distress and sadness (48.0%) and erosion of the self-concept (35.0%). Some victims also reported avoiding school sporadically because of victimisation (12.0%). Peer association, self esteem and self restraint were found to be lacking. Moreover, victims of school-based violence were found to be prone to depression and anxiety (Prinsloo & Neser, 2007a:50-53).

School-based violence also has an effect on educators (*cf.* De Wet, 2003, 2006, 2007a). Educators do not only have to deal with common forms of transgressions, but also with more serious offences. These could be violent and criminal in nature and could thus pose potential harm to their well-being (Masitsa, 2008:240). Consequences such as post-traumatic stress, disturbances in mood, thoughts

and behaviour, as well as hyper-arousal and avoidance, have a negative influence on teaching (SAHRC, 2008:14). Feelings of fear and disempowerment could lead to educators acting out aggressively toward their learners (Crawage, 2005:54). This could in turn lead to alienation, dissatisfaction with work and ultimately, personal problems such as alcohol dependency (SAHRC, 2008:14).

Apart from individual victims, school-based violence also affects overall education and academic achievement (Crawage, 2005:54; Flores, 2005:75; Maree, 2008:18; Naser, 2005:64; Warner *et al.*, 1999:64; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2008:110). The presence of school-based violence inhibits learning and harms the school climate (Miller & Krauss, 2008:18). As school-based violence interacts with ill-discipline, misconduct and fear, the effectiveness of teaching is adversely affected (Rossouw & Stewart, 2008:246). Learners from many countries have shown to be fearful of being victimised at school (Avi Astor *et al.*, 2002:717). Facing the prospect of being victimised at school could subsequently interfere with academic and cognitive performance (Warner *et al.*, 1999:64).

Learning difficulties such as innumeracy and literacy deficits, inability to handle class assignments, poor examination performance and general lack of school motivation are further anticipated consequences of school-based violence (SAHRC, 2008:14). These educational setbacks affect *“schools, families, peer groups, communities and society as a whole”* (Naser, 2005:64). Violence has dramatic consequences for the well-being of the poor, by negatively influencing livelihood security and social institutional functioning. Investment in jobs is adversely affected, which results in the loss of employment and reduced human capital. Also, violence tends to create distrust between generations, which widens the generation gap (UNODC, 2008:15).

5. Coping with school-based violence

Violence has different meanings to victims since there are different ways of making sense of an incident (Parkes, 2007:411). In order to mitigate the effects of school-based violence, individuals make use of the process of coping. In the next section, the coping process and the use of different coping strategies will be discussed. Coping with school-based victimisation depends on the strategies used in dealing with other types of stress. This assumption is largely theoretical, as empirical evidence is lacking. Central to this section is the transactional model of coping and stress, which forms the basis for the categorisation of coping strategies, i.e. problem-focused and emotion-focused. In addition, the possibility of gender differences in the use of coping strategies will be explored by means of recent literature on the topic.

5.1 Coping and coping strategies

Coping is the capacity to respond and recover from something stressful (WHO, 1999). More specifically, coping is defined as “*the person's constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the person's resources*” (Lazarus, 1993:237). Certain assumptions about coping need to be taken into account along with these definitions (Aldwin & Yancura, 2004):

- It is process-oriented, i.e. there is a focus on what an individual thinks and does in a stressful encounter, and how this change as the encounter unfolds.
- It is contextual, being influenced by the individual's appraisal of the demands warranted for the encounter and the resources available for managing it.
- There are no assumptions on what constitutes good or bad coping, as the focus is on an individual's efforts to manage demands, whether this results in success or not.

Effective coping consists of a set of strategies that can be used in specific situations (Mitchell, 2004:18). Coping strategies are applied in an attempt to redefine stressful events with the purpose of minimising adversity (Agnew, 2001:326). A host of coping strategies have been identified, including the use of humour, religious coping, meaning making and relying on supportive peers and adults (Sharf, 2001:329; Aldwin & Yancura, 2004). Even though some coping strategies are believed to be more positive, no coping strategy should be regarded as either adaptive or maladaptive. The effectiveness of a strategy depends on the degree of fit between the strategy and appraisal of a situation (Mitchell, 2004:19-20). However, it is thought that some strategies (e.g. problem-focused coping) are generally more likely to yield positive outcomes than others (e.g. emotion-focused coping) (McGee, 2003: 309).

As adolescents age, they add to their repertoire of coping strategies. Older adolescents apply a more diverse range of coping strategies than younger adolescents, possibly due to developed cognitions and increased skill in the use of coping strategies (Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000:546). The use of coping strategies is influenced by contextual factors (e.g. prior victimisation, availability of social support) and individual characteristics (e.g. gender, emotional reactivity, attitudes, prior experiences with similar stressors) (Terranova, 2009:255). For instance, individuals with a high sense of humour are more likely to employ problem-focused strategies to cope with stressful events or conditions (Abel, 2002:376).

A highly influential contextual factor is the type of stress experienced (Terranova, 2009:255; Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000:546). Three types of stressors have been identified, namely life change events, traumatic stressors, and chronic stressors (Holahan *et al.*, 2004; see Table 3). School-based violence could be regarded as a traumatic stressor, as these stressors stem from externally imposed, unexpected, uncontrolled, and emotionally overwhelming situations (Okun, 2002:245). However, as

bullying occurs repeatedly over time, school-based violence could also be a chronic stressor, depending on situational factors (Leff *et al.*, 2004:270).

Table 3: Types and examples of stressors

Life change events	Traumatic stressors	Chronic stressors
Death of spouse	War exposure	Family role strains
Death of friend	Victim of violent crime	Work role strains
Divorce	Natural disaster	Discrimination
Fired at work	Technological disaster	Poverty
Financial setback	Serious medical illness	Care giving

Adapted from Holahan *et al.* (2004)

5.2 The transactional model of coping and stress

Even though different conceptualisations of coping strategies exist, categories are usually dichotomous. For instance, coping strategies can be divided along the parameters of approach and avoidance strategies (Vogel, 2002:24; Pakenham *et al.*, 2007:91):

- Approach strategies – direct efforts to alter the stressful situation, which includes problem-solving and support seeking.
- Avoidance strategies – no attempts to alter the situation, which includes denial, avoidance and wishful thinking.

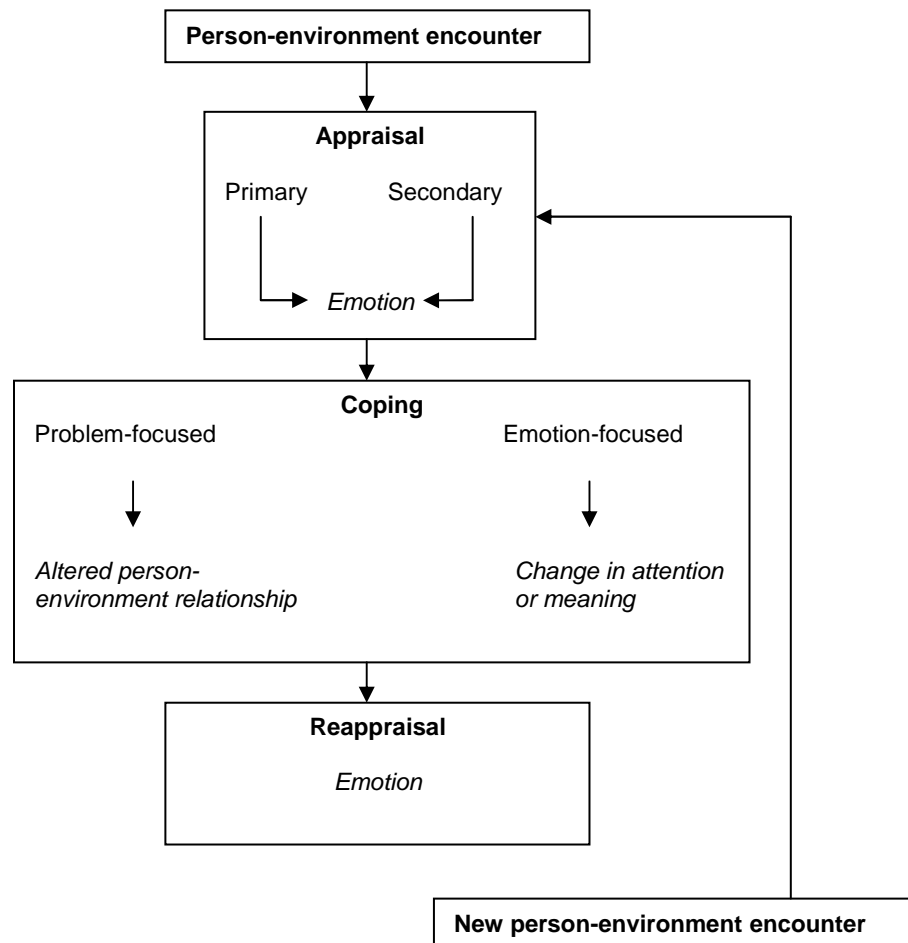
Arguably the most widely used conceptualisation of coping strategies can be found in Lazarus and Folkman's transactional model of coping and stress. According to this model, stress is interpreted as transactions between the individual and the environment. These transactions depend on the external stressor's impact, and are mediated by the individuals' cognitive appraisal (University of Twente, 2009). Cognitive appraisal is a successive process used by individuals to evaluate whether and how an environmental encounter is relevant to their well-being (Folkman *et al.*, 1986:992). This takes place in three steps (Folkman *et al.*, 1986:993; Mitchell, 2004:18):

1. Primary appraisal determines whether there is a problem or danger.
2. Secondary appraisal assesses what, if anything, can be done to deal with the problem.
3. Reappraisal takes place based on new information attained from the environment and individual during the situation.

In essence, primary appraisal assesses the perceived control of the situation and available resources, after which secondary appraisal guides the use of coping strategies (Mitchell, 2004:18). After appraisal, coping efforts take place. Coping efforts are actual strategies aimed at the regulation of the

problem which result in outcomes of the coping process (University of Twente, 2009). The effectiveness of the strategies used and the individual's psychological adjustment is determined by reappraisal (Mitchell, 2004: 18). There are two strategies in the transactional model, i.e. problem-focused and emotion-focused coping (Sharf, 2001:12-13). These strategies refer to overlapping, and not to separate processes (Garnefski *et al.*, 2002:604).

Figure 2: The transactional model of coping and stress



Source: Adapted from Folkman & Lazarus (1988: 467).

5.2.1 Problem-focused strategies

Problem-focused coping aims to modify the perceived stress through direct action, and is likely to be applied when a situation is appraised as being changeable (Mitchell, 2004:19). It targets the alteration of the relationship between the individual and the environment through planning and decision-making (i.e. planned problem-solving) (Büyükşahin, 2009:709; Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000:538-539). This may include learning new skills, finding alternative ways of gratification, developing alternative behavioural standards, attaining social support as well as creating cognitive plans to address the situation (Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000:538-539; Mitchell, 2004:19).

Problem-focused coping is employed when a stressor is appraised as being harmful, threatening or challenging, with a possible solution (Folkman *et al.*, 1986:993; Mitchell, 2004:10; Renk & Creasy, 2003:160). These solutions can be outer-directed or inner-based. Outer-directed solutions attempt to change or affect the behaviour of others or to try and manage the environment. Inner-based solutions attempt to deal with the individuals' own skills or attitudes toward events or people (Sharf, 2001:12-13). In this way, problem-focused strategies have been subdivided into behavioural (outer-directed) and cognitive (inner-based) coping strategies (Goodkind *et al.*, 2009:102):

- Behavioural strategies intend to avoid, diminish or end the effects of stress, by maximising the positive or minimising the negative outcomes, often through vengeful behaviour.
- Cognitive strategies attempt to ignore or minimise the significance of adversity, maximise the positive or minimise the negative outcomes, and accept responsibility for adversity.

5.2.2 Emotion-focused strategies

Emotion-focused coping attempts to regulate stressful emotions which may include ignoring the issue, withdrawal or the expression of negative feelings (Büyükhahin, 2009:709; Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000:538). There is a strong focus on the internal emotional state, in contrast with external conditions which trigger emotional responses (Mitchell, 2004:19). Emotion-focused (or emotional) strategies essentially intend to moderate negative emotions that result from exposure to a stressful situation. These strategies may be conventional (e.g. listening to music, relaxing) or deviant (e.g. illicit drug use) (Agnew, 2001:326).

Emotional strategies are most likely to be applied after primary appraisal contends that nothing can be done to alter the harmful, threatening or challenging conditions. This is thought to be due to the perception that the individual's inner state is more likely to alter than the perceived unchangeable situation (Büyükhahin, 2009:709). Emotional strategies come into play when problem-focused strategies are unsuccessful or unavailable (Folkman *et al.*, 1986:993; Goodkind *et al.*, 2009:102; Renk & Creasy, 2003:160). It is directed towards the modification of the individual's emotional response toward the problem, and may include wishful thinking, minimisation or avoidance of the problem (Mitchell, 2004:19). These efforts could also take the form of taking a break from the situation, substance use, meditation or physical exercise (Goodkind *et al.*, 2009:102; Sharf, 2001:12-13).

5.2.3 Gender differences in the use of coping strategies

As mentioned, the use of different coping strategies is influenced by certain individual traits. Gender and coping has received little attention in academic literature, even though it has been suggested to be an important determinant of coping behaviour (Green & Diaz, 2008:200). Past investigations have suggested that females usually apply emotion-focused and males problem-focused coping strategies (Büyükhahin, 2009:709; Green & Diaz, 2008:200; Matud, 2004:1411; Renk & Creasy, 2003:164). This

might be due to the fact that males have been shown to have a greater ability and inclination than females to detach themselves from emotions related to stressful events (Lawrence *et al.*, 2006:279).

Prominent differences in the use of coping strategies include that females are more likely than males to seek social support when coping with stress (Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000:541-542). Certain behavioural responses which are more confrontational have been shown to be more distinctive of males than females (Rasmussen, 2004:71). Males are more likely to use ventilation (e.g. sport, physical exercise), as well as to ignore the problem more often (Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000:541-542). Conversely, a meta-analysis of studies spanning from 1990 to 2000 found no differences in problem-focused coping strategies between males and females (Tamres *et al.*, 2002:18). Males were, however, more inclined to use avoidant and withdrawal (emotion-focused) strategies. In contrast, previous results have not reported any differences between males and females in avoidant coping (specifically substance use) (Schraedley *et al.*, 1999:103).

Even though traditional views on coping have subjected males and females to different coping strategies, findings on these divergences have been inconsistent (Büyükşahin, 2009:709). Several reasons have been suggested to account for these inconsistencies. For instance, such variation in findings could be due to inconsistencies in the types of strategies assessed by researchers (Lengua & Stormshak, 2000:790). Tamres *et al.* (2002:4) contend that the dichotomy of problem- and emotion-focused coping is not compatible with gender comparisons. These concepts are very broad, which makes comparisons difficult. The two categories entail discrete behaviours, of which only some are associated with a particular sex. Gender differences may be due to only some differences in each category, and these differences may cancel out each other when placed in the same category.

It has further been suggested that gender differences in coping behaviour is due to gender role orientation and related personality dimensions, and not necessarily gender itself (Lengua & Stormshak, 2000:789). Due to differences in psychological make-up, disparities could thus be associated with differences in appraisal, and not necessarily gender. One gender could find violent encounters more stressful than the other, which could cause different behavioural responses (Tamres *et al.*, 2002: 3). This could especially be the case in school-based victimisation, as male learners have been shown more likely to be victimised in school than female learners (Leoschut & Burton, 2006:71). Male learners are also more likely to be threatened, assaulted and robbed at school, while female learners are more likely to be sexually assaulted (Burton, 2008:21-22).

6. Managing school-based violence

Schools are instrumental in reducing school-based violence and youth misbehaviour in general (Jimerson *et al.*, 2006:10). This depends on how school-based violence is managed, in which principals and educators play an integral role. In the following section, recent approaches to the management of school-based violence will be discussed. Attention will also be paid to national and

provincial policies, with special reference to the South African School's Act (84 of 1996). The role of discipline versus punishment will receive focus, as well the role of management and school administration. Firstly, a brief overview will be provided of initiatives aimed at preventing school-based violence.

6.1 Overview of school-based violence prevention initiatives

Over the past decade, schools had access to the whole school approach, different anti-violence tools, and a variety of national anti-violence policies and programmes (Sullivan *et al.*, 2005:56). All these strategies have the end goal of a safe school environment, which can be conceptualised as “*one in which the occupants have a very low risk of physical, emotional and psychological injury*” (Independent Projects Trust [IPT], 1999:3). A safe school is essentially dependant on effective management (Osher *et al.*, 2006:51). This includes the following (Knoff, 2007:393):

- Emphasis on academic achievement.
- Emphasis on socio-emotional and behavioural success.
- The involvement of families.
- Links with the community.
- Emphasis on positive staff and student relationships.
- Open discussions on safety issues.
- A functional problem-solving process.
- Solution-oriented programmes and interventions.
- Mental health support services.

In response to the challenge of crime and victimisation in schools, the National Department of Education (NDoE) has launched several national and provincial initiatives. These were implemented with different levels of commitment, investment and intensity. It includes a National Safe Schools Call Centre, the School Firearm Zone Free Project, the implementation of school drug policy guidelines, and the supply of physical infrastructure to promote school safety (Frank, 2006).

A whole school approach to prevent school-based violence has also been implemented. It entails the establishment of a system of common values shared by the whole school community. This is achieved by targeting all school members to establish anti-violence norms (Payne & Gottfredson, 2004:169). In this vein, the National Policy on Whole School Evaluation aims to implement quality assurance systems in schools. The policy's seventh key area revolves around safety and security and calls on schools to develop indicators to track progress in this regard (NDoE, 2001:14).

An intervention strategy with an international background is the Safer Schools approach (Leoschut & Burton, 2006: 81). This initiative forms part of the framework document *Tirisano – towards an intervention strategy* to address youth violence in schools. It promotes an integrated, measurable,

targeted and interdepartmental approach to school-based violence. Safer Schools recommends that interventions should take place on the following levels (Shaw, 2004:6):

- Address the system underlying youth violence to shift the risk factors and build resilience in youth.
- Eliminate the spaces where violence often occurs.
- Increase the protective factors that prevent crime involving young people.

Additional anti-violence tools and strategies include a national manual on crime prevention (Signposts for Safe Schools); self-defence training (Crime Buster Project); St. Mary's Interactive Learning Experience (SMILE); Bridges, Independent Projects Trust (IPT); Khanya Family Centre; Change Moves; Public Health Programme (PHP); and Community Psychological Empowerment Services (COPES) (*cf.* IPT, 1999; Griggs, 2002; Frank, 2006).

6.2 Discipline as a violence prevention tool

Apart from the use of external resources for violence prevention, schools should have strategies in place to manage violence on a day-to-day basis. Central to school-based violence management is maintaining of discipline, as the failure to maintain anti-social classroom behaviour often transcends the classroom (Gerler, 2004:75). In South African schools, discipline is by and large maintained through physical punishment methods such as corporal punishment, which is a favoured disciplinary tool among educators (Burton, 2008:29). However, democratic reform led to the abolishment of corporal punishment, and today it carries a criminal sanction (SASA, 1996:6). This has been argued to adversely affect school and classroom discipline, with little effective alternative strategies available to educators (Badenhorst *et al.*, 2007: 304-305). SASA (84 of 1996) was instituted to guide relevant parties in effective and democratic school governance.

Section 8 of SASA provides for schools to adopt a code of conduct, in consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the school. The function of the code is to establish and maintain a safe school environment that is dedicated and conducive to the quality of education (De Waal, 2005:57). A school's code of conduct can be expanded to include unique strategies to fit its needs. Such strategies may include disciplinary measures in the form of individual counselling and referral, involving parents in decisions concerning their child, strategies that adhere to the principles of positive discipline, and school and community service (NDoE, 2000: 20,25-26). This should be explicitly outlined in the code of conduct, and within the following framework (NDoE, 2000:20-24):

1. Introduction and preamble.
2. The school's vision.
3. The mission statement.
4. Aim of the code.

5. The rights of learners.
6. The rights and responsibilities of educators with regard to learners.
7. The rights and responsibilities of parents with regard to learners.
8. School rules, regulations and provisions.
9. Infringement of the code of conduct and school rules.
10. Jurisdiction and scope of the code of conduct.

By providing schools with the freedom to implement creative disciplinary steps and to consult with stakeholders, the code of conduct reflects the transition from authoritarian to democratic school governance. This reform is underlined by a transition from 'punishment' to 'discipline'. Punishment refers to a reactive, punitive and humiliating approach. In contrast, discipline refers to a corrective, nurturing, educative, proactive and constructive recognition of the need to maintain order (NDoE, 2000:9; Masitsa, 2008:244) (see Table 4).

Table 4: Differences between punishment and discipline

Punishment	Discipline
Expresses power of an authority. Usually causes pain to the recipient. It is based upon retribution or revenge and is concerned with what has happened.	Is based on logical or natural consequences that embody the reality of social order (rules that one must learn and accept to function adequately and be productive in society); concerned with what is happening now.
Is arbitrary - probably applied inconsistently and unconditionally; does not accept or acknowledge exceptions or mitigating circumstances.	Is consistent - accepts that the behaving individual is doing the best he or she can do for now.
Is imposed by an authority (done to someone) with responsibility assumed by the one administering the punishment and the behaving individual avoiding responsibility.	Comes from within, with responsibility assumed by the behaving individual. The behaving individual desiring responsibility presumes that conscience is internal.
Closes options for the individual who must pay for a behaviour that has already occurred.	Opens options for the individual who can choose a new behaviour.
As a teaching process, punishment usually reinforces a failure identity; essentially negative and short term, without sustained personal involvement of either teacher or learner.	As a teaching process, discipline is active and involves close, sustained, personal involvement of both teacher and learner, emphasising developing ways to act that will result in more successful behaviour.
Is characterised by open or concealed anger; is a poor model of the expectations of quality behaviour.	Is friendly and supportive, provides a model of quality behaviour.

Table 4 continued

Punishment	Discipline
Is easy and expedient.	Is difficult and time-consuming.
Focuses on strategies intended to control behaviour of learner.	Focuses on the learner's behaviour and the consequences of that behaviour.
Rarely results in positive changes in behaviour; may increase subversiveness or result in temporary suppression of behaviour; at best produces compliance.	Usually results in a change in behaviour that is more successful, acceptable; develops the capacity for self-evaluation of behaviour.

Source: Vogel (2002: 28-29).

The transition from punishment to discipline is a main theme of the NDoE's guideline document *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment* (NDoE, 2000). The document sets out to provide schools with a more detailed description of alternative disciplinary actions. According to the policy, the application of disciplinary methods is closely related to the nature of the misconduct, which can be categorised according to five successive levels (NDoE, 2000:25). The first level, titled *misconduct in the classroom*, includes truancy, dishonesty and failing to complete homework. This is followed by the *breaking of school rules*, which includes smoking, graffiti and vandalism. At the third level there is the *serious violation of school rules*, which includes inflicting minor injury to another, discriminatory behaviour and weapons possession. A *very serious violation of school rules* constitutes, among others, threatening others with a weapon, inflicting intentional limited injury to others and engaging in verbal and sexual abuse. The highest and most serious level of misconduct refers to *criminal acts which breaks school rules and the law*. This includes intentionally inflicting major physical damage to others, use of a deadly weapon, sexual abuse and harassment, rape and murder (NDoE, 2000:25-26; Masitsa, 2008:238). In order to counter these behaviours, five related levels of discipline - which are administered by different role players - have been suggested (NDoE, 2000:25-26; Oosthuizen & De Waal, 2005:13):

1. Carried out by the class educator: verbal warnings; community service; losing credits gained; additional, constructive work related to the nature of the misconduct; small, menial tasks; class detention.
2. Carried out by the principal: any of the above-named actions; disciplinary talk with the learner; talks with the parents or guardian; written warning; signing a contract with the learner who agrees to improve; daily report given by the learner; performing duties to improve the school environment.
3. Carried out by the principal: any of the above-mentioned actions; written warning of being suspended; referral to counsellor or social worker; community service after permission is granted by the provincial education department.

4. Carried out by the principal or SGB together with the provincial education department: any of the above-mentioned actions; referral to outside agency for counselling; application to the provincial educational department for limited suspension from school.
5. Carried out by the principal or SGB together with the provincial education department: application for expulsion or transfer of the learner; given the criminal nature, allow for criminal or civil prosecutions.

School discipline has primarily two aims: to ensure the safety and security of the learners and school staff, and to create an environment conducive to education and learning (Wolhuter & Van Staden, 2008:391). A distinction is made between reactive and proactive disciplinary methods (Oosthuizen & Van Staden, 2007:363). Reactive discipline is similar to punishment and includes corporal punishment, disciplinary hearings, suspension, expulsion, criminalisation, community service and detention. In contrast, proactive discipline refers to organisational school management; a partnership with the parents; the development of classroom rules; the level of expertise and preparedness of the educator; the focus on values, classroom prayer, and the encouragement of learner pride; security measures and positive discipline. Proactive methods have been argued to be more effective in the management of discipline (Oosthuizen & Van Staden, 2007:363-364). Additional factors to ensure proactive discipline in schools include (Wylie, 2006:11; De Waal, 2005:57; Griggs, 2002:136):

- Leadership and advocacy by the school principal and an attempt by teachers to get to know all the learners in the school.
- Learners forming part of a decision-making process regarding a school policy on discipline, school rules, class rules, and the code of conduct.
- An effective SRC with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Learners taking responsibility to educate the community and keeping parents informed of the changes at school.
- Parents' meetings to inform and support the disciplinary methods employed by the school.
- The attendance of parents when a learner is interviewed following an alleged infringement of agreed behaviour policies.

6.3 School management and school-based violence

One of the tenets of effective school-based violence prevention is strong management and leadership (Aitken & Seedat, 2007:viii). Two groups are to ensure school safety, namely the SGB and school administrators (SASA, 1996:8). An SGB is a body comprised of parents, educators, non-teaching staff and senior learners who are responsible for external school governance. Professional management refers to individuals who daily manage the school administration, which may include the principal, deputy principal and educators. SASA emphasises that these two groups should act in accordance with all stakeholders involved in the school in order to ensure a safe educational environment (IPT,

1999:2). After reviewing eight school-based violence interventions, Griggs (2002:136-137) concluded that the following factors are essential regarding professional management:

- Principals should be of high standard and quality, with the right qualifications.
- A principal should have vision, courage, leadership, integrity, the capacity to form networks, strong academic qualifications, be fair, proactive, moral, professional and highly referenced.
- The SGB should preferably consist of the principal, educators, caretaker representative, non-teaching staff, an NGO representative, religious leaders, community members and a police official.

Learners are entrusted to the school by their parents, mostly for six to eight hours per day, five days a week (Leoschut & Burton, 2006:80). Schools have, *in loco parentis*, a legal responsibility to protect the interests of learners during the time that learners attend school (which include sport and cultural excursions) (Netshitahame & Van Vollenhoven, 2002:313; Masitsa, 2008:264). Educators are obliged by their profession and the law to maintain discipline and safety (Masitsa, 2008:236). For instance, the Regulations for Safety Measures at Public Schools (as amended in 2006) declare all schools to be drug and violence free. This includes a ban on weapons or dangerous objects of any kind, as well as controlled access and the existence of emergency procedures. Furthermore, Section 12 of the Bill of Rights (freedom and security of the person) and Section 24 (an environment free of harm to the health and well-being of the person) places the impetus of learner safety on the school and educators (Joubert, 2009:144).

The abovementioned also applies for several parts of the Children's Act (38 of 2005), specifically Section 9. This section calls for the best interests of the child in terms of care, wellbeing and protection to be maintained. In this vein, SASA makes provision for the search of learners for weapons or dangerous objects. Section 15 of SASA (1996:8) states that "[e]very public school is a juristic person, with legal capacity to perform its functions in terms of this Act". In terms of Section 8A, no learner may bring or possess a dangerous object on school premises or during any school activity. Random searches may be conducted by a principal or educator on groups of learners or their possessions. Such a search must adhere to SASA guidelines and reasonable suspicion must be established. The search must be conducted by an adult of the same sex as the learner, in the presence of another adult of the same sex, and must take place in a private place. If a dangerous object is found, the school should mark the object with the particulars of the learner. The object should be handed over to the police in exchange for a receipt for procedural purposes. Further steps as prescribed by the code of conduct are then followed.

Essential to school safety is the establishment of a School Security Committee (SSC). An SSC should include learners, educators and members of the community, thus drawing links between relevant stakeholders. Police representation is a key component of such a committee, and should provide assistance in security matters (IPT, 1999:3). An integral function of the SSC is to draft a school safety

policy. This is meant to set the tone of school management and shape the classroom climate (Bailey, 2006:31). Such a policy should be practical, logical, flexible and easy to understand. Also, they should be designed to leave a paper trail if violent events occur (Sullivan *et al.*, 2005:142). As such, it has been recommended that incidents of violence be recorded by educators. Such a record should include the date, time, type, location, description and involved parties of the incident, as well as disciplinary actions taken (IPT, 1999:7-8; Smit, 2007:56). In addition to the drafting of a school safety policy, the core functions of a SSC are the following (IPT, 1999:4):

- Identifying the school's security problems.
- Liaising with significant people in the community.
- Overseeing and monitoring the implementation of security strategies.
- Charting the rise or decline in school based crime and violence.

6.4 Challenges faced by administrators in managing school-based violence

The principal and educators of a school play a pivotal role in school-based violence management and prevention. For instance, schools with principals able in effective conflict resolution show several positive traits. This includes higher levels of self-confidence, self-reliance and satisfaction of learners, educators, parents and the community (Masitsa, 2005:187). However, school administrators face daily challenges in the school and classroom, especially given the changing nature of education.

There is overbearing pressure on a principal to perform. Principals are expected to have the skills to remedy all the shortcomings of the school while being in close contact with the community (Elmore, 2000:14). During the past two decades, principals had to make the transition from teaching to management-oriented tasks. The managerial tasks faced by (especially) secondary school principals are increasingly diverse and complex (Masitsa, 2005:175-176). According to Elmore (2000:14), principals are expected to be “*masters of human relations*”. They are supposed to attend to all the potential conflicts and disagreements among students, educators, and others who create conflict in the school. Also, they should be respectful towards the district officials, while trying to deflect administrative intrusions which disrupt the autonomy of educators (Elmore, 2000:14). The Free State province has especially shown to have a shortage of managerial competence. This is largely exacerbated by inadequate or lack of training, rapid changes in the education sphere, and the inevitable promotion of inexperienced educators to principal (Masitsa, 2005:178).

Formal, as well as in-service training² is vital to ensure that the principal can deal with these complexities. This may include financial management, personnel evaluation and development, change management, dealing with school-related legal issues and coping with stress (Masitsa, 2005:194). Apart from additional training, several authors (e.g. Harris, 2004; Spillane, 2005; Spillane *et al.*, 2004) have suggested that distributing leadership could be an effective solution to this

² See Masitsa (2005: 177) for a synopsis of different school management training courses available.

challenge. The distribution of leadership entails “*multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization, made coherent through a common culture among senior school personnel*”, and leads to the creation of a common culture (Elmore, 2000:15).

Educators are expected to monitor learner activities and to apply effective conflict-resolution skills, if needed (Card *et al.*, 2007:355). As Foucault (1991:176) noted: “*A relation of surveillance (as method of maintaining discipline), defined and regulated, is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching, not as additional or adjacent part, but as a mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency*”. However, educators find themselves facing the challenge of bringing together groups of learners who vary in terms of academic achievement, behaviour, motivation, interests, maturity and intelligence, and measure their academic competency and growth within an academic timeframe (Chisholm & Ward, 2005: 63). This is exacerbated by numerous factors outside the educator’s control, including (Sullivan *et al.*, 2005:130-131):

- The number of classes.
- The changing landscape of educators’ and learners’ daily routines.
- The different times of day that learners are in class – when they are tired, hungry or sleepy.
- The vagaries of timetables (e.g. learners arrive in class after break time and are over-energetic).

Educators should thus ideally be equipped with tools for behaviour change and management, which may include modelling, positive reinforcement, praise and encouragement, impulse control activities, empathy training, helping learners to change their reputations, and social and problem-solving skills training (Horne *et al.*, 2004:318).

6.5 Strategies in preventing school-based violence

As studies (e.g. Netshitahame & Van Vollenhoven, 2002; Steyn & Janse van Rensburg, 2010) show, the application of tangible anti-violence strategies and policies are lacking in many South African schools. In working towards such a strategy, the school’s professional management should ensure that (Netshitahame & Van Vollenhoven, 2002:317):

- The school safety mission statement is clarified.
- Comprehensive school safety policies and rules are in place.
- Educators and principals are provided with learner behaviour management training.
- A zero tolerance approach to school-based violence is adopted.
- A school safety response team is established.
- Partnerships are formed with the community.
- The school’s physical facilities are improved and maintained.

Given that no single institution has enough resources to prevent school-based violence, partnerships with stakeholders are a vital preventive measure (Bemak & Keys, 2000:22). School principals should actively involve parents in schooling and disciplinary matters, and sustain a sound relationship with the parenting community (Griggs, 2002:134; Heystek, 2003:341; Leoschut & Burton, 2006:81; Badenhorst *et al.*, 2007:314; Prinsloo & Naser, 2007a:58; Wolhuter & Van Staden, 2008:398). A strong partnership with the broader community is imperative in school-based violence prevention (Griggs, 2002:135; Leinhardt & Willert, 2002:37-42; Leoschut & Burton, 2006:81). Communities should share responsibility for children's upbringing, as illustrated by the African proverb: "*It takes a village to raise a child*" (Badenhorst *et al.*, 2007:314).

Collaborative links with provincial education departments should lead to a system of support and monitoring (Rossouw & Stewart, 2008:268; Griggs, 2002:135). A partnership with the local police will also provide additional support. Regular visits and searches by the police for weapons and drugs could deter learners from carrying and potentially using such items on school property (Masitsa, 2008:264; Leoschut & Burton, 2006:81). Schools can also form partnerships with each other. In this vein, clustering is a strategy which has yielded success in the past. It entails two or more schools within ten kilometres from each other working together on safety and security. The collective problem-solving process results in collaborative links with the community and police, and has been shown to effectively decrease school-based violence (Rossouw & Stewart, 2008:268).

Ultimately, school-based violence should be targeted through universal, multi-setting programmes, which should form part of the school's violence prevention strategy. These programmes are currently available to schools (some of which have been mentioned), and should ideally have the following functions (Woods *et al.*, 2007:385):

- Target both violence prevention and the promotion of social competence.
- Teach learners developmentally appropriate, targeted skills.
- Integrate the school's learning objectives.
- Have the support of the community.
- Promote positive relationships for learners with peers, school staff, and the community.

7. Summary

The review of literature highlights important messages and lessons for school-based violence prevention and management. Current evidence paints a bleak picture. Acts such as kicking, hitting and slapping are detrimental to healthy development and the long-term wellbeing of learners. In addition, school-based violence impedes the education responsibilities and functions of educators. Seen broadly, the literature suggests that:

- School-based violence continues unabated in South Africa.
- Violence at school results in different types of victimisation.
- Studies suggest that roughly a third of learners feel unsafe in school.
- Authors differ in their understanding of school-based violence, which prompts close scrutiny of operational definition, including the types and effects of school-based violence.
- The aetiology of school-based violence features at all levels of ecological systems theory.
- The mental health of victimised learners depends on their ability to cope, and the types of coping strategies they are equipped with.
- The use of coping strategies is influenced by contexts such as the type of stress experienced (i.e. school-based violence) and individual factors.
- School management structures are legally tasked with the responsibility of protecting learners from harm, but face many challenges in this regard.
- Although official directives advocate for a transition from punishment to discipline, it is evident from the literature that the latter poses challenges to present-day education.
- Several guidelines and programmes are available to assist schools in ensuring a safe school environment.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODS

1. Introduction

Various scientific methods can be followed in investigating school-based violence. Quantitative methods are useful when large populations are studied, for example a large number of learners or educators (Babbie, 2010:287). In addition, research can focus on an array of variables, such as the types and frequency of violence in schools. Qualitative methods are valuable when studying a limited number of variables that warrant rich, in-depth explanations and descriptions, for example experiences of school-based violence (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:50). Nevertheless, both quantitative and qualitative methods have their unique disadvantages, which render mixed-methods research a viable alternative. By combining the two approaches, their strengths complement each other, as well as supplement each other's weaknesses (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:18). As the chapter will indicate, this holds a range of advantages when studying a complex subject such as school-based violence. The chapter explains the research approach opted for, as well as the study's overall research design and strategy. In addition, the sample selection procedure, data collection, data analysis, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations are discussed. Lastly, limitations of the study are provided against the background of the methods employed.

2. Research approach

Three research approaches are generally used in social research, i.e. quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods (Hanson *et al.*, 2005:225). As shown in the previous chapter, the bulk of local studies on school-based violence have made use of quantitative techniques, in particular self-administered surveys among learners. Survey research implies the inclusion of many respondents. They also cover a broad spectrum of issues, which may impede the verification of accuracy (Denscombe, 2007:32). In addition, surveys carrying a criminal sanction are mostly hampered by underreporting and dishonesty (Warner *et al.*, 1999:56; Collings & Magojo, 2003:129-130). Data obtained from additional sources such as educators can be a valuable complement to the accuracy of findings (Sveinsson & Morris, 2007:20-21).

Quantitative research is a systematic and objective process. Ultimately, it aims to generalise findings to a broader population (Maree & Pietersen, 2007a:145). Its use in the present study resulted in obtaining numerical data from learners about school-based violence. The approach was useful to describe various variables related to the phenomena, as experienced by a large number of learners (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:18). In contrast, qualitative research is a non-numerical process. It is an enquiry aimed at the deeper examination of the qualities, characteristics and properties of the matter under study

(Henning *et al.*, 2004:3). In this study, it was aimed to obtain a deeper understanding of how principals and educators deal with violence in their schools (Babbie, 2010:394).

By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, the study applied the mixed methods approach. This type of research does not replace either quantitative or qualitative methods, but draws on the respective strengths and weaknesses of each in one study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:15). The strategy ensured certain advantages as opposed to a single approach (Denscombe, 2007:118, 136):

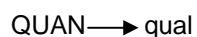
- A more comprehensive account of school-based violence was formed by incorporating the strategies of quantitative (survey) and qualitative (personal interviews) research.
- By conducting the survey before the personal interviews, data was used to inform the choice of themes discussed with principals and educators. Thus, the views of learners could be supplemented and corroborated by the narratives of principals and educators.
- There was a consistent and good use of triangulation between the views and experiences of learners, principals and educators, as well as between the quantitative and qualitative methods as mentioned above.

3. Research design

Research design refers to a strategy which transcends the research approach and underlying philosophical assumptions to specify the selection of respondents, data gathering techniques and data analysis that will be employed (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:70). Central to quantitative and qualitative research designs is deciding whether the matter under study will be explored, described or explained (Babbie, 2010:91). Descriptive studies set out to provide specific details of a situation, social setting or relationship (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:80-81). The study aimed to depict the nature and extent of school-based violence in two secondary schools. Exploratory research is applied when phenomena which are persistent and relatively new to the researcher are studied (Babbie, 2010:92). As little is known about gender differences in coping with school-based violence, and how principals and educators manage violence in schools, an exploratory design was needed. Whereas descriptive studies are associated with surveys, explorative studies are usually conducted through qualitative methods (even though the two may overlap when using a mixed methods approach) (Fouché, 2005:09).

The study's research design thus included explorative and descriptive aspects. However, the mixed methods approach necessitated a more suitable design. In order to construct a mixed-method design, it should be decided whether the inquiry will operate within one dominant paradigm or not, and whether the phases will be conducted concurrently or sequentially (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:20). The latter is referred to as the time orientation, and together with the level of mixing (partial versus full) and emphasis

(equal versus dominant status), forms the basis of mixed methods design (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009:266-267). The quantitative phase held dominant status in the present study. The qualitative phase was used to complement and enrich certain aspects of the quantitative component. The design was thus dominated by quantitative research, while having a sequential time order. Consequently, it can be written as follow:



The capital letters denotes dominant status and weight, while the arrow represents the sequential time order (Denscombe, 2007:114-115). The design of the present study, therefore, is referred to as a partially mixed sequential dominant status design, as the respected phases were completed in their entirety before being mixed during data presentation (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009:267). The quantitative component (survey among learners) was conducted prior to the qualitative inquiry (interviews with principals and learners). The coping strategies of learners were investigated exclusively by quantitative methods in order to ensure a large sample for statistical testing.

4. Research strategy

As indicated above, the research strategy entailed a two phase effort: a survey followed by a series of personal interviews. This had implications for the selection of study populations, data collection, data analysis, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations.

4.1 Selection of research respondents and participants

The selection of respondents for the quantitative leg of the study was conducted in conjunction with Kroonstad-based AVP coordinators. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the study draws on baseline data generated by a broader investigation. Subsequently, the same selection methods are reported here. Two of the six public secondary schools in Moakeng were identified for inclusion in the study because they were the only ones that have not received any AVP intervention at the time. Furthermore, the broader investigation was designed to have a one year time lapse between the baseline and the follow-up studies. This necessitated the inclusion of an age group that will technically be enrolled in school for at least another year. As AVP Free State primarily focuses on individuals in their late adolescence, it was decided to include Grade 10 and 11 learners in the study. All these learners who were present on the day of the survey took part in the survey. The investigation managed to obtain data from 353 learners from School A and 357 learners from School B, resulting in a total of 710 respondents.

As to the qualitative component, the principals of the two schools were interviewed. It was also envisaged that they would assist in the process of selecting educators for the personal interviews. Consequently, chain referral was applied, which is the use of contacts to penetrate a network, and then refer participants to the researcher for interviewing (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:80). The number of educators interviewed depended on their availability (class schedule) and nomination by the principal. Three educators were interviewed from School A and one from School B. The principal of School B was uncooperative in having educators included in the research, which explains the inclusion of only one educator from that school. In line with research ethics in the social sciences, people have to participate voluntarily in research. In addition, a researcher has no right to force a manager for access to his or her workers. The matter was also emphasised in the letter of authorisation provided by the FSDoE (see Appendix 1). Thus, together with the principals, the total qualitative sample consisted of six participants. While it is acknowledged that this is a low number of participants for a proper qualitative investigation, it can be justified in light of the component's less dominant status in the overall research design (see 3. Research design).

4.2 Data collection

Data about learners' experiences of violence was obtained by means of a survey. The strategy was considered appropriate given the large number of learners targeted and the numerous variables included in the instrument (Maree & Pietersen 2007a:155). It also saved time, as all learners completed the questionnaire during a single day, thereby minimising costs (Denscombe, 2007:31).

Qualitative data was generated by means of personal interviews. Qualitative interviews, as opposed to surveys, are based on the in-depth discussion of topics rather than the use of standardised questions. In essence, it is a conversation in which the researcher establishes a general direction, while following specific topics raised by the subject (Babbie, 2010:318, 320). This was required for the exploration of school-based violence management, seeing as little is known about the subject in relation to these schools.

4.2.1 Survey instrument

In quantitative research, an instrument is constructed which can be administered in a standardised manner and according to predetermined procedures (Golafshani, 2003:598). In this regard, a self-administered questionnaire was used in the form of a booklet, and was developed with the aid of various sources of literature. Self-administered questionnaires have several advantages, some of which were demonstrated in the present study (Cargan, 2007:117):

- No specialised skills were needed to effectively manage the distribution of the instruments. A group of honours students were used as fieldworkers under the supervision of a research team.
- It strengthened ethical research, as it can be argued that it is unethical to directly observe violent behaviour and not intervene in such actions.
- Respondents have greater feelings of anonymity, while being more comfortable to express their own opinion than in personal interviews.
- The validity of the results was reinforced by standardised instructions, wording and order of questions, which produced uniform results.

The aim of the survey and other relevant information was explained on the front cover of the booklet. Instructions on how to answer each question were given (Maree & Pietersen, 2007b:159). Care was taken to ensure that the questions were sequenced in a non-confusing way (Babbie, 2010:265-266). The questionnaire started with biographical information before moving to questions more relevant to the study, which were grouped in categories A to D. Section A dealt with biographical questions, which is in line with the guideline that a good sequence starts with non-threatening questions (Maree & Pietersen, 2007b:160).

Questions regarding the incidence, types, frequency, causes and management of school-based violence were formulated by the research team after an extensive literature search. These questions were developed with the input of two experienced researchers. The coping strategies scale was developed in consultation of a registered psychologist and researcher. As the respondents were of school-going age, special consideration was given to the wording of questions. Also, care was taken to avoid ambiguity, vagueness, double-barrelled and leading questions in the instrument (Denscombe, 2007:163). The questionnaire comprised of dichotomous questions, multiple choice questions, filter and contingency questions, scales, and open questions (Babbie, 2010:263-265; Maree & Pietersen, 2007b:161-162; 167). Since the questionnaire was developed for the broader study (see Appendix 2), only questions relevant to the present investigation were used (see Table 5).

Table 5: Sections, themes and questions in the survey instrument

Sections	Themes	Questions used
A	Biographical background	Gender, age, grade, after school supervision, gang activity, leisure activities
B	Extent, nature, causes of violence	Incidence, frequency, types, victimisation, perpetration, causes
C	Effects of violence, status of management, punishment	Effects on learners, effects on school, status of management
D	Reactions to violence, coping, conflict resolution training, normative beliefs, management of violence, family and community background, leisure activities	Coping strategies, conflict resolution training, management competence

An important matter in measurement is whether or not to employ one or several indicators to test a variable. The use of single indicators (e.g. dichotomous questions) is more economic and was used to measure constructs such as age, grade and gender. However, for more diverse constructs, e.g. types and frequencies of violence and coping strategies, there are certain disadvantages in the use of single indicators. Such disadvantages may include the failure to capture the full scope of the concepts mentioned, and the failure to capture attitudes toward an issue or behaviour (Bryman & Cramer, 2004:21). In order to ensure adequate measurement of more complex school-based violence constructs, Likert scales were used. This is a measurement which presents respondents with a series of statements to which they indicate their level of agreement or disagreement (Maree & Pietersen, 2007b:167). For example, the frequency of violence was measured by the categories never, seldom, often and very often (see Appendix 2).

It has been suggested that, in order to ensure quality data, a self-administered questionnaire should not exceed 30 minutes to complete by a child or adolescent (Maree & Pietersen, 2007b:159). The present questionnaire took approximately 20 minutes to complete, which was confirmed by the pilot study. The pilot study was conducted among a group of learners who matched the criteria of the target population (Delpont, 2005:177). Shortfalls and errors were corrected, after which the modified instrument was ready for use.

4.2.2 Conducting the survey

The survey was conducted in a group format. Apart from the obvious advantage of research a large number of respondents, researchers could assist learners in clarifying uncertainties. Also, an optimal response rate was achieved by including all Grade 10 and 11 learners present at school on the day of the survey (Maree & Pietersen, 2007b:157). A date for the survey was arranged in conjunction with the principals. Both schools were visited on the same day. A team consisting of seven Criminology honours students, a lecturer and an AVP representative conducted the survey. The questionnaires were completed during a school period specifically set aside for the project. As the process depended on the flexibility of the principals and educators, the procedures differed between schools. One school opted to send all Grade 10 and 11 learners to the assembly hall. The other kept respondents in class with the research team visiting the classrooms. A response rate of 100.0% was achieved, as all Grade 10 and 11 learners present at school completed (or partially completed) a questionnaire.

4.2.3 Conducting the personal interviews

The personal interviews with principals and educators were conducted over a two-day period. By using semi-structured interviews, a clear list of topics related to school-based violence was discussed between the researcher and the participants. This granted the necessary flexibility for broad, in-depth discussion of topics in no particular order (Denscombe, 2007:176). For example, while some interviews started with the problematic nature of school-based violence, others started with the causes of such behaviour. Semi-structured interviewing was suitable for this study as the purpose was to corroborate existing data (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:87). It allowed for the discussion of themes which supplemented the quantitative data without sacrificing richness and depth of data which is associated with structured interviews. An interview schedule (see Appendix 3) allowed for the interview to keep to the themes under discussion. There are several advantages to the use of interviews (Cargan, 2007:117):

- Interviews are more appropriate for complex situations that may need in-depth information, as in the case of school-based violence management.
- Interviewing is a straightforward method of collecting data concerning attitudes, beliefs, motives, feelings, knowledge, values and other social characteristics connected to school-based violence.
- Participation is encouraged with an interviewer present. Interviewers can solicit information by asking questions and probing, repeat or rephrase questions for better understanding.
- Facts can be obtained by interviewing the person who is in the position to know them, which in this case were the individuals responsible for school-based violence management.

The interviews were conducted with the availability of participants in mind. In order to create as little disruption as possible in the participants' routines, interviews took place in an isolated venue in a school building during school hours (Denscombe, 2007:190). After an introduction, the researcher explained the purpose and scope of the study, and asked permission for the interview to be voice-recorded. None of the participants objected. The interviews took approximately 15 minutes to complete.

4.3 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process concerned with reducing the amount of collected data in order to provide meaningful statements of information (Hardy & Bryman, 2004:4). A distinction is generally made between primary and secondary analysis. The former is carried out by the researcher, while the latter entails analysis by someone else or for another reason (Fielding & Gilbert, 2006:5). In the present study primary data analysis was applied, as the researcher was actively involved in the quantitative and qualitative data collection.

Prior to the analysis of the quantitative data, responses were coded by hand according to the levels of measurement. Data capturing was managed by the CHSR&D. Analysis was undertaken with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0). This allowed for uni- and bivariate analyses. Univariate analysis refers to the investigation of a single variable for purposes of description. Bivariate analysis is the simultaneous analysis of two variables in order to test a relationship (Babbie, 2010:426, 436). In order to describe the extent, nature and management of school-based violence, frequency tables were generated (univariate analysis). Frequency distributions describe the number of times the different attributes of a variable are observed in a sample. This allows for the comparison of different variables (Babbie, 2010:428; Fielding & Gilbert, 2006:50).

As to the bivariate analyses, statistical tests of significance were conducted on the coping strategies component in order to explore gendered differences. Chi-square tests were used to calculate significant differences in the use of coping strategies between male and female victims of school-based violence (Babbie, 2010:483). A 95% level of significance was used, which is most commonly used in social research (Fielding & Gilbert, 2006:270). Data from both the coping aspects and effects of school-based violence was used in respect to actual victims. A variable was created to filter out learners who were not victims of school-based violence during the twelve months preceding the survey. This allowed for more accurate reflections of the targeted constructs, as non-victims could only give opinions or guesses regarding victimisation.

The researcher is considered the primary instrument in analysing qualitative data. The subjective knowledge and understanding of the researcher produce the analysis and sense making of data (Henning

et al., 2004:7). The recorded interviews were verbatim transcribed, coded and thematically content analysed (Babbie, 2010:333). Verbatim transcriptions were used instead of a summary of the audio recordings, as the latter is subject to the researcher's bias (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:104). Thematic content analysis refers to the process of capturing relevant themes in the data through the procedure known as coding (Franzosi, 2004:550). Coding refers to the process of breaking down raw data and formalising each category of interest in the text as a coding category (De Vos, 2005:346), thus transforming raw data into a standardised form (Babbie, 2010:338). More specifically, *a priori* coding was applied in the current study, as this allowed for the development of codes before analysis took place, thereby specifying the themes to receive focus (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:107).

4.4 Data presentation

The dimensions and management of school-based violence data is represented by frequency distributions (Fielding & Gilbert, 2006:51; Babbie, 2010:428). It has been suggested that data should be presented as clear as possible, which is achieved by using a minimum amount of horizontal lines (Fielding & Gilbert, 2006:209). Toward this end, percentages are coloured blue for a clearer presentation and to facilitate comparison. Some elements of the data produced striking results, which necessitated the use of bar graphs and pie charts (De Vos *et al.*, 2005:234; Fielding & Gilbert, 2006:74). Complex tables were needed to depict the variables of adolescents' coping strategies. When two or more variables are cross-classified in a table, it is referred to as a contingency table (Fielding & Gilbert, 2006:310). An additional column was added to relevant tables in order to depict chi-square values.

In order to constitute a mixed-method design, the findings should be integrated at some point (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:20). Themes from the qualitative data were paired with relevant tables and figures. The qualitative responses were described in textual format and complemented by direct quotations (Henning *et al.*, 2004:3).

4.5 Validity and reliability

Validity refers to a measure which accurately reflects the phenomenon it intends to measure (Babbie, 2010:153). In any scientific inquiry, two or more methods or sources of data collection can be applied to increase validity (Henning *et al.*, 2004:6). This was ensured by the application of triangulation as an outcome of mixed methods. Triangulation is the practice of viewing things from more than one perspective. This may involve the use of different methods, different sources of data or different researchers (Denscombe, 2007:134). In the present study, methodological triangulation between methods was applied by using interview data to substantiate and complement survey data. Data

triangulation was undertaken by obtaining data from learners, educators and principals (Denscombe, 2007:136).

Reliability is a measurement of the quality of data collected. It indicates whether the same data would have been collected repeatedly in studying the same phenomenon (Babbie, 2010:150). In terms of the survey, reliability was assured by triangulation and by testing the questionnaire by means of a pilot study. In contrast with quantitative research, no distinction is made between validity and reliability in qualitative research. As there cannot be validity without reliability, it can be assumed that when validity is proven, reliability is met (Golafshani, 2003:601). Since validity of the qualitative phase is ensured by triangulation, it can be assumed that the interview results are reliable. However, it has been suggested that the concept 'trustworthiness' be applied instead of reliability. In the present study, certain measures were taken to ensure a level of trustworthiness (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:113-115):

- The use of different data sources i.e. principals, educators and learners led to verification of the data by providing a general unified response, e.g. in the case of the incidence of violence.
- Direct quotations were chosen and applied carefully in order to strengthen an argument, thus keeping the context intact.
- Care was taken to protect the participants' identities by referring to them as principals, educators and participants, while the schools were referred to as 'A' and 'B'. As there are six secondary schools in the area of Maokeng, breaching anonymity and confidentiality is unlikely to occur.

4.6 Ethical considerations

Research ethics refers to the set of widely accepted moral principles and rules that guide research (Strydom, 2005:63). Research ethics prevents research abuses by placing emphasis on the humane and sensitive treatment of respondents and participants (Bless *et al.*, 2006:140). The present study adhered to the principles of responsible research. Respondents and participants gave informed consent to share their experiences and views (Bless *et al.*, 2006:142; Denscombe, 2007:145). They were also provided with a summary of what the study entails. Assurance was given that the study is voluntary and that non-compliance would not result in any sanction (Babbie, 2010:64-67).

The study, as well as the questionnaire, was registered and cleared by the Directorate: Quality Assurance of the FSDoE (see Appendix 1). Verbal permission to conduct the survey among learners was granted by the principals. The principals were also assured that feedback would be given of the survey results (Bless *et al.*, 2006:145). This took place during a feedback workshop arranged by the broader research project. As most of the survey respondents were under-age, they constituted a vulnerable population which warranted strict ethical considerations (Bless *et al.*, 2006:144). Learners were not deceived in any way,

as they were informed about the purpose of the study. They were also assured of anonymity and confidentiality (Bless *et al.*, 2006:143), meaning that the completed questionnaires included no names or any information that could be traced back to individual respondents (Denscombe, 2007:143). This also meant the data obtained could be disseminated without confidentiality being compromised. Permission to have the personal interviews audio recorded was obtained from each participant. However, this meant that assuring participants of anonymity is somewhat challenging, as their identities could be traced back to them (Babbie, 2010:69, 418). Lastly, the exact location of the two schools is not disclosed, which strengthens anonymity of respondents and participants.

5. Limitations

The limitations stemming from the research methods used are acknowledged. Since non-probability selection procedures were employed, the results cannot be generalised to all schools, both in terms of demography and geography. This implies that the results are not comparable to learners outside Grade 10 and 11, as well as respondents and participants of ethnic and cultural background other than African and SeSotho speaking. In terms of geography, the schools are situated on the periphery of an urban area, but in a predominantly informal area. Therefore, the results cannot be compared to schools in rural and metropolitan settings.

There is an “*inherent danger*” in collecting data on school-based violence only from schools, as this isolates the school from the environment in which it exists (Burton, 2008:4). A more comprehensive approach would thus entail collecting data from role players within and outside the school setting. As the focus of the present study falls on learners, educators and principals, it falls short of a complete examination of school-based violence in broader contexts. Furthermore, in compiling the self-administered questionnaire, statistical testing for criterion-related and construct validity (optimal tests for validity) was not conducted (Babbie, 2010:154). As such, a loss of accuracy could be anticipated. However, face and content validity, triangulation and a pilot study resulted in a measure of validity and reliability being ensured.

Regarding data collection, self-administered questionnaires have certain disadvantages. Self-reported information raises concerns regarding validity due to respondent characteristics. Their motivations may lead to reluctance to answer honestly and a lack of knowledge may lead to misunderstandings when answering a question (Cargan, 2007:117). The survey was further conducted in group format. Even though this has certain advantages, it could cause respondents to mutually influence each other, thereby affecting their opinions (Delport, 2005:175). Also, some educators were present during the actual survey. This raises questions about voluntary participation, as learners might have felt compelled to take part in the survey due to the presence of authority figures.

The interviews and number of participants in the qualitative phase were influenced by time constraints and the cooperation of principals. Even though in-depth data was collected, the optimum level of saturation was not reached. For instance, during survey School B did not have a principal, and by the time the qualitative interviews were conducted, a new principal resided. The new principal was unwilling to allow sufficient access to the school's educators. This inevitably had an impact on the volume and quality of data collected, and thus saturation was not reached.

6. Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the research methods used in the study. A mixed methods research approach was opted for, resulting in a QUAN→qual, descriptive and explorative design. Grade 10 and 11 learners were selected in line with the broader project's design, while chain referral was employed in the qualitative phase. A survey was used to gather data from learners, while semi-structured interview schedules were used in the qualitative phase. A self-administered questionnaire was developed for the survey, which was conducted over one day in a group format. The interviews were conducted over two days, using an interview schedule and voice-recording the information. The quantitative data was uni- and bivariate analysed as to provide frequency distributions and Chi-square differentiations.

The interviews were *a priori* coded and thematically content analysed. Quantitative data is presented by means of simple and contingency tables, pie charts and bar graphs. Qualitative data is presented through text, while being enriched by direct quotations. The data was merged by splitting and adding the qualitative data to the corresponding tables and figures. Validity and reliability was reached mainly through triangulation, which is a major strength of mixed methods research. Ethical considerations included informed consent, discontinuance, anonymity and confidentiality. Lastly, limitations included validity and reliability of the quantitative instrument, self-administered questionnaires and interviews as methods of data collection, the group format of the survey, and the uncooperativeness of one principal in the gathering of data from educators.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

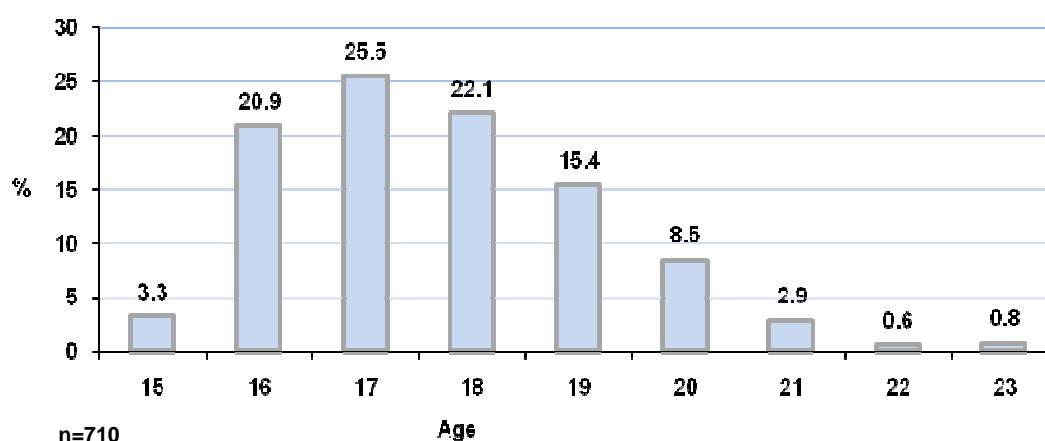
1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study. Quantitative results are numerically depicted in table and figure formats. Qualitative data is presented by narrative text with direct quotations. The quantitative data focuses on all three objectives of the study, namely the dimensions, coping strategies and management of school-based violence. The qualitative data enriches and contributes to particular themes, i.e. incidence, types, frequency, causes and management of school-based violence at the two schools in Maokeng, Kroonstad. Firstly, a background of the two sources of information will be provided.

2. Biographical and background data

The quantitative respondents consisted of 710 learners. The two schools were fairly similar regarding learner and educator numbers, with School A having a learner-educator ratio of 30:1 and School B a ratio of 27:1. The schools were located in the same community, approximately five kilometres from each other. Respondents were almost equally distributed across the schools: 353 from School A (49.7%) and 357 from School B (50.3%). In terms of sex, 361 (50.8%) of the respondents were female, and 346 (48.7%) were male. Slightly more Grade 10 (378; 53.7%) than Grade 11 (332; 46.8%) made up the study population.

Figure 3: Age distribution of survey respondents



The age of respondents ranged from 15 to 23 years (Figure 3). Most learners were between 16 and 19 years of age, with the largest number of learners 17 old. More than a quarter (28.2%) of the respondents was older than 18.

Table 6: After school supervision

State of after school supervision	Never		Sometimes		Often		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Is there an adult to take care of you?	211	31.3	162	24.4	299	44.3	672	100.0
Do they drink until drunk?	336	72.9	87	19.7	34	7.4	461	100.0
When drunk, do they become aggressive?	50	41.3	51	42.1	20	16.5	121	100.0

Nearly a third (31.3%) of learners were never supervised by an adult after school (Table 6). Of learners who were supervised, some reported that their caretakers become inebriated sometimes (19.7%) and often (7.4%). Of these caretakers, nearly three out of five reportedly became aggressive sometimes (42.1%) and often (16.5%) while under the influence of alcohol.

Figure 4: Presence of criminal gangs in the community

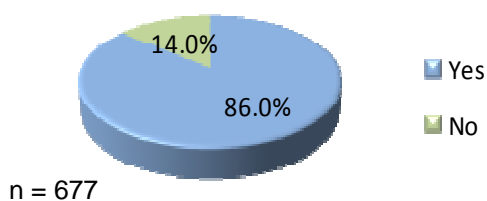
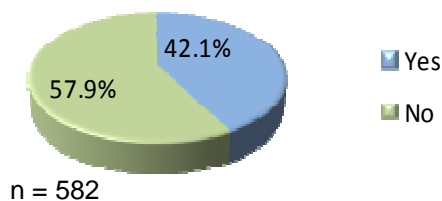


Figure 5: Family having been harmed by gangs



The bulk of respondents (86.0%) reported that they know of criminal gangs in their community (Figure 4). Of these respondents, more than two out of five (42.1%) reported that they or their family have been harmed by these gangs (Figure 5).

Table 7: Leisure activities after school

Type of activity	Never		Sometimes		Often		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sport	104	15.6	345	51.6	219	32.8	668	100.0
Cultural	266	40.1	262	39.5	136	20.5	664	100.0
Spend time with a gang	499	76.0	97	14.8	61	9.3	657	100.0
Help with housework	34	5.1	273	41.2	355	53.6	662	100.0
Homework	44	6.5	188	28.0	440	65.5	672	100.0
Do nothing/laze around	387	58.7	216	32.8	56	8.5	659	100.0
Visit friends	129	19.3	397	59.5	141	21.1	667	100.0
Drink alcohol	494	74.4	122	18.4	48	7.2	664	100.0
Work for own income	240	36.4	295	44.8	124	18.8	659	100.0
Use dagga/drugs	515	84.0	63	10.3	35	5.7	613	100.0

Regarding leisure activities after school, most respondents reported often doing homework (65.5%) and helping with housework (53.6%) (Table 7). One sixth reported to sometimes (10.3%) or often (5.7%) use

marijuana or drugs, while nearly one in five sometimes (18.4%) reportedly used alcohol. Nearly one in ten (9.3%) stated that they often spend time with a gang. Roughly one in five reported that they often work for an own income (18.8%).

The qualitative participants consisted of five men and one woman. This included the principals, as well as the life orientation educators. Educators were selected by the principals according to their knowledge of school-based violence issues. For instance, one educator who took part in the interviews was allocated the responsibility of mobilising staff to identify vulnerable learners in order to provide support. As mentioned in Chapter 3, one principal was reluctant to be interviewed and to provide access to the educators. While the one principal holds a master's degree in development studies, the latter had standard tertiary training in education.

3. Dimensions of school-based violence

In the following section, dimensions of school-based violence will be described and explored. This includes the incidence, frequency, victimisation and perpetration rates, types, effects and perceived causes of violence, along with educators and principals' experiences and views on these aspects.

3.1 Incidence of school-based violence

Figure 6: Violence in school

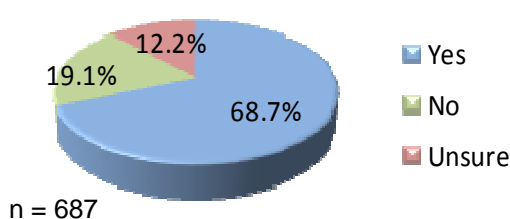
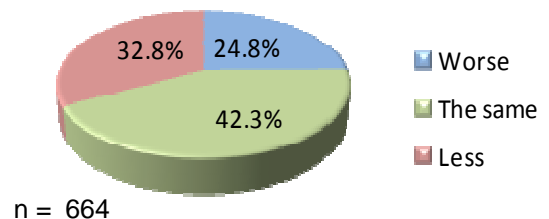


Figure 7: Violence compared to other schools



According to the survey results, more than three out of five (68.7%) learners reported that school-based violence occurred within the twelve months leading up to the study (Figure 6). When asked how this compared to other schools, almost one in three (32.8%) reported that there is less violence in their school (Figure 7). On the other hand, roughly a quarter (24.8%) reported that violence in their school is worse.

The qualitative data showed differences in perceptions regarding the incidence of violence. Parallel to the survey data, some participants believed violence to be less in their school than in other schools. Most participants observed that violence in their schools was declining from the previous few years, while admitting that there still are challenges. One participant remarked: *"But now it is a little bit better. Not better in the sense of 'best'. It's not ideal"*.

3.2 Types and frequency of school-based violence

Table 8: Frequency of learner on learner violence

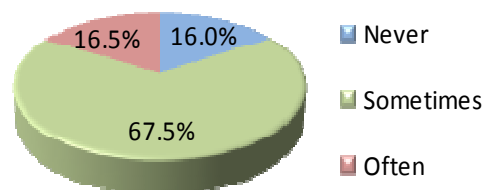
Type of violence	Never		Seldom		Often		Very often		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Hitting, kicking or slapping	97	15.0	182	28.2	176	27.3	190	29.5	645	100.0
Calling bad names	58	9.0	112	17.4	164	25.4	311	48.2	645	100.0
Making fun of others	71	11.0	108	16.8	162	25.2	303	47.0	644	100.0
Sexual abuse	388	58.9	138	20.9	63	9.6	70	10.6	659	100.0
Vandalism	191	29.2	191	29.2	136	20.8	135	20.7	653	100.0
Fights involving weapons	141	20.8	147	21.7	179	26.4	210	31.0	677	100.0

The results suggest verbal violence to be the most prominent form of learner-to-learner victimisation reported (Table 8). Nearly half of respondents indicated relational violence to occur very often (47.0%). More than one in five respondents cited physical violence to take place often (27.3%) and very often (29.5%) respectively. Approximately one in three learners reported fights involving weapons to take place very often (31.0%).

Table 9: Frequency of learner on educator violence

Type of violence	Never		Seldom		Often		Very often		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Learners verbally insulting educators	299	45.4	156	23.7	107	16.3	96	14.6	658	100.0
Learners assaulting educators	427	64.1	129	19.4	61	9.2	49	7.4	666	100.0
Educators assaulting learners	287	43.8	177	27.0	85	13.0	107	16.3	656	100.0
Educators verbally insulting learners	224	34.0	183	27.8	116	17.6	136	20.6	659	100.0
Educators making fun of learners	247	36.9	158	23.6	117	17.5	148	22.1	670	100.0
Educators sexually abusing learners	484	74.5	72	11.1	40	6.2	54	8.3	650	100.0

Figure 8: Frequency of corporal punishment



n = 689

In terms of learner-educator violence, slightly more than one in eight respondents indicated learners to verbally abuse educators often (16.3%) and very often (14.6%) (Table 9). They also reported that some learners physically assault educators often (9.2%) and very often (7.4%). Roughly two in five (43.8%) reported that educators never physically assault learners. Nearly one in ten (8.3%) felt that learners are sexually abused by educators very often. Two in three learners (67.5%) of respondents indicated that corporal punishment occur sometimes (Figure 8).

Regarding qualitative data, some participants commented that even though school-base violence takes place, it seldom occurs. One participants explained that *"the incidents are far from each other, it's not like its everyday"*. Others saw school-based violence as a serious and frequent problem: *"We get violence here almost every single day"*. In terms of types of violence, physical violence between boys and verbal insults between girls were deemed the most frequent, which were seen as bullying behaviours. However, some participants admitted that very serious incidents took place at times: *"We have cases where we call in the police, where matters are beyond us"*. The level of seriousness of a fight seemed to have been evaluated by the presence of weapons (especially knives) and blood.

The seriousness of weapons used and conflict management skills was illustrated by an account narrated by two of the participants. In the year prior the interviews, three boys were gambling behind the school bathroom. An argument erupted, after which two of the boys started stabbing the third with knives. Fortunately, the school is located close to a hospital, and learners managed to carry the victim across the road: *"It was very serious ... They said if he lost more blood than he did ... the boy should have died."* Even though he had several chest wounds, he fortunately managed to recuperate. The gravity of the incident made a visible and lasting impression on the narrators, who both shook their heads repeatedly as they spoke.

Violence between educators and learners was said to be non-existent, and one participant was visibly uncomfortable and annoyed when asked about this issue. Another educator told a story of educators assaulting twin boys in an act of retribution (discussed later). Nevertheless, one participant explained that some educators would apply corporal punishment: *"...some other educators just give them the whip"*. However, this was not perceived as assault, even though some of them admitted that they are not supposed to administer corporal punishment. The issue of personal safety was outlined by one

participant, who explained how he sometimes had to separate fighting boys. He admitted that he feared these situations, as it carries the risk of physical harm to him.

3.3 Victimisation

Table 10: Victimisation of respondents by fellow learners

Type of violence	Yes		No		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Been hit, kicked or slapped	110	15.8	586	84.2	696	100.0
Been called a bad name	343	49.4	352	50.6	695	100.0
Been made fun of in a bad way	282	40.5	415	59.5	697	100.0
Been sexually assaulted by learners	50	7.2	644	92.8	694	100.0
Property been broken by learners	216	31.2	476	68.8	692	100.0
Been threatened with a weapon	183	26.2	515	73.8	698	100.0
Been injured with a weapon	94	13.5	600	86.5	694	100.0

Learners reported whether and how they have been victimised by other learners within the year leading up to the survey (Table 10). Nearly half (49.4%) reported that they were verbally assaulted by other learners, while more than four in five (40.5%) were reportedly made fun of. More than a quarter (26.5%) cited being threatened with a weapon, while more than one in eight (13.5%) were injured with a weapon.

Table 11: Victimisation of respondents by educators

Type of violence	Yes		No		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Been hit, kicked or slapped	145	20.9	550	79.1	695	100.0
Been called a bad name	208	30.1	484	69.9	692	100.0
Been made fun of	221	32.1	468	67.9	689	100.0
Been sexually assaulted	60	8.8	625	91.2	685	100.0

In terms of victimisation of learners by educators, more than one in five respondents cited physical abuse (20.9%) and nearly one in ten (8.8%) reported having been sexually assaulted by educators (Table 11).

3.4 Perpetration

Table 12: Respondents victimising fellow learners

Type of violence	Yes		No		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Hit, kicked or slapped a learner	93	13.3	606	86.7	699	100.0
Made fun of a learner in a bad way	231	33.0	470	67.0	701	100.0
Called a learner a bad name	188	26.9	510	73.1	698	100.0
Sexually abused a learner	32	4.6	663	95.4	695	100.0
Broken a learner's property on purpose	92	13.2	605	86.8	697	100.0
Threatened a learner with a weapon	53	7.6	642	92.4	695	100.0
Injured a learner with a weapon	43	6.2	653	93.8	696	100.0

The overall rates of perpetration reported were perceivably lower than those of victimisation (Table 12). Concerning the victimisation of learners, roughly a third (33.0%) of respondents admitted to making fun of a learner in a bad way, and more than a quarter (26.9%) to verbal violence.

Table 13: Victimisation of educators

Type of violence	Yes		No		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Hit, kicked or slapped an educator	42	6.0	655	94.0	697	100.0
Called an educator a bad name	72	10.3	625	89.7	625	100.0
Sexually assaulted an educator	23	3.3	674	96.7	697	100.0

Regarding the victimisation of educators, one in ten (10.3%) cited verbal abuse (Table 13).

3.5 Causes of school-based violence

Table 14: Causes for school-based violence (closed questions)

Causes	Yes		No		Unsure		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gangs from outside the school	454	65.3	181	26.0	60	8.6	695	100.0
Girlfriend/boyfriend problems	441	63.4	189	27.2	66	9.5	696	100.0
Gangs within the school	420	61.1	217	31.6	50	7.3	687	100.0
Material jealousy	379	55.0	231	33.5	79	11.5	689	100.0
Performance jealousy	343	49.5	270	39.0	80	11.5	693	100.0
Domestic problems	304	44.3	292	42.5	91	13.2	687	100.0
Popularity jealousy	307	44.2	284	40.9	103	14.8	694	100.0
Alcohol use	289	41.6	335	48.2	71	10.2	695	100.0

As depicted in Table 14, the most cited cause for school-based violence was gangs from outside the school (65.3%), followed by relationship problems (63.4%) and gangs inside the school (61.1%). More than two in five reported domestic problems (44.3%) and alcohol use (41.6%).

Table 15: Causes for school-based violence (open question)

Causes	n	%
Gangs	135	19.0
Lack of discipline	83	11.7
Drugs and alcohol	72	10.1
Lack of respect	67	9.4
Jealousy	58	8.7
Weapons	34	4.8
Poverty	31	4.4
Domestic problems	31	4.4
To gain respect	27	3.8
Violent school environment	18	2.5
Lack of security	17	2.4

In an open question on the causes of school-based violence (Table 15), the bulk of respondents suggested gang activity (19.0%). Roughly one in ten reported a lack of discipline (11.7%), drugs and alcohol (10.1%), and a lack of respect for others (9.4%).

Participants in the qualitative leg discussed several causes for school-based violence. Early bullying behaviour was identified, as well as poor conflict resolution skills. The lax nature of learner supervision during examinations (due to educators marking papers) was also mentioned. Older learners (i.e. above 18 years of age) were singled out as carrying some of the blame for violent behaviour. As this specific group of learners finished school at the time of the interviews, the rates of school-based violence were anticipated to decrease.

Most participants pointed to initiation schools as a cause of violent behaviour. According to participant accounts, when the year draws to an end, traditional healers scout boys of the appropriate age to take them through the initiation process. The traditional healer takes the boys to an isolated place (e.g. a farm, in one account), where the initiation process and ceremony takes place. One educator told of boys walking around in groups, branding weapons (e.g. knopkieries, pangas and knives), and sometimes assaulting people during the days leading up to the initiation. Traditional healers are furthermore in competition with each other, which often leads to volatile situations.

Even though most of the male participants went through initiation themselves, some were disillusioned with the purpose of initiation at present, as illustrated by the following: "*Initiation schools*

were meant to bring boys into manhood. That was its purpose. But it has lost its meaning. The new meaning is...to become a gangster". Participants reiterated the impact of gangs on school-based violence, as suggested by the survey data. Gangs are perceived to originate in the community, after which they penetrate the school. They are seemingly motivated by power-struggles associated with drugs and gambling. One participant even suggested a link between initiation schools and gangs.

Poor parenting as cause for school-based violence was also suggested. Some parents are perceived to be afraid of their children, a situation that fosters indiscipline. One participant explained that parents are most of the time not aware of their children's behaviour: *"My experience as an educator has taught me that this child can lead many lives. At home she is like this, and in the community she is like this, at school she is like this"*. Participants conveyed the reluctance on some parents' part to become involved with school disciplinary processes that involve their children.

An important problem identified by several participants was parentless households. In some households, children are raised by family members. In other instances: *"...we have kids raising children"*. These learners have more responsibilities than appropriate for their age, especially financially. Also, they have to fulfil the role of the parent, which causes frustration and may lead to them lashing out. In this vein, participants highlighted the lack of governmental social support. Even though learners with domestic problems are identified by educators, social workers are largely absent. When a learner with learning difficulties needs to be referred to specialised attention, there is a substantial lack of psychologists and social workers to facilitate the referral. These learners are thought to regularly cause problems in class.

As indicated by a participant, volatility brought on by romantic relationships between learners is also a cause for school-based violence. Such relationships are especially problematic when out of school youth are involved, as there have been cases where unauthorised individuals would enter school grounds and cause trouble. This is substantiated by the view that a lack of security and subsequent loss of access control is in part responsible for school-based violence. For instance, at one school the fence used to be broken. However, after the fence was replaced with steel palisades, a drop in the incidence of school-based violence was notable.

3.6 Effects of school-based violence

Table 16: Effects of violence on learners

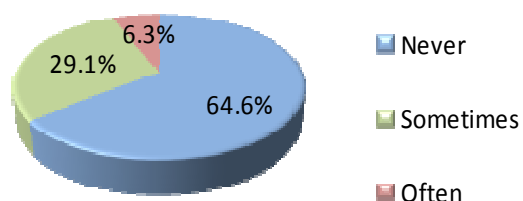
Effects	Yes		No		Unsure		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Avoid certain places at school	363	65.3	131	23.6	62	11.2	556	100.0
Feel angry	304	52.4	216	37.2	60	10.3	580	100.0
Feel frustrated	297	51.8	226	39.4	50	8.7	573	100.0
Feel powerless	288	50.3	228	39.9	56	9.8	572	100.0

Table 16 continued

Effects	Yes		No		Unsure		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Keep away from other learners	223	39.0	266	46.5	83	14.5	572	100.0
Feel isolated from other learners	184	32.2	315	55.1	73	12.8	572	100.0
Have problems with concentration	134	23.4	382	66.8	56	9.8	572	100.0
Afraid to go to school	63	10.9	495	85.6	20	3.5	578	100.0
Start to dislike school	45	7.8	509	88.4	22	3.8	576	100.0

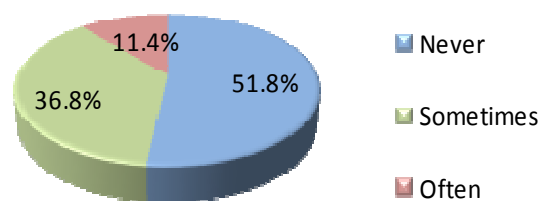
In terms of the effects of school-based violence, the bulk of victims reported to avoid certain places at school (65.3%) (Table 16). This was followed by approximately half of victims feeling angry (52.4%), frustrated (51.8%) and powerless (50.3%). Roughly one in ten (10.9%) reported to feel afraid to attend school. Almost a third (32.2%) reportedly felt isolated from their peers, while roughly two in five (39.0%) intentionally avoided their peers.

Figure 9: Victims becoming more argumentative



n = 687

Figure 10: Victims having difficulty sleeping



n = 684

More than a third of victims of school-based violence reported to sometimes (29.1%) and often (6.3%) get into more arguments than usual after being victimised (Figure 9). Nearly half reported to sometimes (36.8%) and often (11.4%) have difficulty sleeping after such an incident (Figure 10).

Table 17: Impact of violence on the school

Effects	Yes		No		Unsure		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Disrupts classes	522	76.4	124	18.2	37	5.4	683	100.0
Causes vandalism	545	78.6	105	15.2	43	6.2	693	100.0
Makes school unpleasant	560	80.5	89	12.8	47	6.8	696	100.0
Causes learners to fear school	577	84.0	73	10.6	37	5.4	687	100.0

Respondents cited different impacts of violence on the school itself (Table 17), which included class disruption (76.4%) and a fear of school (84.0%).

4. Coping with school-based violence

Results about learners' coping strategies are presented in frequency tables according to behavioural, cognitive and emotional strategies. In addition, gender differences in the use of these strategies are indicated. It should be borne in mind that the data only represents the responses of victims of school-based violence (n=592).

Table 18: Behavioural coping strategies

Coping strategy	Never		Sometimes		Often		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Talk with a friend	48	8.3	293	50.9	235	40.8	576	100.0
Seek help, advice	69	12.0	227	39.5	278	48.4	574	100.0
Seek revenge	207	37.2	214	38.4	136	24.4	557	100.0

Results on behavioural coping strategies suggest that the bulk of victims talked with a friend and searched for help and advice (Table 18). A quarter reported to often (24.4%) seek ways to get back at their perpetrator.

Table 19: Cognitive coping strategies

Coping strategy	Never		Sometimes		Often		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Find reasons to laugh about it	223	38.9	203	35.4	147	25.7	573	100.0
Focus on positive things	52	9.1	155	27.1	365	63.8	572	100.0
Remind myself that things will get better	43	7.5	215	37.7	312	54.7	570	100.0

Regarding cognitive strategies, the bulk of victims reported to focus on positive things and to remind themselves that their situation will improve (Table 19). Nearly two in five (38.9%) reportedly never use humour to cope.

Table 20: Emotional coping strategies

Coping strategy	Never		Sometimes		Often		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Avoid school	485	84.6	51	8.9	37	6.5	573	100.0
Use alcohol/drugs	496	86.7	52	9.1	24	4.2	572	100.0
Avoid friends/family	367	63.8	153	26.6	55	9.6	575	100.0
Emotional outlet	54	9.4	225	39.1	297	51.6	576	100.0
Physical exercise	115	20.1	260	45.4	198	34.6	573	100.0

Results on emotional coping strategies show that the bulk of victims reported to never use alcohol or drugs (86.7%) and avoid school (84.6%) (Table 20). Conversely, more than half (51.6%) reported to often find an emotional outlet, and nearly half (45.4%) sometimes engage in physically exercise.

Table 21: Behavioural coping and gender differences

Coping strategy	Female		Male		Total		p
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Talk with a friend	270	51.4	255	48.6	525	100.0	0.065
Seek help/advice	259	51.5	244	48.5	503	100.0	0.068
Plan revenge	175	50.4	172	49.6	347	100.0	0.774

Table 22: Cognitive coping and gender differences

Coping strategy	Female		Male		Total		p
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Find reasons to laugh about it	175	50.3	173	49.7	348	100.0	0.886
Focus on positive things	265	51.3	252	48.7	517	100.0	0.334
Remind myself that things will get better	270	51.5	254	48.5	524	100.0	0.223

Regarding the use of behavioural (Table 21) and cognitive (Table 22) coping strategies, no statistically significant differences were found between male and female respondents.

Table 23: Emotional coping and gender differences

Coping strategy	Female		Male		Total		p
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Avoid school	40	46.0	47	54.0	87	100.0	0.357
Use alcohol/drugs	23	30.7	52	69.3	75	100.0	0.000*
Avoid friends/family	101	48.8	106	51.2	207	100.0	0.533
Emotional outlet	261	50.3	258	49.7	519	100.0	0.461
Physical exercise	220	48.1	237	51.9	457	100.0	0.022*

*p<0.05

In terms of the use of emotional coping strategies, the results suggest that male victims are significantly more likely to use alcohol or drugs to cope with school-based violence than female victims (p=0.000) (Table 23). Male victims were found to be more likely to physically exercise than their female counterparts when coping with school-based violence (p=0.022).

5. Management of school-based violence

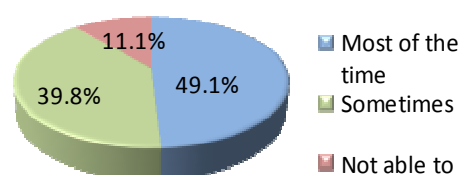
Learners' views were explored about how their schools deal with violence. Educators' and principals' views on aspects of school-based violence management were also obtained.

Table 24: Learners' views on how schools manage violence

Prevention strategies	Never		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Violent learners get punished	69	9.9	273	39.2	53	7.6	302	43.3	697	100.0
Corporal punishment for violence	127	18.9	200	29.7	117	17.4	229	34.0	673	100.0
Weapons search after a fight	192	27.5	191	27.4	79	11.3	235	33.7	697	100.0
Regular weapons searches	273	39.7	209	30.4	83	12.1	123	17.9	688	100.0
Security guards during school hours	469	67.5	64	9.2	35	5.0	127	18.3	695	100.0
Educators supervise breaks	475	67.9	117	16.7	30	4.3	78	11.1	700	100.0
Prefects can control learners	234	33.6	241	34.6	93	13.4	128	18.4	696	100.0
Restricted access to school	205	29.5	145	20.8	69	9.9	277	39.8	696	100.0
Learners protected from outsiders	169	24.2	174	25.0	66	9.5	288	41.3	697	100.0
Learners protected from learners	144	20.7	207	29.8	83	11.9	261	37.6	695	100.0
Learners protected from educators	147	21.4	179	26.1	90	13.1	270	39.4	686	100.0
Unsupervised classes	155	23.6	163	24.8	136	20.7	203	30.9	657	100.0

Roughly two in five (43.3%) reported that violent learners always received punishment (Table 24). A third (34.0%) reported that violent perpetrators always receive corporal punishment. Roughly a third (33.7%) responded that weapons searches always occur after a fight, while nearly two out of five (39.7%) indicated that regular weapon searches are never conducted. Two thirds indicated that educators never patrol the playgrounds during breaks (67.9%). Nearly a third (29.5%) cited restricted access to the school to be absent, while roughly a quarter (24.2%) perceived the school to never protect learners from outsiders. A fifth reported that the school never protects learners from other learners (20.7%) or educators (21.4%). Roughly one in five reported that classes are never (23.6%) and sometimes (24.8%) without adult supervision.

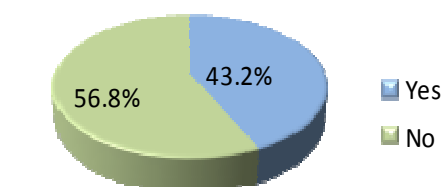
Figure 11: Schools' ability to deal with violence



n = 674

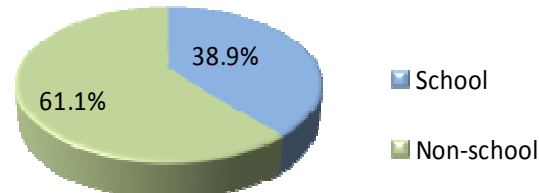
Regarding the schools' ability to manage violent behaviour, approximately one in ten (11.1%) learners felt that school management is not able to effectively deal with school-based violence (Figure 11).

Figure 12: Learners who received training in conflict resolution



n = 665

Figure 13: Source of training in conflict resolution



n = 287

More than half (56.8%) of the respondents indicated that they have not received any training in peaceful conflict resolution methods (Figure 12). Of those who affirmed training, roughly two thirds (61.1%) received it from sources external to the school (Figure 13).

Results from the qualitative interviews indicated a general consensus regarding a lack of different kinds of support in the management of school-based violence. A major obstacle related the lack of support from the government and police. Participants expressed the need for social support for needy learners, as well as for educators to be trained in conflict management. There generally seemed to be negative feelings towards the FSDoE, as the department has overturned some disciplinary decisions in the past. Specifically, it was noted that feedback on monthly school-based violence reports was altogether absent. Furthermore, the strategies and policies prescribed by government were viewed as “*far-fetched*”, complex and time consuming.

Participants were asked to illustrate their reactions to conflict situations on school grounds involving learners. When there is a violent incident on school grounds, an educator would intervene, during which he/she would determine the seriousness of the conflict. When it is perceived as not serious (e.g. verbal and relational violence, pushing and shoving), the learners would either be verbally reprimanded at that moment or sent to the principals' office to receive punishment. However, participants seemed reluctant to punish learners for low-level violence. One participants remarked that learners are often left to resolve the situation themselves, because “*boys will be boys*”. The general trend appeared to let low-level violent perpetrators off with a warning.

If there is blood involved, the parents are contacted and the incident would be recorded in a logbook. If weapons are involved, the police are contacted. Other than settling matters informally, participants explained that a code of conduct was followed. This was formulated in conjunction with the SGB and the parenting community. In terms of actual strategies aimed at targeting school-based violence, participants' responses were vague, only briefly mentioning their code of conduct. However, a good relationship with parents seemed to be a priority for a number of participants. Some parents, when

called to school after their child has been involved in a violent incident, are reluctant to participate in disciplinary processes. The school then usually prohibits the learner from attending school until accompanied by his or her parents.

Another priority for some participants was strong ties with the community. As mentioned, the community has a number of child-headed households and children growing up in poverty. One of the participants is allocated the responsibility to actively deal with these challenges. The participant would, with the cooperation of colleagues, identify learners in need of support. The participant would then visit the learners' home, along with a social worker, and assess the situation. Support would be provided to the learner in question, whether financially, or in the form of extra attention paid to him or her in school. Often such a learner would be paired with an adult guardian who can assist the learner in applying for social grants.

Other strategies for managing school-based violence included the formation of a SSC in School A, in which parents and the SGB are involved. This committee led to the development of a school safety policy (see Appendix 5). The school safety policy was drafted by the SGB. It starts with a preamble, providing definitions to school safety and security. The document further guides the composition and functions of the SSC. Acts are outlined which are perceived to violate the safety of the school. A table is provided in which such behaviour can be recorded (these recordings form part of a monthly school-based violence report which is submitted to the FSDoE). Included are procedures which are to be followed in case of an injury. The types of injuries are not specified. However, the SGB is to be notified in the case of any serious injuries. Also, the location and maintenance of a first aid kit is included. Along the lines of school-based violence prevention, the document calls for terrain supervision. In addition to guidelines promoting safety from violence, the document also deals with occupational safety.

A code of conduct (see Appendix 6) was in place in School B, even though it lacked the school's own creative input in terms of detailed disciplinary steps. The code of conduct was adapted from an official FSDoE template. The document starts by setting out definitions of key terms. Different forms of school-based violence are prohibited by school rules, and the document puts forth guidelines for the application of disciplinary measures. A disciplinary code is provided, followed by a specification of acts which would violate school rules (including acts pertaining to school-based violence in sections four to seven). Guidelines outline the application of verbal, written and final warnings, as well as suspension and expulsion. Detail is also provided on the procedures which are to be followed in the application of these steps. In the last section, school-based violence is specifically forbidden in the general school rules.

Some participants expressed the importance of physical security measures. They stressed the impact of an improved fence and burglar-proofing on the perceived declining rate of school-based violence. Even though some participants reported that they underwent a school-based violence training

workshop, a general concern was the lack of conflict resolution knowledge. This was especially highlighted in terms of breaking up fights, as some participants expressed uncertainty and fear of such situations. One of the participants conveyed a fear of being stabbed after being involved in an incident between learners fighting. He said that he was unsure as what to do, and that he had to “improvise”. Another participant expressed that he usually applies his self-taught knowledge and discretion: *“We normally don’t have a specific system where we say, if you do this, this is what we are going to do, or, it becomes automatic. There is no clear set of rules, and as a result, it allows a situation to take its own course.”*

The lack of conflict resolution training was exemplified by an incident taking place a few months before the study. A female educator attempted to strike a disobedient boy with a cane. He took the cane away from her, broke it and physically assaulted her. When the other educators heard about the incident, they took the boy to the staff room to punish him for his perceived act of disrespect. However, fellow learners told the learners’ twin brother about the incident, after which the brother joined what turned out to be a highly volatile situation. As explained by an educator, the staff “took their revenge”, after which “their fists were swollen”. The twins were suspended by the principal, and subsequently reinstated by the FSDoE. The narrator viewed this decision as “terrible”. In another instance, there was a love triangle between boy and girl in Grade 12, and an older, out-of-school boy. The older boy came to the school during break to stab the Grade 12 boy, which led to the participant having to “man-handle” him and put his own personal safety at risk. This incident further reiterated the view that jealousy and relationship problems carry potential for acts of school-based violence, as mentioned previously.

5. Summary

This chapter presented the results of the study, which will be used in the next chapter to make comparisons and draw conclusions. Through the use of simple and complex tables and figures, the quantitative data was presented. The qualitative data was presented through the use of narrative text, along with direct quotations derived from the personal interviews. In this way, the three objectives of the study, i.e. the dimensions, coping strategies and management of school-based violence were described.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

1. Introduction

In the concluding chapter, the results of the study are discussed in the context of the literature review. Important findings will be highlighted, as well as how they compare with previous studies. The implications of these comparisons will be considered, leading to recommendations for dealing with school-based violence. The ultimate goal is to reach a logical conclusion which will reflect the aim and objectives of this dissertation, as outlined in Chapter 1: Introduction, aim and objectives.

It should be noted that, while comparisons with existing literature are made throughout this chapter, substantial differences exist across these studies. As shown previously, school-based violence investigations from recent years differ in scope, size and measurement. These differences may account for certain discrepancies in comparisons. However, comparing the present findings to previous results is deemed necessary to provide the needed perspective of the seriousness of violence in the research area.

2. The extent and nature of school-based violence

The extent and nature of school-based violence form part of the first objective of the study. Consequently, the incidence of violence in the selected schools will be discussed, as well as the types of violence reported. These types will be discussed in two sections, namely, violence between learners and violence between learners and educators.

2.1 The incidence of school-based violence

The results confirm the presence of violence in the targeted schools. The bulk of learners (68.7%) believed violence to have occurred in their school during the twelve months leading up to the survey. Some educators believed violence to take place daily. These findings corroborate results from previous studies, both from the views of learners (Neser *et al.*, 2004:142, 144) and educators (De Wet, 2003:94). The present study thus confirms the reality of violence in schools.

2.2 Types of school-based violence between learners

The types of violence found between learners were dominated by verbal (25.4% often and 48.2% very often) and relational (25.2% often and 47.0% very often) violence. Other types of violence between learners were fights involving weapons (26.4% often and 31.0% very often) and physical violence (27.3% often and 29.5% very often). This is similar to previous findings, where different types of verbal, relational and physical violence were reported (Neser, 2005:69). Also, the use of weapons in

findings substantiates recent findings from the Free State province (Steyn & Janse van Rensburg, 2010: in progress). The results suggest a trend in terms of the occurrence of different types of violence. Schools seemingly experienced verbal violence most frequently, followed by relational, physical (with or without weapons) and sexual violence.

2.3 Types of school-based violence between learners and educators

Physical and verbal violence between learners and educators is a reality. The present investigation suggests that learners victimised educators verbally (16.3% often and 14.6% very often) and physically (9.2% often and 7.4% very often). Educators very often victimised learners verbally (20.6%), relationally (22.1%), physically (16.3%) and sexually (8.3%). In addition, the greater part of learners underlined the use of corporal punishment in school (67.5%), which was substantiated by educators' input. These findings uphold evidence on the existence of conflict between educators and learners in schools (De Wet, 2006:19; De Wet 2007a:41; Steyn & Janse van Rensburg, 2010: in progress). Moreover, the existence of corporal punishment in the schools substantiates national findings (Burton, 2008:29). Interestingly, although many learners reported corporal punishment to occur in school, it stood in contrast with the percentage of learners indicating that educators physically assault learners.

Learners victimising educators implies a climate marked by a lack of discipline and respect. Educators victimising learners could harm their image as trustworthy confidants and mentors. This also has implications in terms of learners modelling educators' conflict resolution behaviour. The discrepancy between learners' views of victimisation by educators and corporal punishment suggests that learners do not necessarily perceive corporal punishment as a criminal act. Such viewpoints might be due to a lack of legal knowledge or part of communal beliefs cultivated at home, and demonstrates the distance still to be covered in the abolishment of the practice.

2.4 Victims of school-based violence

The survey included a component which focused on the responses of actual victims of school-based violence. Most learners reported that they were victimised in a verbal (49.4%) and relational (40.5%) manner by other learners. A higher percentage of learners reported to have been verbally insulted (49.4%) when compared to the 32.8% recorded by the NYVS (Leoschut & Burton, 2006:67). Moreover, a higher percentage of learners in the present study has been physically (15.8%) and sexually (7.2%) victimised by fellow learners when compared to the 4.3% and 3.1% reported at the national level (Burton, 2008:18). The study thus suggests that, compared to existing evidence, the selected schools have a high rate of victimisation. As mentioned in the literature, victims of school-based violence are at risk to exhibit future violent behaviour (Prinsloo & Naser, 2007a:53). This could perpetuate a cycle of violence and raises the need for adequate victim assistance, either by school-based services or referral to professional intervention.

2.5 Perpetrators of school-based violence

Learners reporting on their own violent behaviour compared intermittently with existing evidence. Of learners who reported to have victimised other learners, most admitted this to take relational (33.0%) and verbal (26.9%) forms. The percentage of learners who reported that they had threatened (7.6%) or assaulted (6.2%) learners with a weapon was somewhat lower compared to the 9.2% reported in the 2002 NYRBS (Reddy *et al.*, 2003:14). Physical violence (13.3%) was shown to be lower than the 63.6% reported by Collings and Magojo (2003:127), 19.3% by Reddy *et al.* (2003:14) and 21.0% by Reddy *et al.* (2010:10). The rates of learners reporting their own violent behaviour in comparison with reported rates of victimisation was found to be relatively low. This confirms the assumption that surveys underreport on self-acknowledged antisocial behaviour (Collings & Magojo, 2003:129-130). On the other hand, the findings could also prove to be correct, i.e. a small number of learners could be responsible for the majority of violent incidents. Explorative research on the relationship between the number of school-based violence offenders and the extent of violence could inform this issue.

3. The causes of school-based violence

Causal factors relating to school-based violence are incorporated into EST (ecological systems theory). The reader is reminded that EST considers the individual to exist in an ecological environment which consists of a set of nested structures, each located inside the other (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:39). Six structures are included in this theory, which is referred to as individual, micro, meso, exo, macro and chrono level factors (Ryan & Paquette, 2001:2). Each structure contains risk factors and represents causal relations pertaining to attributes, while these relations have a rippling effect on surrounding systems (Ward, 2007:13). It should be kept in mind that while some factors are deemed to cause violence on their own, others interact to produce violence. The nature of the relationship between risk factors is dictated by the structure which contains the factors in question. As depicted in Figure 13, learners, educators and principals suggested causes for violence in all levels of the EST model, starting with individual psychosocial factors. Some micro systems in which individuals are nested was also pointed out as cause for violent behaviour, as well as their mutual influence on each other (the meso system). Exo system causes were suggested, as were causes on a macro and chrono system levels.

3.1 Individual level causes

The results confirm existing literature on individual causes for violent behaviour. Both educators and learners underlined the perceived influence of volatile romantic relationships on violent behaviour. The problematic nature of these relationships could be due to poor conflict resolution skills (Oosthuizen & De Waal, 2005:4; Randall, 2006:16). A case in point is the situation described by an educator whereby an out-of-school youth and Grade 12 learner had a physical confrontation on school property. The origin of the altercation was a shared romantic interest, and an educator had to

intervene. Such situations could possibly be exacerbated by factors such as jealousy (Parault *et al.*, 2007:149; Randall, 2006:15), and alcohol and substance use (Netshitahame & Van Vollenhoven, 2002:314). Results from the closed and open questions on the aetiology of school-based violence suggested substance use as a contributing factor. These findings are supported by the fact that one in six learners reported to sometimes (10.3%) or often (5.7%) use marijuana or drugs, while more than one in five sometimes (18.4%) or often (7.2%) use alcohol after school. Such behaviour, even though it was not directly linked to violent behaviour in the present study, increases the risk for involvement in violent behaviour (Flores, 2005:82; McDonald *et al.*, 2005:1509; Ward, 2007:23). The findings on the individual level thus support current literature, and suggest an awareness on the part of learners and educators as to individual-specific factors which contributes to school-based violence.

3.2 Micro system causes

The micro system refers to the immediate structures which surround the individual. In this way the focus falls on factors facilitated by the school, parents, family and peers. The results show that some learners seemingly faced domestic problems such as inadequate parenting, while some were burdened by responsibility beyond their means due to the absence of parents. These findings are supported by the fact that nearly a fifth of learners (18.8%) reported to often work for an income. Moreover, a third of learners (31.3%) seemingly were never supervised after school, while some of those who were supervised sometimes have to deal with adults who are drunk (19.7%). Nearly half of these parents then become aggressive (42.1%). Parental supervision based on absence and alcohol use is problematic, as positive primary bonds with parents are vital to ensure adequate socialisation (Almond, 2008: 68; Bemak & Keys, 2000:17; Naser, 2005:61). The lack of parents in a household, whether due to socio-economic reasons or due to substance abuse, implies the need for social support in the community. This is especially required in light of learners being burdened unfairly and unlawfully according to the Children's Act (38 of 2005).

In terms of school factors, educators cited poor supervision during examinations as a contributor to school-based violence. Learners agreed with the notion that a violent school environment - marked by weapons possession - contributes to violence (Kasen *et al.*, 2004:204; Netshitahame and Van Vollenhoven, 2002:314). Such an environment is in part due to the lack of physical school security measures. A qualitative participant mentioned the importance of a broken fence in the occurrence of violent incidents, specifically related to gangs. Such a fence facilitates gang activity on school property by providing easy access to school grounds (Burton, 2008:17). This finding implies that the schools lack basic physical security measures, which will be discussed at a later stage. Parental and school factors demonstrate the importance of a system that strengthens resilience against violent behaviour.

3.3 Meso system causes

As explained earlier, the meso system refers to the relationships between micro systems, and the effect these relationships have on individual behaviour. The focus in the micro system is on the direct influences certain factors may have on an individual's behaviour, as explained above. The focus in the meso system falls on the indirect influence that the *relationship* between micro systems may have on an individual's behaviour. For example, in a micro system school and family factors influence the individual's behaviour. In a meso system, the focus is on the effects the relationship between school and family factors have on the individual's behaviour. In this way, the results suggest a poor relationship between the parents and the schools, which presents a cause for violent behaviour at the meso level. Establishing and maintaining this relationship has important implications for the management of school-based violence, as iterated in the existing literature (Badenhorst *et al.*, 2007:314). The lack of a constructive relationship with parents was not directly linked by educators as impediment to school safety. Such an omission possibly suggests that the importance of a symbiotic interchange eludes educators. This obviously holds several implications for the management of school-based violence, which will be discussed later.

3.4 Exo system causes

The exo system contains risk factors which influence the individual more indirectly than in micro and meso systems. This primarily entails factors existing in the neighbourhood and community. Results indicate a strong consensus in the presence of community gangs as cause for violence in the schools. The majority of learners reported the presence of harmful criminal gangs in their community (86.0%), and a proportion reported to sometimes spend time with a gang after school hours (14.8%)³. The results thus support the link between the presence of community gangs and increased levels of school-based violence (Van der Merwe & Dawes, 2007:100). Gangs could more easily become a destination for learners who exhibit the aforementioned individual risk factors. A strong presence of gang activity could create a structure in which violence becomes the expectation or the norm. Moreover, this presents possible risk to learners frustrated with the macro influences discussed below.

³ In the interest of clarification, the reader should note that differentiation is made in this study between gangs which subsist in the community, and gangs which subsist in school. Community gangs are categorised as an exo level risk factor for violence, as it assumedly operate largely in neighbourhoods. School gangs assumedly originate in school by means of peer group association, and consist mostly of learners who operate largely within school boundaries. Therefore these gangs are categorised as a micro risk factor for violence. According to an educator, it appears that some gangs originate in the community, after which the school is permeated. As the present study did not investigate the exact nature and origin of the gangs mentioned by learners and educators, gangs are paired under both micro and exo system factors.

3.5 Macro system causes

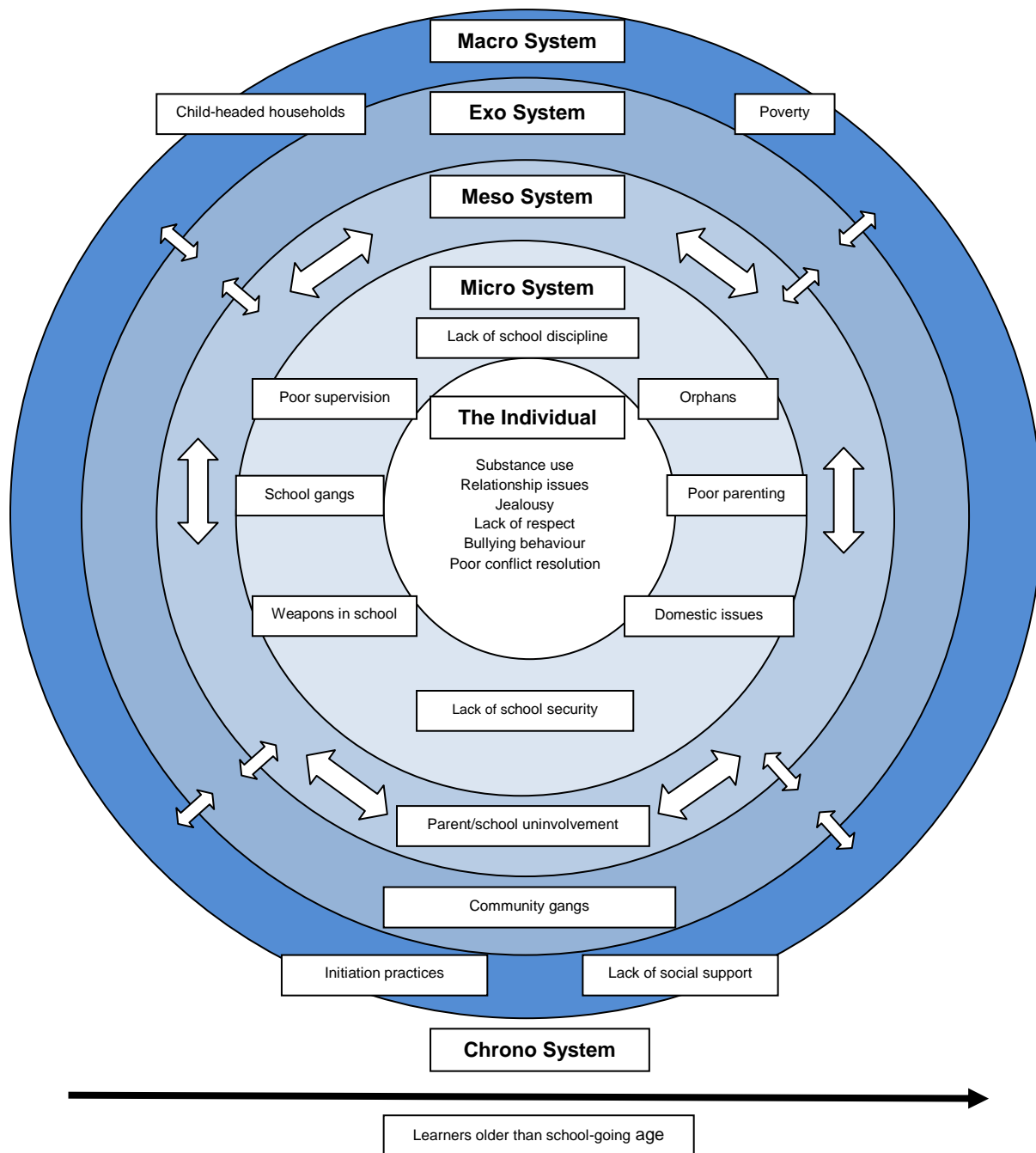
Macro level causes are essentially factors that exist in the broader tenets of society, politics and cultures. These causes affect individuals in a very indirect manner, by exercising influence over the causes for school-based violence in lower levels. A few learners (4.4%) mentioned the influence of poverty on violent behaviour in school, which is in line with the notion that perceptions of poverty can be linked to the incidence of violence (Bemak & Keys, 2000:21). Most of the learners lived in low-socio-economic neighbourhoods. Their world-view of life in poverty might have contributed to an obstruction in perceiving poverty as a risk factor for violence. Under the conditions of poverty, a lack of social support to vulnerable children seemed to be an important factor to participants in the qualitative interviews. The present community environment confirms the socio-economic challenges felt by several South African communities (Straker *et al.*, 1996:52). Such challenges create an environment in which the role of the school in the community becomes pronounced. Also, socio-economic problems place impetus on the school to reach out beyond basic education in order to alleviate community challenges.

A cause consistently suggested by the participants in the qualitative interviews was the influence of initiation schools on learners' aggression. It should be underlined that it is not the cultural practices *per se*, but rather the competition and subsequent conflict between traditional healers which are perceived to be problematic. Importantly, the goals of initiation were believed to be lost in the new generation, which implies a rift across generations. Such a generation gap is widened by the perception of the older generation that violent behaviour and gang affiliation are being favoured above traditional values (UNODC, 2008:15). Previous findings have suggested that traditional factors e.g. witchcraft and related customary practices could foster aggressive behaviour (Netshitahame & Van Vollenhoven, 2002:314). The present results possibly imply the absence of a solid relationship between the schools and traditional leaders in charge of initiation processes.

3.6 Chrono level causes

Factors subsisting in the chrono level govern other levels with reference to time-related transitions. The survey data showed more than a quarter of learners to be over the age of 18 (28.2%), a factor which have been identified to carry the potential for violent behaviour (Maree, 2008:73). This is underlined by the opinion of some educators, who thought that older learners are often to blame for violence in school. In terms of the existence of community gangs, peer group and neighbourhood factors have been suggested to play a greater role for older children (Miller & Krauss, 2008:16). A large number of older learners present in the selected schools, along with various neighbourhood challenges e.g. gang activity, could present a higher level of risk for school-based violence. The matter warrants further investigation.

Figure 14: EST causes from the present results



4. The effects of school-based violence on victims

The results outline several effects of school-based violence. One of the more prominent effects on the school, as supported by the literature (Reddy *et al.*, 2003:14; Naser, 2005:69; Mullis *et al.*, 2006: 277-279; Steyn & Naicker, 2007:13; Reddy *et al.*, 2010:10; Steyn & Janse van Rensburg, 2010:in progress), is learners' feelings of unsafety while in school. Also, a range of long-term psychological

effects were reported by victims of school-based violence, which were both internalising and externalising in nature.

4.1 Effects on the school

With reference to the perceived effects violence has on their school, survey respondents indicated that violence disrupts classes, makes school unpleasant and causes learners to fear school. This confirms effects on the school outlined in the literature (Rossouw & Stewart, 2008:246). An important implication of these findings is that the nature of the school environment, as suggested earlier, plays a pivotal role in the incidence of violence. It also underlines discipline problems suggested by the levels of conflict between learners and educators. Such an environment also has a detrimental effect on learners' perceptions of school safety and their possible fear of attending school. It also presents educators with several possible challenges in ensuring school safety.

4.2 Fear of school

The iatrogenic effects of violence were aptly demonstrated by the qualitative narrative on the stabbing of a learner by his peers. As the results reflect a relatively high occurrence of physical violence (27.3% often and 29.5% very often) and threats with weapons (26.4% often and 31.0% very often), it is somewhat surprising that a relatively low number of learners felt unsafe while in school (10.9%). This is substantially lower than existing results, where findings have been shown to vary from as high as 77% of learners feeling unsafe (Mullis *et al.*, 2006: 277-279) to 32.6% (Steyn & Janse van Rensburg, 2010:in progress), 31.7% (Reddy *et al.*, 2003:14), 29.6% (Steyn & Naicker, 2007:13), 29.2% (Neser, 2005:69) and 27.0% (Reddy *et al.*, 2010:10). Such a discrepancy could point to increased levels of resilience toward violence, and could also support the culture of violence normalisation suggested earlier. A high level of resilience supports learners' abilities to successfully cope with the effects of violence. While such abilities can be deemed positive, it could blind decision-makers from violence as a problem. The school is an important agent in the socialisation of children, and a culture of violence normalisation could demonstrate violent behaviour as acceptable to learners, educators and, subsequently, the community.

4.3 Long term effects for individuals

The long term effects reported by victims of school-based violence comprise both internalising and externalising consequences. Internalising consequences included withdrawal from others, problems with concentration, fear and feelings of frustration, powerlessness and anger, all of which are supported by the literature (Burton 2008:14; Crawage, 2005:54; Maree, 2005:18; Neser, 2006:139; Parkes, 2007:411). A number of victims sometimes (36.8%) and often (11.4%) experienced difficulty sleeping after being victimised. An externalising consequence was heightened aggression, with victims reporting that they sometimes (29.1%) and often (6.3%) got into more arguments than usual after a violent event. Aggression as an externalising consequence supports existing results (Burton

2008:14; Crawage, 2005:54; SAHRC, 2008:14). The findings underline the importance of appropriate assistance for victims of school-based violence. Victimisation raises the risk for future aggression (Crawage, 2005:54), which could perpetuate a cycle of violence. Psychological support offered by the school, or referral to such services, is vital in these circumstances, as are effective coping mechanisms from the side of victims of school-based violence.

4. Coping strategies for school-based violence

The results confirm that victims of school-based violence apply different coping strategies when adjusting to its effects. Victims' responses included behaviour-, cognitive- and emotion-focused strategies.

5.1 Behaviour-focused coping strategies

A large number of victims applied behaviour-focused strategies in order to cope with school-based victimisation. Nearly half often sought help and advice (48.4%), while two in five talked with a friend (40.8%). Such coping behaviour largely depends on the presence of social support (Terranova, 2009:255), which suggests that most victims have a confidant who could lend support during the coping process. A worrying finding is that a quarter of victims (24.4%) reported to often seek ways to avenge themselves on the perpetrator, which supports the view that victimisation could lead to thoughts of retribution (Randall, 2006:16). Retributive action could possibly perpetuate and sustain the cycle of violence mentioned earlier, which underlines a need for relevant life-skills training.

5.2 Cognitive-focused coping strategies

A relatively large number of victims (63.8%) constantly attempted to be optimistic when dealing with the effects of school-based victimisation. Even though humour has been shown to be an effective way of coping with stress (Abel, 2002:376), two in five victims (38.9%) failed to find reasons to laugh about the situation. This underlines the contextual nature of school-based violence as a stressor, as humour may not always be an appropriate way to deal with its (potentially serious) impacts. In this vein, it should be kept in mind that the effectiveness of a coping strategy is due to the degree of fit between the strategy and an appraisal of the situation (Mitchell, 2004:19-20). In the present case, it can be assumed that the outcome of coping with school-based violence will depend on the fit between strategy and how the victim appraises the type of victimisation suffered. Thus, the use of different coping strategies can be influenced by different types of victimisation. Low level violence, such as verbal and relational victimisation, might be perceived as a changeable situation, which would make humour an appropriate strategy to use.

5.3 Emotion-focused coping strategies

More than half of victims who applied emotion-focused strategies always tried to find an emotional outlet (51.6%). A third took part in physical exercise (34.6%). The latter is a common emotion-focused strategy (Goodkind *et al.*, 2009:102), but could also be defined as a behaviour-focused strategy. However, it is argued here that, while physical exercise could be classified as behaviour, it is applied in order to *avoid* negative emotions associated with school-based victimisation. Consistent with the consequences of school-based violence, a number of victims seemingly isolated themselves from friends, family and school. As mentioned in the literature, avoidance is a typical emotion-focused strategy (Mitchell, 2004:19). A small number of victims engaged in substance use, which, as mentioned, produces risk for future violence (Netshitahame & Van Vollenhoven, 2002:314).

The contextual nature of coping strategies is of relevance here. More serious types of violence such as physical or sexual victimisation might be appraised as an unchangeable, harmful situation, which would warrant the use of emotion-focused strategies. For instance, humour might be an effective method in coping with verbal abuse, whereas victims of sexual abuse might rather use alcohol and drugs to cope. It could even be argued that problem-focused coping strategies may be appropriate when dealing with lower types of violence, while emotion-focused strategies will be more common when dealing with more serious forms of violence. Further research is needed in this regard, as well as how types of victimisation correlate with other influences proposed in coping literature.

5.4 Gender differences and coping strategies

Gender has been suggested to influence the use of coping strategies (Green & Diaz, 2008:200; Terranova, 2009:255). This was investigated with regard to coping with school-based violence. No statistical significant difference was found between male and female victims of school-based violence in problem-focused coping, which supports the findings of Tamres *et al.* (2002:18) but contrasts other studies (e.g. Green & Diaz, 2008:200; Matud, 2004:1411; Renk & Creasy, 2003:164). Nevertheless, two differences were detected in emotion-focused coping. In line with previous suggestions (Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000:541-542), male victims were found to be significantly more likely to vent their emotions through physical exercise than female victims ($p=.022$). In addition, males were found to be more likely to use alcohol and drugs to cope ($p=.000$), which is in contrast with previous results that showed no significant differences between males and females in this regard (Schraedley *et al.*, 1999:103). Given local evidence which shows that males are more likely than females to use alcohol and drugs in general (Steyn & Janse van Rensburg, 2010: in progress), the disparity across gender is to be expected.

The findings thus suggest that the use of some coping strategies may vary according to gender, which highlights the need for gender-specific victim support and prevention strategies. The fact that some gender differences were corroborated while others were challenged could be due to differences in the type of stress and contexts measured. A repeated implication of this part of the study is that

coping with school-based violence is highly contextual: the types of violence experienced and gender are only two influences in the equation. Further research is needed for effective psychological management and assistance to victims.

6. The management of school-based violence

The results brought several issues relating to the management of school-based violence to light. These include how learners perceive the abilities of school administrators and schools' collaboration with stakeholders.

6.1 Perceptions on schools' ability to deal with violent behaviour

One in ten learners felt that their school's administration is not adequately equipped to manage school-based violence. A third of learners (33.6%) thought that prefects are never able to regulate learners' behaviour. Findings substantiate earlier suggestions of the existence of a culture of ill-discipline, of which learners are seemingly aware. Learners' lack of confidence in their schools' ability to manage violence is further stressed by the view that learners are never protected from outside harm (41.3%), educators (39.4%) and other learners (37.6%). Such a lack in confidence could partially be ascribed to the reported lack of learner inclusion in prevention efforts (Wylie, 2006:11; De Waal, 2005:57). The present schools' code of conduct was compiled with the assistance of parents, but not learners. Moreover, an SSC was formed without input and inclusion of learners. A misrepresentation of learners in violence prevention strategies could arguably have an impact on the confidence of learners in the professional management of school-based violence.

6.2 Lack of learner supervision

There seems to be lack of learner supervision during school hours, as two-thirds of learners reported that they were never supervised during breaks (67.9%) and nearly a third were frequently unsupervised in class (30.9%). Qualitative data suggests that this is even more so the case during examinations. Previous studies (e.g. Burton, 2008:78; Steyn & Janse van Rensburg, 2010: in progress) reported a high incidence of violence in the classroom, underlining the need for educators to not leave their classrooms unattended. Learner supervision should be non-negotiable, given schools' mandate of maintaining a safe environment for learners (Netshitahame & Van Vollenhoven, 2002:313; Masitsa, 2008:264). In cases where educators are not in the position to supervise learners on the playground, the SRC should be given a more prominent role.

6.3 Lack of school security

The study highlights the importance of school security. Results suggest that weapons searches are never conducted (39.7%). Similarly, access to the schools' premises appears permeable (29.5%). This substantiates the earlier finding that gangs and outsiders enter the school through broken fences. However, it should be kept in mind that learner responses was based on the perception of a

broken fence, which at the time of the qualitative interviews was replaced by steel palisades. The significance of the school fence is consistent with the Regulations for Safety Measures at Public Schools (as amended in 2006), stressing the importance of controlled access. Secure fencing is a basic and vital element in school-based violence management.

Even though many causes for school-based violence originate from the learners inside the school, schools have a responsibility to protect learners from outside harm. Furthermore, access control is not only a manner of keeping unauthorised individuals out of the school, but functions as a screening method for dangerous objects. As schools seldom have the funds for advanced screening methods such as metal detectors, SASA allows for random searches within certain boundaries. With the relative high incidence of threats and fights involving weapons in mind, it is not surprising that a number of learners reported regular weapons searches to be lacking (39.7% reported that searches are never and 30.4% that searches are sometimes conducted). Regular weapons searches, along with frequent visits and consultation by the local police could rectify the problem of learners carrying weapons.

6.4 Educators dealing with violence

The results suggest that, when confronted with conflict between learners, educators would assess the nature and gravity of the situation. Such an assessment follows along the parameters of the presence of blood and weapons. Perpetrators of lesser transgressions seemed to receive a verbal warning instead of punishment, while steps according to the schools' code of conduct are reserved for more serious transgressions. The manner in which educators and principals intervene in a conflict situation corresponds with the code of conduct and official directives. Even though the principles of the code of conduct (Appendix 5: Disciplinary steps, Section A iv) states that disciplinary measures must match the nature of the transgression, a verbal warning can hardly be regarded as a form of punishment. Such an approach is in contrast to a zero tolerance policy suggested in the literature (Netshitahame & Van Vollenhoven, 2002:317). This finding points to the need for appropriate disciplinary methods, which should be formulated in consultation with the SGB, parents and, importantly, learners.

The policies of the two schools investigated showed insufficient detail regarding the management of violence. As discussed earlier, the schools had knowledge of the aetiology of school-based violence along multiple levels. However, there was no mention of any tangible strategies to target these factors. In more serious cases of violence, the codes of conduct provide little guidance as to what specific steps should be taken. In addition, safety policies provide direction about what to do *after* an injury took place, without mentioning how to handle the situation while in play. Qualitative participants seemed unsure and fearful of what to do in a conflict situation, and by their own admission do not have the skills for effective intervention. Moreover, training in conflict resolution by the school is largely absent. Poor conflict resolution is a suggested risk factor for school-based violence (Oosthuizen & De Waal, 2005:4; Randall, 2006:16), on the part of both educators and learners. Such training could prove fundamental to the safety of learners and educators alike.

6.5 Relationships with stakeholders

The results suggest that links between the school and relevant stakeholders is lacking or largely absent. The relationship between school management and some parents were reportedly strained. Concerning the relationship between the school and the local police, qualitative participants were not satisfied with police visibility at the schools. The police was perceived to only assist schools in extreme cases, and it was suggested that they should visit the schools more frequently. Furthermore, there was discontent relating to the lack of support from education officials at the district and provincial levels. It is, however, encouraging that community outreach to vulnerable learners takes place. This demonstrates the schools' ability in mediating challenges in the community. By allocating an educator to reach out to troubled learners, strong links with the community can be established and a level of primary prevention can be ensured. Such a strategy could hopefully provide a catalyst for support and input from different role players. As mentioned in the literature, a solid relationship with the parents, police, community and government, both at provincial and district levels, is an important primary prevention measure (Griggs, 2002:135; Masitsa, 2008:264; Rossouw & Stewart, 2008:268).

6. Recommendations

As demonstrated, school-based violence comprises varying actions, which differ in frequency and nature. It is thus important to equip learners with a wide array of conflict resolution skills to prevent victimisation. In this vein, an evaluation of current conflict resolution training, inherent to the curriculum or otherwise, is warranted.

It appears that some educators have difficulties in handling violent events. It is recommended that training in conflict resolution be provided, ideally with a focus on crisis intervention and the minimising of risk when intervening in a physical confrontation. School management should be made aware of effective alternative forms of discipline, and be motivated to incorporate and specify these in their code of conduct. A standardised code of conduct and school safety policy are vital tools in the prevention and management of school-based violence, but should be adjusted to meet the school's specific needs regarding violence and discipline.

Research is needed to investigate the correlation and relationship between the use of coping strategies and the type of victimisation suffered. However, this should be conducted with a valid, reliable instrument, specifically designed for measuring coping with the types of victimisation identified. Further exploration into possible gender differences should also shed light on the specific factors influencing the use of different coping strategies. Such knowledge could be incorporated into resilience strengthening and conflict resolution training. Ultimately, schools should have access to effective psychological support to counter the effects of violence and to foster and reinforce effective coping strategies.

In terms of prevention strategies, schools are in an ideal position to confront many of the causal factors identified in this report. Given the high prevalence of weapons at the schools, random searches could prove to be a deterrent factor as well as screening method. SASA makes provision for random searches along certain guidelines. Learners should participate actively in violence prevention initiatives. Given the lack of confidence in prefect's abilities and the unsupervised nature of breaks, violence prevention training of SRC members could prove valuable. The data suggested a lack of strong relationships between schools and traditional healers. In communities where traditional practices such as initiation are prominent, such relationships could prove to be in the best interests of the learners, schools and the community.

Against the background of limitations identified in Chapter 3: Research Methods, it is recommended that the results be supported by a larger-scale study. A study marked by probability sampling and a standardised instrument will provide more valid and reliable information about the extent and nature of school-based violence, both in terms of geography and demography. This will also facilitate comparison with existing evidence and provide a standard against which future findings can be measured. The present study's aim and objectives created limited capacity in which to understand all relevant aspects of school-based violence management. Research should include role players such as the SGB, community and traditional leaders, the local police, district and provincial government.

As the study draws on baseline data from a larger project, implications and recommendations specific to the AVP intervention was kept in mind. The reader is reminded that AVP aims to prevent violence by equipping individuals with peaceful conflict resolution skills. The following implications are highlighted for the AVP programme:

- Gendered coping strategies could have an impact on AVP is effectiveness, seeing as AVP training does not differentiate between male and female participants.
- Different kinds of coping strategies need to be taken into account when focusing on victims of violence.
- The spectrum of types and effects of school-based violence should be accommodated in the programme.
- While AVP focuses unilaterally on learners, thought should be given to expand the programme to educators and school management. Their reported lack of conflict resolution knowledge makes them important targets for training.
- As demonstrated, an ecological approach to school-based violence warrants the inclusion of all stakeholders. Ultimately, AVP should extend its mandate to the policy and procedure level as well. A multi-pronged intervention approach will improve and strengthen the outcomes and reach of the programme.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of this investigation was to describe and explore the nature and extent, coping strategies and management of school-based violence. In reaching these objectives, it was determined that the schools under scrutiny were marked by different types, causes, effects and reactions to violence. Seen broadly, it was determined that 1) learners apply a range of different coping strategies to deal with victimisation in school, which can be perceived as mostly positive, and 2) that educators lacked skills in managing and preventing the violent behaviour of learners. The findings lay a foundation to further explore aspects of school-based violence, ultimately to inform policy and to ensure an environment conducive to learning.

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Synopsis

School represents a critical phase of an individual's life. Apart from educational gain, learners are socialised to become productive members of society. Violence in the school environment holds a range of adverse consequences for learners and educators alike. Efforts have been launched across the globe to determine, manage and prevent the complexities of school-based violence. South African institutions have added to this literature, although several aspects of school-based violence remain outside the academic spotlight.

Even though the nature and extent of school-based violence has received substantial attention in recent years, studies are marked by methodological differences which make comparisons difficult. Research on coping strategies used by adolescents is still in its infancy. This also pertains to the lack of evidence on factors influencing the use of different strategies, in particular from a gender perspective. Democratic change necessitated changes in the education system, which inevitably had an impact on the manner in which school administrators manage and prevent school-based violence. However, little is known about the disciplinary methods and violence prevention strategies applied by educators, along with challenges they may face in this regard.

In order to address these shortfalls, an investigation was launched to ascertain how schools deal with violence, with particular focus on learners' coping and school administrators' management strategies. Subsequently, the dissertation set out to describe and explore the nature, extent, coping strategies and management of school-based violence in two schools in Moakeng, Kroonstad, Free State province.

The study stems from a partnership between the Centre for Health Systems Research and Development (CHSR&D) and the Department of Criminology (both from University of the Free State), and the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP). In order to accommodate different target groups (learners and educators) and different sources of information, a mixed methods approach was utilised. The research design was a partially mixed sequential dominant status design that consisted of a survey and personal interviews. The self-administered survey was conducted among 710 learners with a structured questionnaire, while six educators took part in semi-structured personal interviews. Mixed methods research inherently guarantees a level of triangulation, which promoted the validity and reliability of the data.

The results confirm the presence of violence in the selected schools. Higher levels of violence were recorded among the learners when compared to other South African studies. Different types of violence were identified, both between learners and between learners and educators. The causes of violence featured across all six levels of the ecological systems theory model. The study identified numerous long-term consequences for learners who are victimised by school-based violence.

Learners applied different coping strategies, although it appears that problem-focused coping was used more often.

Little differences were found between male and female victims' use of coping strategies, with the exception of emotion-focused strategies. In light of the high levels of violence, the results suggest that learners have little confidence in their schools' administrators to effectively manage and prevent violence. An overall lack of learner supervision in the schools was reported, along with a lack of physical security measures. Educators were found to follow official guidelines relating to disciplinary methods, even though corporal punishment was widely used in the schools. Finally, the schools did not have strong relationships with stakeholders such as the local police and governmental structures at the district and provincial levels.

It was concluded that the schools under scrutiny were marked by different types, causes, effects and reactions to violence. Seen broadly, it was identified that 1) learners apply a range of different coping strategies to deal with victimisation in school, which can be perceived as mostly positive, and 2) that educators lacked skills in managing and preventing the violent behaviour of learners. The findings lay a foundation to further explore aspects of school-based violence, ultimately to inform policy and to ensure an environment conducive to learning.

Opsomming

Skool verteenwoordig 'n kritieke fase van 'n individu se lewe. Benewens opvoedkundige groei word leerders gesosialiseer om produktiewe lede van die gemeenskap word. Die bestaan van geweld in die skoolomgewing hou 'n reeks ongunstige gevolge vir beide leerlinge en opvoeders in. Talle pogings is in verskeie lande geloods om die kompleksiteite om skool-gebaseerde geweld vas te stel, te bestuur en te voorkom. Suid-Afrikaanse instellings het daarin geslaag om by hierdie groeiende literatuur te voeg, alhoewel verskeie aspekte van skool-gebaseerde geweld buite die akademiese kalklig bly.

Alhoewel die aard en vlakke van skool-gebaseerde geweld die afgelope jare heelwat aandag geniet het, word studies gekenmerk deur metodologiese verskille wat vergelykings bemoeilik. Navorsing oor die hanteringstrategieë wat adolosente gebruik is nog in aanvangsfase. Hierdie sluit in die afwesigheid van bewyse oor geslagsverskille en hanteringstrategieë in die konteks van die stres wat skool-gebaseerde geweld tot gevolg het. Demokratiese verandering het verskeie wysings tot die opvoedkundesisteem genoodsaak het, wat 'n onvermydelike impak het op die manier waarop skooladministrateurs geweld bestuur en voorkom. Min is egter bekend oor die dissiplinêre metodes en geweldvoorkomingstrategieë wat deur onderwysers toegepas word, tesame met die struikelblokke wat hulle in hierdie veband mag teëkom.

Om hierdie tekortkominge aan te spreek is 'n ondersoek geloods om vas te stel hoe skole geweld hanteer, op beide die vlakke van leerlinge se sielkundige prosesse sowel as die skooladministrateurs

se bestuurstrategieë. Gevolglik fokus hierdie verhandeling op die aard, vlakke, mate, hanteringstrategieë en bestuur van skool-gebaseerde geweld in twee skole in Maokeng, Kroonstad, Vrystaat provinsie.

Die studie spruit voort uit 'n vennootskap tussen die Sentrum vir Gesondheidsstelselnavorsing en Ontwikkeling (SGSNO) en die Departement Kriminologie, albei van die Universiteit van die Vrystaat en die Alternatives to Violence Project. Deur verskillende teikengroepe (leerlinge en onderwysers) en bronne van inligting te akkommodeer, is 'n gemengde navorsingsmetode gebruik. Die navorsingsontwerp was 'n gedeeltelik gemengde opvolgende dominante status ontwerp, wat toegelaat het vir 'n opname en persoonlike onderhoude. Die selfgeadministreerde opname is onder 710 leerlinge gedoen, terwyl ses onderwysers aan semi-gestruktureerde persoonlike onderhoude deelgeneem het. Gemengde-metode navorsing waarborg inherent 'n vlak van triangulasie, wat die geldigheid en betroubaarheid van die data bevorder.

Die resultate het die teenwoordigheid van geweld in die geteikende skole bevestig, wat in vergelyking met bestaande literatuur ietwat hoog vertoon het. Verskillende soorte geweld is geïdentifiseer, beide onder leerlinge en tussen leerlinge en onderwysers. Die oorsake van geweld in die skole kom in al ses vlakke van die ekologiese stelsel teorie model voor. Die gevolge van skolegeweld het individuele effekte tot gevolg gehad. Slagoffers hanteer geweld deur van verskillende hanteringstrategieë gebruik te maak, waarvan probleem-gefokusde strategieë die meeste toegepas is.

Min verskille is gevind tussen manlike en vroulike slagoffers se gebruik van hanteringstrategieë, met die uitsondering van emosie-gefokusde strategieë. In die lig van redelike hoë vlakke van geweld stel die resultate voor dat leerlinge min vertrouwe het in skoolbestuur om skool-gebaseerde geweld effektief te bestuur en te voorkom. 'n Algehele gebrek aan leerlingtoesig is gerapporteer, tesame met 'n gebrek aan fisiese sekuriteitsmaatreëls. Alhoewel lyfstraf in die skole toegepas word, is daar gevind dat onderwysers wel amptelike riglyne rondom dissiplinêre metodes volg. Laastens het die skole nie sterk verhoudings met relevante belanghebbendes, soos die plaaslike polisie en die regering op distrik- en provinsiale vlak, gehad nie.

Ter gevolgtrekking is daar vasgestel dat die skole onder bespreking gekenmerk word deur verskillende tipes, oorsake, impakte en reaksies tot geweld. In die breë gesien is geïdentifiseer dat 1) leerlinge 'n reeks hanteringstrategieë toepas om viktimisering te hanteer, wat hoofsaaklik as positief gesien kan word, en 2) dat onderwysers 'n gebrek aan vaardighede en kennis het om die gewelddadige gedrag van leerders aan te spreek en te voorkom. Die bevindings lê 'n grondslag vir verdere ondersoek rakende aspekte van skool-gebaseerde geweld ten einde beleid toe te lig en 'n omgewing daar te stel wat leer bevorder.

Key terms

- School-based violence
- Types of school-based violence
- Coping strategies
- Managing school-based violence
- Mixed methods research
- Ecological Systems Theory

Appendix 1 - FDoE Letter of permission



education

Department of
Education
FREE STATE PROVINCE

Enquiries: Malmene (M)
Reference: 16/4/1/20-2008

Tel: 051 404 8682
Fax: 051 447 7318
E-mail: malmene@edu.fs.gov.za

2008 - 05 - 23

Ms H Foster

P.O.Box 11242

Universitas

9321

Dear Ms. Foster

REGISTRATION OF RESEARCH PROJECT

1. This letter is in reply to your application for the registration of your research project.
2. Research topic: **The Effectiveness of a Life-Skills Development Project as Intervention in School Based Violence.**
3. Your research project has been registered with the Free State Education Department.
4. Approval is granted under the following conditions:-
 - 4.1 Learners and officials participate voluntarily in the project.
 - 4.2 The names of all schools and participants involved remain confidential.
 - 4.3 The questionnaires are completed and the interviews are conducted outside normal tuition time.
 - 4.4 This letter is shown to all participating persons.
 - 4.5 A bound copy of the report and a summary on a computer disc on this study is donated to the Free State Department of Education
 - 4.6 Findings and recommendations are presented to relevant officials in the Department.
5. The costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility
6. You are requested to confirm acceptance of the above conditions in writing to:

The Head: Education, for attention: DIRECTOR : QUALITY ASSURANCE
Room 401, Syfrets Building, Private Bag X20565, BLOEMFONTEIN, 9301

We wish you every success with your research

Yours sincerely,

FR SE LO

DIRECTOR : QUALITY ASSURANCE

Directorate: Quality Assurance, Private Bag X20565, Bloemfontein, 9300
Syfrets Center, 65 Maitland Street, Bloemfontein
Tel: 051 404 8750 / Fax: 051 447 7318 E-mail: quality@edu.fs.gov.za

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Appendix 2 – Survey instrument

UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA



Departement Kriminologie/Department of Criminology
Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe/Faculty of the Humanities

SCHOOL BASED VIOLENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Research shows that violence in some South African schools is very high. Your school has been selected to take part in a study on violence. Your views and experiences are very important for us to better understand the situation. **WE DO NOT WANT YOUR NAME.** All the data is pooled, so no one can link your answers to your name. Therefore, **please be very honest in your answers.**

- Read each question carefully before you answer.
- Place an **X** behind the answer which best reflects your **OWN OPINION or SITUATION.**
- When asked to give an opinion in the space provided, please do so in detail.



339, Bloemfontein 9300, Republiek van Suid-Afrika, Republic of South Africa
(051) 401 2278 (051) 401 3581 SA

SCHOOL BASED VIOLENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

1	2	3
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SECTION A

1. What is your gender

- a) Female
b) Male

2. What is your age? _____ years

3. In which grade are you?

- a) Grade 10
b) Grade 11

SECTION B

Think about the situation at your school this year and answer the following questions:

1. Was there violence in your school?

- a) Yes
b) No
c) Uncertain

2. How often did the following happen at your school this year?

	Never	Seldom	Often	Very often
2.1 Learners hitting, kicking or slapping each other?	1	2	3	4
2.2 Learners calling other learners bad names to hurt them?	1	2	3	4
2.3 Learners making fun of other learners in a bad way?	1	2	3	4

Office use only

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Office use only

2.4 Sexual abuse of learners by other learners?	1	2	3	4
2.5 Damage of learners' property, like bookcases and clothes?	1	2	3	4
2.6 Fights between learners involving weapons?	1	2	3	4
2.7 Learners bringing weapons to school?	1	2	3	4
2.8 Learners calling teachers bad names to hurt them?	1	2	3	4
2.9 Learners hitting, kicking or slapping teachers?	1	2	3	4
2.10 Learners being left in classes without the teacher being there?	1	2	3	4
2.11 Teachers hitting, kicking or slapping learners?	1	2	3	4
2.12 Teachers calling learners bad names to hurt them?	1	2	3	4
2.13 Teachers making fun of learners in a bad way?	1	2	3	4
2.14 Sexual abuse of learners by teachers?	1	2	3	4

3. Why do you think some learners take weapons to school?

	Yes	No	Uncertain
3.1 For protection	1	2	3
3.2 To gain respect	1	2	3
3.3 To intimidate other learners	1	2	3
3.4 To attack other learners	1	2	3
3.5 To show off before the girls	1	2	3
3.6 Another reason? Please tell us about it	1	2	3

4. Have any of the following happened to you this year at the school?

	Yes	No
4.1 Have you been hit, kicked or slapped by other learners?	1	2
4.2 Have you been called a bad name to hurt you by other learners?	1	2
4.3 Have you been made fun of in a bad way by other learners?	1	2
4.4 Have you been sexually abused by other learners?	1	2
4.5 Have your things been broken or damaged by other learners on purpose?	1	2
4.6 Has another learner threatened you with a weapon?	1	2
4.7 Has another learner injured you with a weapon?	1	2
4.8 Has a teacher hit, kicked or slapped you?	1	2

8. Why do you think we have such high levels of violence in our schools in South Africa?

1	2
1	2
1	2

SECTION C

1. How do you react to violent incidents at your school?

	Yes	No	Uncertain
1.1 I avoid certain places at the school	1	2	3
1.2 I take part in the fights	1	2	3
1.3 I try to stop the fights	1	2	3
1.4 I report the fights to SRC or teachers	1	2	3
1.5 I just stand and watch the fights	1	2	3
1.6 I keep away from other learners	1	2	3
1.7 I have problems with concentration	1	2	3
1.8 I am afraid to go to school	1	2	3
1.9 I become frustrated with the violence	1	2	3
1.10 I feel powerless against the violent learners	1	2	3
1.11 I am afraid to be humiliated if I am picked on	1	2	3
1.12 I become angry	1	2	3
1.13 I feel isolated from other learners	1	2	3
1.14 I do not like school any more	1	2	3

2. Do you have another kind of reaction? Please tell us about it

1	2
1	2
1	2

- 4.9 Has a teacher called you a bad name to hurt you?
4.10 Has a teacher made fun of you in a bad way?
4.11 Have you been sexually assaulted by a teacher?

5. Have you done the following this year at school?

	Yes	No
5.1 Hit, kicked or slapped another learner?	1	2
5.2 Called other learners a bad name to hurt them?	1	2
5.3 Made fun of another learner in a bad way?	1	2
5.4 Sexually abused another learner?	1	2
5.5 Broken or damaged another learner's things on purpose?	1	2
5.6 Threatened another learner with a weapon?	1	2
5.7 Injured another learner with a weapon?	1	2
5.8 Hit, kicked or slapped a teacher?	1	2
5.9 Called a teacher a bad name to hurt him/her?	1	2
5.10 Sexually assaulted a teacher?	1	2

6. Would you say the following are reasons for violent behaviour in your school during this year?

	Yes	No	Uncertain
6.1 Gangs from outside	1	2	3
6.2 Gangs within the school	1	2	3
6.3 Alcohol use	1	2	3
6.4 Problems between girlfriends and boyfriends	1	2	3
6.5 Problems at home	1	2	3
6.6 Jealousy of other learner's things like cell phones?	1	2	3
6.7 Jealousy because other learners do better in school?	1	2	3
6.8 Jealousy because other learners are more popular than them?	1	2	3

7. How would you rate the level of violence at your school compared to other schools? (Choose one)

- a) Violence is worse at our school
b) Violence is the same as in other schools
c) There is less violence in our school

5. What do you think would be a good punishment for violent behaviour?

	Yes	No	Uncertain
5.1 Detention	1	2	3
5.2 Corporal punishment	1	2	3
5.3 Suspension	1	2	3
5.4 Doing work on the school ground	1	2	3
5.5 Do you have any other idea for punishing violent behaviour? Please tell us about it.			

6. Do learners get corporal punishment at your school?

- a) Never
b) Sometimes
c) Often

7. What is your opinion about corporal punishment?

8. Many people are worried about the violence in schools in South Africa. What do you think can be done to stop the violence?

SECTION D

1. When you are in a situation at school where you feel that someone will become violent towards you, how do you usually react?

	Never	Sometimes	Often
1.1 I try to stay calm and think of a way to negotiate our differences.	1	2	3
1.2 I seek help from others to stop the violence	1	2	3
1.3 I feel helpless	1	2	3

3. How does violence affect your school?

	Yes	No	Uncertain
3.1 It disrupts the classes	1	2	3
3.2 There is damage of school property	1	2	3
3.3 It makes the school an unpleasant place	1	2	3
3.4 It causes some learners to be scared	1	2	3
3.5 Is there any other way that the school is affected by violence? Please tell us about it.			

4. What do you think of the following at your school?

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
4.1 Violent learners get punished	1	2	3	4
4.2 Learners know how to deal with anger without getting violent	1	2	3	4
4.3 Only learners and school staff are allowed on the school ground during school hours.	1	2	3	4
4.4 Learners are searched for weapons after a fight	1	2	3	4
4.5 Learners are searched for weapons on a regular basis	1	2	3	4
4.6 Security guards protect the school during school hours	1	2	3	4
4.7 Teachers patrol the playgrounds during breaks	1	2	3	4
4.8 Prefects have control over the behaviour of the learners	1	2	3	4
4.9 The school protects the learners from violence from other learners	1	2	3	4
4.10 The school protects the learners from violence from teachers	1	2	3	4
4.11 Violent learners get corporal punishment	1	2	3	4
4.12 The school does enough to protect learners from people outside the school who want to cause trouble at the school	1	2	3	4

Office use only

1.4	I try to think why the person became violent and then try to stop the conflict.	1	2	3
1.5	I think of ways that I can change the situation to make it better.	1	2	3
1.6	I get very angry and attack first.	1	2	3
1.7	I know how to calm myself down.	1	2	3
1.8	I keep thinking that there's not much I can do to help myself.	1	2	3
1.9	I will become even more violent than that person to defend myself.	1	2	3
1.10	They know not to mess with me or they will be sorry.	1	2	3

2. How would you react after an incident where someone really hurts you?

	Never	Sometimes	Often
2.1	1	2	3
2.2	1	2	3
2.3	1	2	3
2.4	1	2	3
2.5	1	2	3
2.6	1	2	3
2.7	1	2	3
2.8	1	2	3
2.9	1	2	3
2.10	1	2	3
2.11	1	2	3
2.12	1	2	3
2.13	1	2	3
2.14	1	2	3

3. Have you ever had training in dealing with conflict and other difficult situations at school?

- a) Yes
b) No

8

Office use only

3.1 If "Yes", where did you get the training?

- a) It is taught in class
b) People from outside the school taught us about this at school
c) I learned it from an organisation that have nothing to do with school

4. Would you like to receive training which will teach you how to peacefully resolve violence?

- a) Yes
b) No

5. Do you think such training would be effective in preventing violence?

- a) Yes
b) No

6. What do you think of the following statements?

	Yes	No	I am not sure
6.1	1	2	3
a)			
b)	1	2	3
6.2	1	2	3
a)			
6.3	1	2	3
6.4	1	2	3
6.5	1	2	3
6.6	1	2	3
6.7	1	2	3
6.8	1	2	3
6.9	1	2	3
6.10	1	2	3

7. According to what you heard from other people, what do you think of school today, compared to school in the past?

9

8. In your view, were there many changes made to schools since you were in Grade 1?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Unsure

8.1. If "Yes", what were the changes?

9. What is your opinion on the rights of learners? (Choose one)

a) They have enough rights
b) They don't have enough rights
c) They have too many rights

10. What do you think about the ability of the school (principle/teachers) to deal with violence in your school? (Choose one)

a) They deal with it well most of the time
b) They sometimes deal with it
c) They are not able to deal with it.

11. Do you have any suggestions on how violence can better be dealt with in your school? Please write it in the space below.

12. Is there an adult person who takes care of you after school?

a) Never
b) Sometimes
c) Most of the times

- 12.1 Do the people who take care of you sometimes drink until they are drunk?

a) Never
b) Sometimes
c) Often

- 12.2 If they are drunk, do they become aggressive?

a) Never
b) Sometimes
c) Often

13. Are there criminals gangs in your community?

a) Yes
b) No

- 13.1 If "Yes", have they done anything bad to you or your family?

a) Yes
b) No

- 13.2 If "Yes", are you part of the gang?

a) Yes
b) No

14. How often do you do the following after school?

	Never	Some-times	Often
14.1 Sport	1	2	3
14.2 Cultural activities (e.g. choir)	1	2	3
14.3 Spend time with a gang	1	2	3
14.4 Help with work around the house	1	2	3
14.5 Homework	1	2	3
14.6 Do nothing / Lazing around	1	2	3
14.7 Visit friends	1	2	3
14.8 Drink alcohol	1	2	3
14.9 Work for my own income	1	2	3
14.10 Use dagga/drugs	1	2	3
14.11 Do you do anything else after school? Please tell us.	1	2	3

Appendix 3 – Qualitative interview schedule

Interview schedule

As you know, recent media reports highlighted the problem of violence in schools. Also, not much is known about how educators handle and manage violence in their schools. Therefore, I would like to ask you a few questions on school violence management. With your permission, I would like to make an audio recording of our conversation, which will assist me in getting the information I need. This conversation and the data derived from it will be handled confidentially, and nobody will be able to trace your answers back to you. Even though I have certain questions to ask, feel free to add anything you would like to talk about.

1. How often does violence occur in your school? What types of violence? How serious is the problem?
2. How do you manage/deal with school-based violence in your school?
3. Do you receive support from the DoE in this matter? If yes, what type of support (training, disciplinary hearing intervention)?
4. Who decides what happens after a violent incident: teachers, the principal or the DoE? Is this process effective? If you could change anything about the process, what would you change and why?
5. Does your school have any policies dealing with school-based violence? (With your permission, could I make a copy?)
6. Have you received any training in dealing with school-based violence? If yes, when and who provided the training? Was the training helpful/could you implement what you have learned?
7. Do you have any suggestions on how school-based violence can be better dealt with?

Appendix 4 – Qualitative interviews information letter

UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Sentrum vir Gesondheidsisteemnavorsing &
Ontwikkeling

Faculty of the Humanities
Centre for Health Systems Research &
Development



Ref:
Verw:

23 June 2009

The principal: _____ Secondary school
Interview – *Managing violence at schools*

To Whom It May Concern:

The dawn of democracy in South Africa necessitated reforms in its education sector, away from one marked by segregation and authoritarianism to an inclusive and safe education system. Despite the introduction of policies and strategies to guide the management of schools, many are characterised by high levels of violence. Although political violence among youths decreased since the early 1990s, violence involving weapons, sexual assault and gang-related aggression continue to be problematic. Recent years were plagued by such reports. It has been noted that, if the media could be used as a yard stick, schools appear to be the most dangerous places in South Africa. In particular, reports of violence involving weapons – such as stabbings with scissors and knives in North West, learners in possession of firearms in Pretoria and the sword-killing in Krugersdorp – bear witness to such claims. Although not downplaying the seriousness of these events, more prevalent acts of violence often go unreported and, thereby, even implicitly tolerated. Official data may even underestimate the real magnitude of the problem.

With this background, a study on school-based violence was conducted in your school during 2008. In order to enrich data obtained in this study, it was decided that your views on aspects on the management of school-based violence be included in the final results. Thank you for participating in this dialogue. With your consent, I would like to record the interview, to facilitate data collection and analysis. All information will be used anonymously, and permission was obtained by the Director: Quality Assurance of the Free State Department of Education.

Thank you,

André Janse van Rensburg

SECONDARY SCHOOL

SCHOOL SAFETY POLICY

1. PREAMBLE:

A secure school environment is one in which the occupants have a very low risk of physical, emotional and psychological injury. Security refers to the measures that we take to make the school environment free of crime and violence. This will be done by making arrangements within the school, and coordinating people's efforts in such a way as to lower the risk of violence and injury.

2. COMPOSITION OF THE SCHOOL SAFETY COMMITTEE

The School Safety Committee (SSC) will be made up of the following people:

- * member of the School Governing Body (SGB)
- * educators
- * learners (RCL)
- * local government representative
- * a representative of the local policy
- * a representative of local business

Members of the School Safety Committee will change depending on the changes of members of the SGB and the RCL.

3. **FUNCTIONS/DUTIES OF THE SCHOOL SAFETY COMMITTEE**

- i) be responsible for all safety and security of all learners at school.
- ii) do proper safety inspections, record and report problems.
- iii) keep record of all injuries to learners and staff.
- iv) draw up an emergency plan.
 - see to it that this plan is practiced on a regular basis.
 - Update the emergency plan annually.
- v) keep staff and learners updated about security.

4. **ACT/INCIDENT THAT CONSTITUTE THE VIOLATION OF THE SAFETY AND SECURING OF THE SCHOOL**

- * fighting and bullying
- * assault and battery
- * threat/intimidation
- * hate speech
- * sex offences
- * disorderly conduct
- * theft of any kind
- * breaking and/or entering
- * substance possession on usage
- * gang activity
- * weapons possession
- * arson
- * trespassing

5.

The following table will be used to record all incidents: -

[illegible]

6. OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

6.1 Procedures to follow in case of an injury

- 6.1.1 First aid, by a trained person, must be applied immediately.
- 6.1.2 Notify parents.
- 6.1.3 If the parents can not be notified, the learner must be taken to the Boitumelo Hospital.
- 6.1.4 The injury register must be completed. It is available from the person in charge of first aid. The following must be entered: date, time, description of the injury and reason.
- 6.1.5 In case of a serious injury, the Governing Body must be notified. The following must be reported: details of the injury, reasons and reports of witnesses.

7. FIRS AID

- 7.1 First aid equipment is available in the office - block.
- 7.2 The person in charge of first aid, as indicated on the work allocation, must do regular inspection to ensure sufficient stock in the first aid case.

8. TERRAIN DUTY

- 8.1 All HODs, must do regular control to ensure that staff is on duty.
- 8.2 The person on duty must give written report of any potential dangerous equipment/situations on the terrain and buildings. All injuries must be reported.

9. INSPECTION TEAM

- 9.1 The inspection team, consisting of the SMT member in charge, principal and a Governing Body member responsible for Buildings and Terrain, must control repair work.

10.

REGISTER OF DANGER SITUATIONS

- 10.1 A register of all situations that may break down safety, must be kept.
- 10.2 The register must reflect the following: date of report and repair.

11.

DANGEROUS SITUATIONS

- 11.1 Cracked or broken windows.
- 11.2 Broken chairs must be sent for repairs.
- 11.3 Slippery and loose floor tiles.
- 11.4 Picking upon of heavy objects by learners.
- 11.5 Sharp, protruding objects.

12.

ELECTRICAL MAIN SWITCHES AND APPARATUS

- 12.1 ^{7.7} Electrical main switches must know where the main switch of his/her class is situation and how to switch it off.
- 12.2 Repairs on electrical apparatus must be done by a qualified person.
Faulty plugs must be reported.
- 12.3 Changing of light bulbs may not done by learners.

13.

BOOK STORES

- 13.1 Inventories should kept by relevant staff member.
- 13.2 Shelves may not be overloaded.
- 13.3 Strict control of stationery's textbook ~~be~~ should be kept and record should be kept.

14.

TERRAIN

- 14.1 Man holes must be covered at all times.
- 14.2 No lawn mowers or edge cutters may be used near learners.

14.3 All terrain and construction work must be cordoned off.

14.4 Bee nests must be removed.

15. PROCEDURE TO BE FOLOWED IN THE EVENT OF INJURIES DURING PRACTICES AND MATCHES

15.1 If first aid official are in attendance, seek their advice.

15.2 Administer first aid if qualified to do so.

15.3 In serious cases take the learner to casualty section of the Hospital. When leaving the practice/match, request another Staff member to supervise the group.

15.4 Inform the headmaster and the parents.

15.5 Always make every effort to ensure that first aid is close at hand.

15.6 Always make every effort to ensure that first aid is close at hand.

15.7 First aid kit in the office block.

15.8 Enter details of all injuries in the book in the office.

10/10/10
18/07/10

Appendix 6 – Code of conduct (School B)

CODE OF CONDUCT

SECONDARY SCHOOL

STATEMENT MEANING AND DEFINITION OF WORDS: Unless appearing to the contrary in this document the following words shall have the following meaning:

SGB: --School governing body

School: ---Name of school

Learner: ---Any boy or girl who has been registered to receive formal education

Gender: ---Where the male gender form is used the female gender form is automatically implied.

School Staff: ---Educators, officials, functionaries and other full/part time employees of the school and Education Department.

HOD: ----Head of Department (School/Head Office—as applicable)

Milieu: Bodibeng Secondary School functions within the laws and regulations of the country, the district and local government, the common law, as well as conventions and public opinion of the community in which the school provides services.

Crucial school rules: A learner must always:

1. remain loyal to the school and not behave in such a manner as to harm the interests or image/reputation of the school.
2. conscientiously obey school rules and regulations , fulfill study obligations and follow instructions from the educators to the best of his ability
3. obey the laws and regulations of the country, District and local authorities
4. respect the person, safety, health and rights of staff members , learners and other people.
5. respect property belonging to staff members, pupils, other people and public institutions
6. comply with the values , norms and morals of society
7. submit to and accept the authority of the principal, educators and other people in positions of authority.

General school rules:

8. Within the context of the principals of the crucial school rules, the internal school management may issue and enforce general school rules, codes of conduct,

Fezile Dabi District

administrative and other instructions on its own or in conjunction with the educators , RCL/learners, in order to:

- ensure effective and functional management and functioning of the school.
- maintain effective and functional management and functioning of the school
- regulate the unique character and traditions of the school

Offences and disciplinary measures

9. Infringement of the crucial school rules will be dealt with according to the disciplinary code and procedures to be read as part of the Code of Conduct.
10. Intentional or malicious infringement, and/or disregard of the crucial school rules 1-7 will be considered as serious misconduct and can lead to suspension and/or expulsion of the learner from the school.
11. Infringement of the general school rules, codes of conduct and instructions are normally dealt with outside the disciplinary code and according to the normal system of discipline of the school. Generally this will be considered as not serious enough to justify suspension/expulsion. Intentional, malicious or repeated offences and/or disregard of general school rules /instructions may escalate under aggravating circumstances to serious misconduct. In such exceptional circumstances disciplinary action may be taken which could lead to suspension /expulsion.
12. A learner must report any infringement of the school to a RCL member or a HOD as soon as he becomes aware of it.

DISCIPLINARY CODE APPLICABLE TO BODIBENG SECONDARY SCHOOL

1. Aim is to:

- encourage disciplined conduct in learners for the sake of the safety and wellbeing of each learner and ensure success of the school's duty to educate.
- ensure that the provisions of the Education Act are met
- ensure that discipline is enforced justly and consistently
- entrench the responsibility for enforcing discipline in the school management in order that discipline of deviant behavior may be enforced immediately.

2. Content of the disciplinary code covers:

- rules of conduct and requirement by which the conduct of pupils will be evaluated.
- disciplinary measures for misconduct as guidelines for the school management so that the school rules may be enforced consistently
- allocation of authority within the management hierarchy
- facilities/opportunities for pupils with regard to representation and appeal.

3. Responsibilities. It is the intention of the SGB that:

- the chairperson of the SGB or his nominee shall have the final disciplinary authority
- the principal, educators and RCL members shall be responsible for the analysis

of and recommendations to the SGB regarding disciplinary measures, as well as maintaining records of disciplinary matters.

4. **Offences:**

The following actions by a learner are regarded as some of the infringements of the school rules and are set out in the same numerical order as the Code of Conduct.

INFRINGEMENTS OR BREAKING OF CRUCIAL SCHOOL RULES

1. Disloyalty to the school or harming the school's reputation.

- 1.1 Offensive /insulting remarks about the school and/or its staff to outside parties.
- 1.2 Disclosure of confidential information regarding disciplinary actions to anyone other than the principal or member of the disciplinary committee.
- 1.3 Spreading untruths or rumours about the school or school administration with the purpose of undermining the school.
- 1.4 Alcohol abuse.
- 1.5 Smoking in school uniform

2. Neglect of duties

- 2.1 Refusing or omitting, without acceptable reasons, to carry out tasks given by educators, such as: study obligations, homework, projects, or carrying out such tasks without due care and attention.
- 2.2 Undermining classes with disruptive behavior of any kind.
- 2.3 Repeated absence without authorized permission.

The following actions may be regarded progressively more serious infringements of this rule:

- Arriving late for school functions /activities
- Leaving the school premises without permission during tuition time (bunking)
- Absence from school for 1-3 days without producing a letter of excuse from a parent/guardian
- Absence from school for more than 3 days without producing a medical certificate.

2.4 Neglecting to report infringements of school rules.

3. Breaking the law or infringements of the law:

- 3.1 Conviction of any criminal offence whether it concerns the school or not.
- 3.2 Any of the following criminal or immoral acts even if criminal prosecution by the law is not instituted:
 - Unlawful appropriation of school property, staff's property, other pupil's property, even if such property is left unattended on the school premises.
 - Removal of school equipment or articles belonging to the school from the school premises without written permission.
 - Dishonesty for example receiving unauthorized information about or during assessment or examination.

- Use or the possession of drugs or alcohol, or supplying drugs or alcohol to learners
4. Endangering the person, rights, safety or health of individuals.
 - 4.1 Joking, jesting or playing during school hours, or during school activities which endanger the safety, health or well-being of individuals.
 - 4.2 Threats of violence or intimidation: that is, threatening to physically or psychologically harm an individual.
 - 4.3 Bringing a dangerous object or weapon into the school premises (Amendment Act-8A)
 - 4.4 Assaulting or attempting to assault any staff member or learner or fighting physically with another individual.
 - 4.5 Any deliberate or negligent act which causes a pupil or staff member to be exposed to injury, harm or death.
 5. Damage to property.
 - 5.1 Any deliberate or negligent act whereby a learner causes damage to school property or property of staff or pupils.
 - 5.2 Vandalizing of school property
 - 5.3 Acting riotously together with one or more other learners or exciting (instigating) a group of learners to behave riotously or to damage school property.
 - 5.4 Any act or threat to disrupt the functioning of the school through physical damage to building, equipment or other property.(sabotage)
 6. Disregard of values.
 - 6.1 Alcohol/or drug abuse
 - 6.2 Behavior that conflicts with the accepted respectability/moral standards of the community and the school.
 - 6.3 The use of words that convey hate, ridicule or contempt of any staff member or learner. The offence is aggravated when directed especially at an individual's race, language, religion, origin, color or sex.
 7. Disregard of and for authority.
 - 7.1 Refusing to obey a reasonable request by a person in authority or inciting other learners to such behavior.
 - 7.2 Any impertinent, impudent or condescending attitude, behavior or words by a learner against a staff member or person in authority.
 - 7.3 Repeated deliberate or negligent disregard of any official notice on the school premises.

DISCIPLINARY STEPS

A.PRINCIPLES

- i. Usually disciplinary steps should firstly be educational and secondly corrective and should only be applied if earlier steps are ineffective.
- ii. Disciplinary steps must not be applied lightly and therefore rest only with persons in

authority who have the requisite responsibility

- iii. Similar offences, committed in comparable circumstances should be treated similarly. The goal is consistency in the application of disciplinary steps.
- iv. Disciplinary steps must be based on the seriousness' of the offence as well as the school and disciplinary record of the offender.
- v. Certain circumstances can either aggravate or mitigate the seriousness of an offence. An offence by a senior learner who should be setting an example can, for example, aggravate the case.

B. VERBAL WARNINGS

vi. Any staff member and RCL member can reprimand a learner at any time, without lodging a formal written complaint.

vii. Verbal warnings can be given for first time offences involving the General School Rules (paragraph 8)

- Unsatisfactory academic achievements or other form of dereliction of duties(rule 2)
- Offences with regard to safety , health and damage to property (rules 4,5)
- Offences concerning disregard of values, norms and moral standards (rule 6)
- Offences concerning 7.2 impertinence/impudence and 7.3 disregard of notices.

C. WRITTEN WARNINGS

viii. Should a verbal warning prove inadequate or ineffectual for the same/similar offence the RCL member or educator or other authority should submit a written complaint to a HOD. The HOD may then, after a proper investigation, refer the matter to the principal or the disciplinary committee.

D. FINAL WARNINGS

ix. A final warning will be issued on the completion of a disciplinary investigation, and will be given in writing for:

- A subsequent offence
- A first infringement concerning the following offences:

- 1.1 Offensive/insulting remarks about the school and/or its staff to outside parties.
- 1.2 Disclosing confidential information
- 1.3 Propagating untruths/misrepresentations concerning the school or school management.
- 1.4 Incidents of alcohol abuse with mitigation
- 1.5 Smoking in public
- 2.2 Serious undermining/disruption of classes.
- 3.3 Unlawful appropriation of school property/property of staff and pupils –dishonesty (e.g. examination)
- 4.2 Threats of violence

4.3 Assault/attempted assault

5.2 Acts of vandalism

5.4 Threats of sabotage

6.2 Serious offences which are in conflict with morals, values and norms in the school.

6.3 Words of hatred, ridicule or contempt which are aimed at race, language, religion, origin, color or sex.

x. A final warning remains valid. The learner must be informed that a repetition of the specific offence can lead to suspension/expulsion.

E.SUSPENSION/EXPULSION

xi. Suspension/expulsion is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Educational Act.

xii. It is the final disciplinary measure and is administered only upon the decision of the SGB and the principal.

xiii. A learner may over and above the General Rules of the Education Act be recommended for expulsion in the following circumstances:

- When other disciplinary steps have failed
- When a learner repeats the same offence after having received a final warning
- When the offence/s is/are of such a serious /aggravated nature that the learner's parents agreement with the enrollment terms are substantially affected.
- For first offences of the following nature:

1.4 Serious alcohol abuse

3.1 Conviction of criminal offence

3.2 Dishonesty with aggravated circumstances/consequences. ----use or possession of drugs, or supplying/use of alcohol/drugs to/by a minor

5.2 Vandalism with aggravated circumstances/consequences

5.3 Any act of sabotage.

PROCEDURE

xiv. When an offence is reported to a person in authority, he/she may investigate the complaint and reject it or give a verbal warning (see paragraph vi and vii), or arrange for disciplinary measures (see paragraph viii)

xv. Over and above the provisions of the disciplinary code, disciplinary investigations and procedures for serious offences must meet the requirements of the Education Act.

xvi. The offender must be informed of his rights.

xvii. The HOD, deputy principal or principal will act as chairperson during the investigation.

DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

xviii. A disciplinary committee shall handle any final hearing which may lead to suspension or expulsion of a learner.

APPEALS

Appeals are heard on the next level of authority of the education management structure.

GENERAL SCHOOL RULES

1. The SGB of the school may recommend expulsion from the school on the grounds of immorality or habitual or serious misconduct or any other grounds if the SGB considers it in the interest of the school and the learners.
2. When a learner has been absent, it is essential that he/she gives a letter from his/her parents to the class educator on the day that he/she returns to school. If a learner is absent for an assessment or examination, or absent for a period exceeding three days, a medical certificate is required.
3. Fighting at school is forbidden, as is the possession of dangerous weapons and knives.
4. Correct and tidy school uniform is compulsory during outings and school functions.(unless learners are informed otherwise)
5. As we are a co-educational school, we expect that the conduct between the sexes should be above approach at all times.
6. The school starts at 7:30 and learners must be punctual.
7. Permission must be obtained from the HOD of the section before a learner will be allowed to leave the school premises during school hours. This letter must be handed to the class educator.
8. Learners are not permitted in class rooms before school or during break except in the presence of an educator.
9. Learners are not to loiter in the foyer or use it as a thoroughfare.
10. No personal radios, tape recorders, cellular phones or toys are permitted on the school grounds.
11. Swearing (fowl language) is forbidden.

GENERAL INFORMATION

RULES APPLICABLE TO GIRLS

1. Jewellery (with the exception of watches) may not be worn under any circumstances. Studs in the ears can be acceptable. Any other Jewellery will be confiscated and be returned at the end of the year.
2. Hair should be neat—the school will exercise discretion in this matter. The school reserves the right to decide which hairstyles are suitable for school.
3. Hair may not be dyed. Pupils may be asked to leave the school temporarily in this case.
4. Nail must be neat and short. No nail polish is allowed.
5. Shoes should be clean and polished.
6. The mentioned rules apply whenever a learner is in school uniform or on a school excursion.

RULES APPLICABLE TO BOYS

1. Jewellery (with the exception of watches) may not be worn under any circumstances. Any Jewellery will be confiscated and be returned at the end of the year.
2. Boys should be clean shaven every day.
3. Hair should be neat—the school will exercise discretion in this matter. The school reserves the right to decide which hairstyles are suitable for school.
4. Shoes should be clean and polished
5. Trousers may not be stitched to resemble “stovepipes” nor cut into shorts.

INTERPRETATION OF RULES

1. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained herein or not contained herein, the right to decide whether or not a rule has been contravened in a specific instance shall, depending upon the nature of the case, rest with the SGB or the principal.
 2. The decision as to application of the rules and whether a learner is under the school's jurisdiction at the time of the infraction rests with the principal.
 3. These rules apply to all learners and where ‘he’ is stated the rules apply equally to females.
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