TEACHER AND LEARNER PERCEPTIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GANG ACTIVITY AND LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

By

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DECLARATION

I, Sizakele Boqwana, declare that the content of this mini-dissertation represents my own unaided work, and that the mini-dissertation has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinion and not necessarily the opinion of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Signed _____ Date _____

ABSTRACT

This study examines the nature and the extent of school gang activity and how it impacts on learner academic performance in South African township schools. The research evidence shows that learners in South Africa have been exposed to widespread school gang activity leading to poor learner academic performance in the township schools. The effects of the phenomenon of school gang activity on learner academic performance are given a more insightful understanding of its effects.

The literature review supports the central argument that school gang activity persists in South African schools, especially in the townships. In addition, the literature provides both international and local perspectives of the high prevalence of school gang activity and claims that it results in an insecure teaching and learning environment.

The specific research design selected for the study is a phenomenological study and is qualitative, explorative and descriptive in nature. A semi-structured interview method was employed to gather the data required.

The findings of the study reveal that many learners in the township schools experience direct incidences of school gang activity either at school or on the way to or from school. In addition, the findings reveal that feelings of insecurity are most intense in the classroom situation because the opportunities to escape danger are minimal.

The conclusions drawn from the study are that classrooms are dangerous places and this impacts on the ability of learners to achieve academically. Based on the findings, this mini-dissertation recommends collaborative efforts of all role-players to interact and produce amicable strategies and solutions that will decrease the occurrence of school gang activities and school violence.

Gang activity in schools severely hinders learner academic performance. Hence incorporating interdisciplinary perspectives, involving activities such as teamwork and programme development can provide some solutions.

DEDICATION

This mini-dissertation is dedicated to my little angel, Avuyile Boqwana, in memory of the day she was born. I said that day, "A professor is born in my house," trusting that my wishes will be fulfilled one day. As young as she is, she is the source of all my inspirations to pursue life-long learning. My little is a source of motivation every time I look at her. She is my hope for the future. It was her enduring love when she always missed her bedtimes waiting for me to come back from my late tiring sessions that provided "the wind beneath my wings" to complete this educational journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study examined the nature and the extent of gang activity in schools and how this related to the learner academic performance in South African township schools. With regard to gang activity, De la Rey, Duncan, Shaffer and Van Niekerk (1997), argue that it was evident that over the years many learners in South Africa have been exposed to school gang activity.

Different perspectives and factors that played a role in the promotion of school gang-activities have been investigated and discussed by different researchers over the last years (De la Rey, Duncan, Shaffer and Van Niekerk, 1997). With regard to poor learner academic performance in the township schools, Mdhluli and Zwane (1996) argued that there was enough evidence from newspapers, television, radio and other media sources to show that schools in the township were highly affected by school gang activities.

With this knowledge as the basis, this study endeavoured to examine the nature and the extent of gang activity and how this related to learner academic performance in South African township schools.

This chapter provides concept clarification, background, motivation and the rationale for the study. It further clarifies the statement of the research problem, aims of the study, research questions, delimitations of the study and ethical considerations. The structure of the report concludes the chapter.

1.2 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

In this section of the study, phrases and concepts specific to the focus of this study are explained. The terms gang activities, learner academic performance, school violence and adolescent learners are clarified to give their meaning within the school context. Furthermore, clarification of these concepts and phrases gives meaning to the issue

that this study investigates: teacher and learner perceptions of the relationship between gang activity and learner academic performance in township schools.

1.2.1 Gang activity in schools

This study regarded school gang activity as the execution of a variety of activities by a group/groups of either learners or outsiders on school premises. These activities included:

- Physical violence- stabbings; the carrying of weapons; fighting; beatings.
- Abuse of learners- physical, sexual and verbal.
- Intimidation and Bullying- threats, bladerail.
- Possession/dealing/use of drugs and alcohol.
- Extorting money from learners.
- Robbery/theft- stealing from learners or teachers.
- Vandalising of school property.

The key is that these activities are perpetuated by a group/groups of learners or outsiders on school premises.

1.2.2 Learner academic performance

In this study, learner academic performance refers to the overall academic progress displayed by all learners in all Grades throughout the year. Such academic performance can be monitored via direct observation of learners' scored task marks or scored percentages as well as through school and lesson attendance. Repeated patterns of irregularities would be suggestive of gang activities either on school premises or outside school.

1.2.3 School violence

School violence as recorded in this study was sometimes as a result of an incorrect execution of power over others in school-related settings. The agents of this power could be individuals, authority figures applying school rules and regulations or social agencies applying social practices. From the researcher's perspective, school violence encompassed behaviour that seriously disrupted the safe learning environment of a classroom or school (Anderson & Bushman, 2002: 23). When this process occurred,

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it denied those subjected to it their human rights and ability to make a difference, either by reducing them from what they were or by limiting them from becoming what they might be.

Therefore, this study revealed school violence as occurring when teachers, learners and outsiders incorrectly exercised power over one another, physically and emotionally, in order to disrupt the safe learning environment.

1.2.4 Adolescent learners

Adolescence is a transitional period between childhood and adulthood. Its age boundaries are not exact but usually adolescence begins around age 13 and ends at about 18 (Weiten, 2001: 14). For the purposes of this study, adolescent learners were used, all participants being between the ages of 14 and 18 years old. The onset of adolescence is heralded by two significant changes in physical development: Firstly, children change dramatically in size and shape as they enter the adolescent growth spurt. Secondly, they also reach puberty, which is the point at which a person reaches sexual maturity and is physically capable of fathering or conceiving a child (Shaffer, 2002: 7). In this stage, some adolescent learners become more vulnerable, develop high levels of insecurity, high cravings to belong or make friends and high levels of threatened self-esteem (Weiten, 2001: 14). When these feelings are experienced in the school environment, there is a likelihood that certain adolescent learners will be at risk of being implicated in school gang activities or display irregular patterns of academic performance.

1.3 BACKGROUND

Mabogoane (2004) and Standing (2005) claimed that South African township schools were among the schools with the highest crime rate in the world. The carrying of weapons by learners, physical, sexual and verbal abuse and the use of alcohol and drugs on school premises all have a debilitating effect on the morale of school managers, teachers, school governing bodies and learners (South African Human Rights Commission, 2006).

Preliminary observations by Phillip (1994) indicate that some schools in the Khayelitsha Township had a high prevalence of school gang activity. The findings from a survey of a selection of twenty schools in Cape Town, including Khayelitsha schools, revealed that physical violence/fighting by groups of learners on school premises constituted 95% in the Khayelitsha township schools (Phillip, 1994). Phillip's findings illustrated that school violence perpetuated against learners by either learners or outsiders on school premises was at the highest level. In addition, the survey revealed that Khayelitsha schools reported an 80% incidence of bullying while 75% of those schools reported prevalence of intimidations. In summary, Phillip's findings revealed the high prevalence of school violence, with gang activity as one aspect of such violence. Many reported incidents regarding school violence involved group/groups of people within the townships.

Apart from the statistics provided by Phillip's survey, the following statistics gave a clear picture of the level of gang activities and violence our learners are exposed to in our schools. According to the South African Police Services, 15% of rape survivors were school going children who were younger than 12 years old and 41% were children under 18 years of age (South African Human Rights Commission, 2006).

Furthermore, the National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey conducted by Reddy (2002) in South Africa among 10,700 Grade 8-11 learners found that 41% of learners had been bullied, 14% of learners had belonged to gangs and 17% of learners had carried weapons onto the school premises.

In support of the statistics articulated above showing the high prevalence of school violence of which school gang activities were one aspect, 75% of learners interviewed in a survey conducted by Mabogoane (2004) revealed that they felt unsafe at schools and 15% of those learners claimed that they were threatened or injured on school grounds. Nearly a half of learners sampled for the very same survey revealed that they had considered suicide and 17% of them had attempted it (Mabogoane, 2004).

When these conditions are present in our schools, it would be reasonably to expect that such an environment would have a negative impact on learner academic performance of all learners in all Grades. Specifically, this would contribute to the

undesirable matriculation results that are at present experienced by many schools in the township.

As illustrated by the statistics above, the prevalence of gang activities in the township schools negatively impacted on the quality of teaching and learning. Generally, some schools in the Khayelitsha Township demonstrated no improvement with regard to their matriculation results. WCED Online revealed in its report that a number of schools in Khayelitsha showed no progress despite considerable teaching and learning support from the Department of Education and other education agencies (WCED Online, 2007). The same report stated that a number of schools that had achieved matriculation pass rates of less than 60% had increased this tendency in 2006 and 2007. These persistent poor matriculation results were partly as a result of school gang activities in certain township schools.

Furthermore, a number of media reports had highlighted incidents associated with school gang activities and the subsequent diminishing of learner academic performance in many South African schools (South African Human Rights Commission, 2006). Yet up until now, there has been little exploration of the nature and the extent of criminal victimisation of learners and the after-effects of those incidents. A relevant question to ask is how well learners would perform academically in the absence of school gang activities.

Standing (2005) argued that despite the series of strategies launched to combat violence in schools such as the Bambanani Against Crime Volunteers a community-based attempt, crime and violence continued to escalate to higher levels, posing persistent threats and taking on new dimensions almost everyday.

As mentioned earlier on, the intention of this study was to examine the nature and the extent of school gang activity and its possible relationship to the learner academic performance in South African township schools particularly in Khayelitsha. The motivation of the study is articulated further below.

1.4 MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

The motivation for this study originated from both a personal and a professional level. With regard to the personal motivation, I am a father therefore the well-being of children is always of special concern. Furthermore, I am always deeply touched by the incidents of any form of violence or crime directed at children.

With regard to the professional motivation, I am a teacher teaching at one of the South African township schools, where I personally fell victim to gang activities on the way to and from school on various occasions. I am continually witnessing, hearing and observing a variety of forms of school gang activities directed at either teachers or learners by learners within the school or by outsiders. Furthermore, I am a Life Orientation teacher and I have sometimes been compelled to assist learners who have fallen victims to different forms of gang activities on the school premises. Mostly I see the effects of gang activities on the affected learners, especially with regard to their performance in the classroom.

In addition, the professional motivation came from a growing recognition of the pivotal role that the schools could play in protecting young people who are at risk of joining gang activities in schools. This is because schools can reach a large number of learners to educate them on the serious long-standing physical and emotional implications of gang activities for both teachers and learners. The motivations articulated above led to the rationale for the study.

1.5 THE RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Two key points drove the rationale for this study: Firstly, daily media reports, such as newspapers, televisions, radios, etc repeatedly revealed the great need for researchers in the field to explore and identify issues surrounding school violence including school gang activities and then to analyse and describe the subsequent impact on learner academic performance. Secondly, the question then arose as to whether the problem of school violence and school gang activities was blown out of proportion via the media or whether it was a reality. The statement of the problem articulated below emerges from the reasons that the study illustrated on the rationale for the study.

1.6 THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study explored teacher and learner perceptions of the extent of gang activity in order to determine its effect on learner academic performance in township schools so that schools could begin to establish measures to address the problem.

1.7 AIMS OF THE STUDY

Based on the statement of the problem articulated above, two clear research aims emerged. The first aim was to explore the nature and the extent of school gang activity. The second aim was to establish its effects on learner academic performance. These research aims were answered by the two research questions that follow.

1.8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Two research questions were posed in the study to address both the statement of the problem and to achieve the research aims.

- How did teachers and learners experience school gang activity in township schools?
- How did gang activity influence learner academic performance in township schools?

1.9 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The delimitation of the study was conducted in only two schools in one area in Khayelitsha. Eight teachers and eight learners in each school participated in the study. The study was conducted in a secondary school environment. In to access the teachers and learners, the principals of both schools were informed and interviewed formally.

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Protecting the confidentiality of participants was of the highest priority in the execution of this research. The following measures were looked at:

- Before any proceedings with the study, I accessed permission first from Western Cape Education Department, the school principals as well as parental consent from learners' parents (see appendices A, C and D).
- Prior to every interview, every participant received a full explanation of his or her rights during the interview sessions and after the interview sessions, the purpose of the study was explained as well as my position as a researcher at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

1.11 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The aim of Chapter One was to provide conceptual clarification, background, motivation and the rationale for the study. Furthermore, the statement of the research problem, research questions and ethical considerations were described. Then chapter concludes with an outline of the remaining chapters of the study.

Chapter Two provides a conceptual framework for the literature review and contains an in-depth discussion on the latest literature with regard to "teacher and learner perceptions of the relationship between gang activity and learner academic performance".

Chapter Three commences with the research design which was based on a phenomenological approach to the study. A purposive sample that covered site selection and participant selection explained. The same applies to the data collection and analysis. An essential part of the methodology is a description of the research sites and participants (number and selection). At the end of this chapter, the research process is briefly described using a table with a summary statement of methodology.

In Chapter Four the findings are analysed, interpreted and a comparison is drawn between the literature review and the findings of the field research.

Chapter Five concludes the study with a summary of the findings, organised in terms of how the problem statement was posed. Based on the theoretical framework and findings of this study, a model that consisted of strategies to promote the culture of teaching and learning in a gang activity-free environment in township schools is discussed. Recommendations for further research on the topic are also made and the significance and implications of the study conclude the chapter.

1.12 CONCLUSION .

The chapter concludes by emphasising the point that school gang activities occur in township schools and that they have negative effects on teaching and learning as well as on the lives of the whole school community. Statistics also indicated that crime and violence rates constantly increase in township schools and have taken on new directions. Furthermore, there was a growing need for the education authorities, the schools and the communities to begin to establish measures to address the situation in order to create safe and health-promoting schools. Thus, one has to consider seriously the views of researchers in this field in answering the research questions in the chapters to follow.

CHAPTER TWO

THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The review of the literature supported the central argument of this chapter, namely that school gang activity persists in South African schools, especially those schools in the townships. The literature claimed that it was evident that the high rate of school gang activity led to an unsafe learning environment and hindered learner academic performance in the township schools (Mdhluli & Zwane, 1996: 4). Based on these claims, the theories of violence found in the literature are discussed within the context of this study. School violence was also clarified and gang activity as another component of it. The two major contributing risk factors (internal and external) of violence as well as different forms of school gang activities in township schools are examined, followed by a discussion of the psychological effects of this on both teachers and learners.

The review of the literature sought to provide insights into the possible relationships between gang activity and learner academic performance in township schools by answering the following research questions:

- How did teachers and learners experience school gang activity in township schools?
- How did gang activity influence learner academic performance in township schools?

I began to answer these research questions by unpacking theories of violence as outlined in the following sections.

2.2 THEORIES OF VIOLENCE

Theory is important for any research because it provides a framework through which to view and conceptualise the phenomena under study. In this research, two theories of violence provided broader insights not only into school gang activity/school violence in general, but also into approaches on how to handle violence in general and assist learners through their developmental stages. These theories further helped in

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the understanding of learner behaviour and learner developmental stages. Anderson and Bushman (2002) argued that an understanding of school gang activities/school violence enabled parents, teachers, and public policymakers to make better decisions concerning learners. Frustration-Aggression Theory describes violence as a reaction where frustrations are viewed as driving human beings to hurt others when they are unable to accomplish their goals or the rewards they expect. On the other hand, Cognitive Behavioural Theory describes violence as an action that comes about because of the influence of thoughts, images and feelings that is experienced before, during and after a stressful incident (NIDA, 2003: 12).

2.3 SCHOOL VIOLENCE

As mentioned in the previous chapter, school violence in this study might sometimes be as a result of an incorrect execution of power over others in school-related settings by certain individuals, authority figures or school rules and regulations, social agencies applying social practices. From the researcher's perspective, school violence encompassed behaviour that seriously disrupted the safe learning environment of a classroom or school (Anderson & Bushman, 2002: 5).

Behaviour exemplary of school violence from an individual learner could include a learner slapping, kicking, taking another's lunch box, extorting money or swearing at another classmate.

Though the post-apartheid education system outlawed corporal punishment, there were teachers in some schools who still practised it and that symbolised school violence based on misuse of power. There were also teachers who had improper relationships with female learners and such practices or behaviours constituted school violence. A love affair between a teacher and a learner is improper and a violation of that particular learner's right since a teacher exercises his power over the helpless learner.

There was also a learner to teacher violence where a learner disrespected, despised and disregarded the presence of a teacher in a classroom. A learner felt he or she could talk anyhow and do as he or she pleased in the presence of a teacher. Furthermore, certain learners stole, robbed and sometimes forcefully took teachers'

belongings. The above activities were mostly perpetuated by group/groups of learners and that constituted school gang activities. There were also reported cases where learners physically attacked teachers (Anderson & Bushman, 2002).

School rules such as sending learners out of class by teachers if they happened to commit an offence or misconduct, the closing of school gates for the late-comers and discriminating school chores for female learners as opposed to male learners also constituted part of school-violence. Social agencies and social practices such as shebeens in the vicinity of schools from where learners could obtain easy access to alcohol and druglords who entered school premises and sold drugs to learners also formed part of school violence. Among other common social agencies and social practices that constituted school violence in our schools were gangster groups and gangsterism.

Separate from the school violence articulated above, gang activities formed another part of school violence where the following activities were perpetuated by certain group/groups of learners, teachers or outsiders within the school premises. These activities amongst others include, the carrying of weapons, sexual abuse of learners by other learners, teachers or by the outsiders, the use of alcohol and drugs, demanding money from other learners, intimidation, beatings, fights, bullying, robbery, stabbing, vandalising school property and stealing from both teachers and learners.

Therefore, the violence that this study referred to came from school gang activity; planned school violence perpetuated by either group/groups of learners or group/groups of outsiders and in few cases by group/groups of teachers on school premises. The above outlined gang activities culminated in school violence.

2.4 CONTRIBUTING RISK FACTORS TO SCHOOL GANG ACTIVITIES

"Contributing risk factors are those circumstances that increase the likelihood that a learner would develop an emotional or behavioural disorder" (Dawes, Tredoux & Feinstein 1989: 113). Amongst risk factors the researcher investigated were the common background factors among learners with adverse and pervasive outcomes such as misconduct problems, delinquency and violence. This study categorised the

risk factors leading to school gang activities into two major groups i.e. internal risk factors and external risk factors.

2.4.1 Internal risk factors

Internal risk factors were those circumstances within the school premises that might increase the chances of learners to resort to gang activities. Some of these internal risk factors included: school factors, teachers' actions and peer group factors.

2.4.1.1 School factors

Schools in South Africa were under scrutiny because of prevailing environmental or structural factors that have been contributed to school gang activities. These factors included the kind of behaviour that group/groups of learners brought to school, the physical space of the school, poor school structure, school rules, corporal punishment and lack of support from either parents or teachers. Researchers such as Rock (1997), Nelson (1997), Carlson & Palonsky (1996), Swarts (1997) in Griggs (1997) in their studies revealed that certain factors predisposed learners to violent behaviour and gang formation.

According to Wallach (1993: 14), group/groups of learners who were at risk of participating in gang activities typically brought to school a pattern of behaviour that made it difficult for them to establish trust, autonomy, and social competence. Factors that constituted this pattern of behaviour might include: excessive viewing of violence on television, repeated examples of bullying behaviour, evidence of poor parenting and the inability to develop friendships at school. Although corporal punishment was prohibited in South African schools, it still occurred in some schools and it instilled violence as a means of resolving issues.

The school structure, overcrowding and school rules were also factors identified in the literature as risk factors that contributing to school gang activities. The school's actual physical space or structure might also be conducive to aggressive behaviour (Pinnock, 1997). Some schools, in townships for example, did not have strong fences to prevent easy access to the playgrounds by unauthorised group/groups of people and for that reason learners found themselves victims of the outside gangs. The mere

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presence of outsiders on school premises threatened the well-being of both teachers and learners. In response to the fear of the outside gangs, some learners formed their own groups for self-defence. These self-defence groups against outsiders in some occasions perpetuated gang activities against teachers and their fellow learners within the school environment (Pinnock, 1997).

Overcrowding contributed to interference with learners and thus resulted in school gang activities where learners fought over the scarcity of teaching and learning materials, for example textbooks and desks. If there was overcrowding in schools, learners ended up with no choice but to adapt and gang up for solidarity to get access to those scarce resources (Pinnock, 1997). Hence overcrowding in schools exposed learners to deviant behaviours which were difficult to avoid.

Rigid school rules and unquestioning conformity by learners led to feelings of anger, resentment and rejection by learners (Emmett & Butchart, 2000). When certain group/groups of learners viewed these school rules as negative to them, they were more likely to develop feelings of detesting them and in so doing, learners tended to infringe on their right to learn and those of others. This also applied to rules designed to increase control without making sense to learners. Some learners often detested these rules and did so by forming resistant groups that eventually carried out other gang activities in school. These learners did not internalise or own the rules but see them as punitive (Emmett & Butchart 2000).

2.4.1.2 Teachers' actions

There were teachers in schools who were "policing the environment in order to enforce the rules rather than educating the pupils about those rules" (Bemak & Keys, 2000: 20). This view implied that teachers enforced the school rules and regulations to learners without sharing moral values behind them. This act might drive some learners to gang activities to counteract the teachers' actions. According to Thomas and Hedda, (2000) violence of any kind to learners by school staff members led to learners' engagement with violent acts.

Violence perpetuated by learners or against learners of all ages on school premises took new dimensions and was increasingly perceived as having detrimental effects on

the learners' achievements (Thomas & Hedda, 2000). This view implied that the school premises that were institutions traditionally considered as safe places for learners were now perceived to be more aggressive and violent places that created an aggressive and violent youth. As a product of that violence, certain group/groups of learners within the school premises were in most cases known as the custodians of violence in their schools.

According to Goldstein, Palumbo & Striepling (1995: 124) "teachers perpetuate segregation between achievers and failures, successful individuals and unsuccessful individuals, winners and losers, adjusted ones and maladjusted ones, conformists and non-conformists". This learner segregation or labelling by teachers could lead to the lack of interest in school activities by those labelled learners and over time, those learners ganged up and no longer respected moral authority and increasingly behaved badly towards school rules and regulations. As they became more and more marginalised and alienated from school, eventually they lacked interest in schoolwork and began to partake in criminal behaviour. Their lack of interest in their education pushed them to engage themselves in school gang activities.

2.4.1.3 Peer group factors

"School is a fundamental issue in a child's behaviour because it is through the attendance of school that a child meets and friends, peers" (Pinnock, 1997: 11). This view implied that friends and peers have been and would always be a major part of every child and adolescent's life. So friends are able to influence others in a negative or a positive way in what is commonly known as peer pressure. In the case of this study, peers at school directly or indirectly influenced certain learners to engage in gang activities.

At all developmental stages, but particularly during adolescence, peer group could have a powerful influence on one's behaviour. "Adolescents may turn more to their peers and siblings for social support rather than to their parents, especially if there is family discord" (Govender & Killian, 2001: 1). Govender and Killian's views implied that adolescent learners sought alternative sources of identity, status, acceptance and support in peer groups. Such peer groups did not only serve the

above-defined purpose but also developed into school gangs that perpetuated gang activities in schools.

2.4.2 External risk factors

External risk factors included those circumstances outside the school premises that increase the chances of learners resorting to school gang activities. This study endeavoured to discuss these external risk factors by looking at family factors and factors escalated within the broader community.

2.4.2.1 Family factors

Some of the family factors that put learners' lives in township schools at risk include aggressive/violent behaviour of parents and unemployment.

Parents' aggressive/violent behaviour could put their children at risk of being violent or aggressive and eventually carrying out gang activities at school. Parents who demonstrated poor self-control could become role models for their children. Children of such parents imitated these behaviours and at school they became violent when the space allowed them to do so. Children from such homes at times, influenced other children at school and that constituted gang groups that carried out gang activities in school premises.

According to Barbarin and Richter (2001: 204), "family life is the environment in which a learner should develop working models of what intimate relationships are". Barbarin and Richter's views implied that families also contributed to the learner's violent aggressive behaviour by accepting the learner's use of violence as a problem-solving strategy. Furthermore, there were few parents who still believed that violence is normal and acceptable and when their beliefs were traced back, revealed that violence had built up helplessness and anger from their own childhood and now they were carrying it over into their relationships with their children (Bemak & Keys, 2000).

Unemployment led to poverty that usually affected negatively on the time that parents and children spend together constructively. Usually living under poverty conditions

was more stressful when there was also a lack of social support (Mabogoane, 2004). When children from poor families gave up, lost hope, felt powerless and frustrated with the inequality that pervaded their lives, they became violent and they certainly formed gang groups as a way of expressing these feelings. The majority of these groups spilled over to school premises in many instances. Their expressed feelings affected the culture of teaching and learning (Evans, 1996).

2.4.2.2 Community factors

Since the community was one of the systems in townships that children interacted with, there were certain community factors that also contributed to learners' gang behaviour displayed in school by certain group/groups of learners. Easy access to weapons in townships was another factor that contributed to school gang activity. Siegel el al (2003) concentrated specifically on the community as a source of crime within the school. Researchers in the Siegel, et al established that any criminal activities in schools were a result of the community in which the schools were located. This claim implied that delinquency in schools occurred in conjunction with delinquency in the communities. Moreover, learners feared criminal elements in their neighbourhoods and as a result they carried weapons or formed groups as means of protection as they travelled from their homes to school and from school to their homes. This might eventually exacerbate the formation of gang activities within the schools.

In communities where alcohol and drugs were easily available to under-age children, the availability of these commodities placed those who lived in these communities at higher risk of violent encounters. Group/groups of learners who started to take drugs and alcohol were susceptible to criminal/delinquent behaviour as such learners were always in groups and in need of money. To obtain the money they needed, they resorted to gang activities such as gang-robbing people and using various violent means to extort money from any person they came across. These groups were often extended to school premises.

Alcohol is the most commonly abused substance amongst by South Africans of all ages. According to Dempster (2002a), the crime intelligence unit of the South African Police Services was of the opinion that alcohol abuse played a major

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contributing factor in gang activities in South African schools. Media reports repeatedly revealed that gang activity and violent behaviour in many schools increased with alcohol intake.

2.5 FORMS OF SCHOOL GANG ACTIVITY

The situation of school gang activity was more accentuated in township schools and some of the most common forms of school gang activity included: insolence, intimidation, fighting/physical violence, aggressive cliques, carrying of weapons, theft, robbery and bullying.

2.5.1 Insolence

Insolence could take the form of a defiant attitude, rudeness, hostile body language, verbal abuse (that is, swearing, back-chatting, disrespectful behaviour) and physical violence or assault. All of these actions affected the culture of teaching and other learners and eventually would influence learner academic performance.

2.5.2 Intimidation

Intimidation was a situation that took place when group/groups of learners threatened to harm either teachers or other fellow learners, bringing their fathers or gangster friends to the school to do so. Learners on the other hand, described intimidations as incidents that took place both internally and externally to the school, usually at the hands of older youths and gang members (Dempster, 2002b). Intimidations affected the culture of teaching and learning since learners who experienced such actions invariably became shy, unfocused and eventually truant.

2.5.3 Fighting/Physical violence

Fighting/physical violence involved a fist or a weapon of some form and this was common in township schools. In schools that were characterised by gang activity, aggressive play could easily escalate into violence, particularly at the secondary school level where learners tended to be more impulsive. Physical violence happened across race and gender groupings and an increasing number of physical fights today

involve girls (Vulindlela Consortium, 2004). External physical violence might be between rival gangs, quarrelling parents or even teachers and that could spill over into the school with detrimental effects on the culture of teaching and learning.

2.5.4 Aggressive Cliques

The formation of cliques was regarded as a normal part of social behaviour but this could escalate to strong aggressive cliques that involved intimidation and bullying (Dempster, 2002b). Most of the cliques formed largely because of homogenous groupings divided along gender or racial lines. These problems were more common in ex-model C schools where teachers felt that cultural and language barriers were the significant contributing factors (Dempster, 2002b). When this happened at a school, it hindered the daily operation and the smooth running of the school

2.5.5 Weapons

Sharp and improvised instruments (such as pens, pencils, pellet guns, stones, compasses, screwdrivers, catties, pangas), bats/sticks, knives and firearms either directly or indirectly exposed, within the school premises affected schooling (Bayne, 2000).

2.5.6 Bullying

Bullying was defined as a behaviour that was intentional and caused physical and psychological harm to the recipient (Smith & Carlson, 1997: 17). It involved repeated oppression, either physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful one (Dunn, 2001). In reality, it was therefore this imbalance of power between the two individuals or groups that depicted the dynamics of bullying and distinguished it from other forms of aggressive behaviour. The meaning of bullying for this study was long-standing violence, physical or psychological, conducted by group/groups of learners or outsiders directed against an individual learner or group who was not able to defend him or itself in the actual situation on the school premises. Bullying in South African schools was common, with most experts attributing it to learners having been exposed to violence in society, learners' lack of self-esteem, dislike of school, distrust in people, neglecting schoolwork, truancy and eventually

dropping out of school (Byrne, 1994). Bullying was essentially a form of child abuse that could lead to high levels of distress and anxiety, withdrawal and school absenteeism.

Some learners who were bullied displayed tremendous drops in their academic performance and even ganged up and developed hostile and aggressive behaviour as a defence. Learners who were victims of bullying were also more likely to commit suicide, smoke and take drugs.

2.6 PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF SCHOOL GANG ACTIVITIES

The psychological effects of school gang activities continued to take control in lives of many learners. Therefore, any research that sought to ascertain the nature and the extent of psychological effects of environmental experiences on learners remained a top priority. To grow up in a widespread violence township, where as a learner one was forced by circumstances to learn how to live and how to react in such a pervasive situation was also of great concern. The central argument that emerged from this chapter suggested that continued exposure to school gang activity was likely to reduce a process of teaching and learning, whilst simultaneously culminating in the acceptance of violent conduct as a dominant and normal mode of conflict resolution in township schools (Dewens, 2007: 9). The gang activity observed in South African township schools and the effects that it has on learners over a period of years inferred that school gang activity might be regarded as a stressful situation in which some learners might be permanently mal-affected.

Those learners who were not coping might experience difficulties such as fear, stress, anger, depression, withdrawal, shame/guilt, low self-esteem, absenteeism, truancy, decline in school progress, dropping out, exposure to sexually transmitted diseases (for example HIV/AIDS) and illegal acts (crime). This kind of behaviour could also lead to violent confrontation (Richman & Frazer, 2001: 54). Discussions of some of these major psychological effects of school gang activity on learners follow.

2.6.1 Fear

MacDonald and Kirkpatrick (1983: 258) described "fear as a painful emotion excited by danger or the apprehension of danger or pain". Learners in township schools might experience this kind of fear when they were exposed to school gang activities. School gang activities might influence them psychologically and they might experience intimidation and fear at school. This inturn might contribute to avoidance of certain parts of the school building, such as toilets and playgrounds where monitoring of learner behaviour was less intensive. Truanting might seem to be the option to minimise stress. In addition, sometimes learners' fear of being bullied forced them to stay away from school or to become withdrawn and isolated (Byrne, 1994: 19).

Some learners in township schools who experienced fear or worry about being safe were less able to concentrate and hence less likely to succeed academically. Research also showed that "chronic exposure to school gang activities adversely affects a child's ability to learn" (Shaw, 2004). Learners in township schools who achieved in school and developed important cognitive skills might be better able to cope with stressful and perhaps dangerous situations. Academic achievement might enhance the development of positive self-esteem and self-efficacy of learners in township schools.

2.6.2 Stress

Smith and Carlson (1997) defined stress as an event, situation, or combination of situations in which the child or adult viewed the perceived demands as exceeding his or her capacity to respond in a comfortable way. According to Antonovsky (1987), early stress might be harmful or beneficial to learners in township schools. This implied that stress that was interpreted as harmful or threatening tended to have a negative inference whereas stress that was perceived as a challenge was however, often associated with positive and energising emotions such as coping tactics. Stress could interfere with learner's engagement and learning in school. Stress could impact on behaviour and emotional well-being and severe or prolonged stress could contribute to health problems. It was therefore essential to equip learners with good coping skills, namely problem-solving skills and conflict resolution skills.

2.6.3 Depression

Depression is one of the classified Mood Disorders. This disorder disturbed one's mood as the predominant feature. Both adults and learners in townships could experience depression because of continual violence or school gang activities that in turn could contribute to suicide. Depression was an illness that could also be caused by an overload of stress. Therefore, the more teachers and parents understood depression and how it affected learners in township schools the better as they would be in a position to make the appropriate interventions (Yandrick, 1993).

2.6.4 Suicide

Suicide was described as a complex, long-term outcome with multiple interacting causes and risk factors that often co-occurred. This meant that no single risk factor or specific event could be used to determine whether a person would attempt suicide. Vulindlela Consortium (2004: 48) described "suicidal behaviours as ranging from merely thinking about ending one's life through developing a plan to commit suicide and obtaining the means to do so, and attempting to kill oneself, to finally carrying out the act successfully". Suicide was prevalent in high schools in South Africa, especially during final examinations when learners were under a great deal of stress because they thought of time they had wasted either through school gang-related incidents or having participated in school gang activities during the year. It might also happen because of high expectations from parents, teachers and themselves.

Insolence, intimidation, fighting/physical violence, aggressive cliques, carrying of weapons, bullying etc on school premises once carried out by group/groups of learners or group/groups of outsiders constituted school gang activities. These gang activities hindered and threatened the culture of teaching and learning with long-term threats to the well-being of both teachers and learners. If these activities persisted in school settings, it was therefore correct to conclude that learner academic performance would be greatly affected since fear caused one to lose concentration. On the other hand, learners who were victims of such school gang activities always strove to get defence mechanisms to deal or cope with the practices of gang activities in their schools. Furthermore, when they found it difficult to deal or cope with the

incidents, they sometimes joined gangs for protection and eventually participated in gang activities.

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The viewpoints on school gang activity of the different researchers in this chapter were very valuable because they contributed to an understanding of school gang activity in South African township schools. The literature review illustrated that there were still high levels of school gang activity, crime and violence in both South Africa as a country and in South African schools especially township schools. The literature also revealed different forms of school gang activities in township schools that included: corporal punishment, child labelling, bullying, alcohol and drug abuse and carrying of dangerous weapons such as firearms, swords, knives, extorting money from learners, etc. In addition, the literature revealed that these barriers disrupted the safe learning environment of schools and classrooms. Learners in township schools growing up under violent conditions were reported to exhibit a high prevalence of stress related psychological symptoms, difficulties in cognitive development, lower levels of academic achievement and higher rates of behavioural and anti-social disorders (Mercy et al. 2003: 112).

In the researcher's opinion, therefore, the literature revealed a greater need for a pro-active approach to minimise the risk of psychological effects of gang activity on learners in township schools. It was also imperative that people became mindful of a lot that still needed to be done in South African education to eradicate the root cause of school gang activity and violence in general as an external barrier to learner academic performance. Because of the exploratory nature of this study, a qualitative research design was employed so as to ensure that data collection process was dynamic and probing in nature. The research design that this study adopted is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH PROCESS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter commences with the research design that outlines a phenomenological approach to the study. A purposive sample that covered site selection and participant selection is explained. The same applied to the data collection and analysis. An essential part of the methodology was a description of the research sites and participants (number and selection). At the end of this chapter, a research process is described with a summery statement of methodology concluding the chapter.

3.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design was a plan to investigate the research question and to make sense of the data gathered in a scientific manner (Mouton, 2001). The specific design selected for this study was a phenomenological approach using two high schools as the sites for obtaining data. The reason the researcher selected this design was that the study was an empirical study, qualitative in nature and aimed at providing an in-depth description of a small number of phenomenon (Mouton, 2001). Therefore, the researcher believed that the phenomenological study design was the most appropriate design to use in order to obtain valid and reliable results as it focused on human, lived experiences (Mouton, 2001). Furthermore, reasons for selecting the two high schools were that the two high schools differed in terms of their traditional history. School "A" had a long traditional history as compared to school "B" which had only been established in September 2004.

3.2.1 Phenomenological approach

A phenomenological approach was an approach in which human experiences were, examined through detailed descriptions of the people being studied; in this case the township school teachers and learners. Understanding the lived experiences marked the phenomenology as a philosophy and was based on the work of Husserl, Schuler,

Sartre and Merlau-Ponty in Nieswiadomy (1993: 20) as much as it was a method of research. As a method, it involved studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning. Through this process the researcher "bracketed" his/her own experiences to avoid bias in order to understand those of the informants (Nieswiadomy, 1993). This view implied that an important methodological principle of any research was based on the attempt to describe the life-world of another person and in so doing a researcher needed to begin by setting aside prior assumptions about the nature of the experience being studied. In the case of this study, the researcher set aside the fact that he was a teacher who was also teaching in a township school and just described the daily-lived experiences of the participants.

With this approach, the findings would not be generalised but built upon limited research and formed a unique interpretation of events (Creswell, 1994). The researcher strongly believed that the knowledge and understanding gained by adopting a phenomenological perspective could help teachers and learners to understand the definition of gang activity and its possible relationship to learner academic performance. Inturn this could facilitate improvements and the devising of counteractive strategies. Phenomenology therefore attempted to understand all aspects of phenomena in preference to concentrating on one specific concept and therefore had a reference for caring for the whole activities related to the incidents of school gang activity (Creswell, 1994: 32).

Phenomenology as a research approach offered a way of exploring research questions and in the case of this study, it offered a way of exploring the two research questions articulated in Chapter One and Two. A phenomenological approach in essence served as an exploration of the lived experiences. With the development of post-positivist approaches, a phenomenological approach has been adopted by different disciplines as an appropriate way of exploring research questions that led to a different way of knowledge being constructed (Van Manen 1990). Furthermore, a phenomenological approach was used mostly in understanding some defined responses to human behaviour (Van Manen 1990). In the case of this study, phenomenological approach gave an understanding of the occurrence, the events, the nature and the extent of school gang activities in township schools. It also endeavoured to give insights into the possible perceived effects of gang activities on learner academic performance.

A phenomenological approach was another way of dealing with issues of the personal response and its wider social location (Sanguinetti, 1994).

From a phenomenological approach perspective, the researcher was interested in understanding how the participants lived and how they interpreted school gang activity. Through this mode of inquiry, the researcher gathered information directly from the participants as individuals who lived school gang activity and who reflected on the actual events in a way that enabled the researcher to write from their perspectives (Huberman and Miles, 2002). To understand the inter-subjective meaning of the actions of the participants the researcher had to "participate" in their "life world" (Schwandt, 2000, 191).

Another tradition that shaped this study was the constructivism approach. The constructivist perspective required the researcher to form a relationship with the participants so that they could tell their stories in their own terms. This necessitated the researcher to listen to their stories with openness to feelings and experiences (Charmaz, 2000). The researcher collected data face-to-face in the school environment on how participants made sense of the situation of the correlation between gang activity and learner academic performance. In order to understand participants' perspectives on their daily-lived experiences with the phenomena, interviews were used as the methods of interaction between the participants and the researcher (Patton, 2002: 104).

3.2.2 Qualitative approach

In order to address the research aims of the study, a qualitative approach using two high schools in a township was used. Wiersma (1995) stated that a qualitative research was done for the purpose of understanding social phenomena, "social beings used in a broad sense". Taylor and Bogdan (1984) argued that qualitative research methodology was commonly used to handle the complexity of issues involving human behaviours.

"A qualitative approach is an inquiry in which researchers collect data on face-to-face situation by interacting with the selected participants in their natural settings" (Mouton, 2001: 107). The mode of inquiry could be interactive or non-interactive (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). This research was interactive and qualitative in

nature because the researcher attempted to document the world from the point of view of the participants and mainly collected data form the participants who formed the part of the study. Furthermore, as a qualitative researcher, he was interested in understanding the participants' experiences in context (Denzin & Linconin, 2000). The context of this research was the nature and the extent of gang activities that took place repeatedly in the township school environment. The purpose of this research was to investigate new or little known phenomena and to discover themes of participant meanings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001) on teacher and learner perceptions of the relationship between gang activity and learner academic performance in the two township schools.

Both a phenomenological approach and qualitative approach therefore were used in this study because of their close connectedness. Both approaches used social beings and human beings' daily experiences.

3.3 PURPOSIVE SAMPLE

Purposive sampling is a kind of sampling that allows the researchers to sample with a purpose in mind (William, 2008). This implies that the researchers start their projects usually with one or more specific predefined groups they are seeking. For instance, this study was limited to two high schools in one of the Cape Town townships and these two high schools were reported to have high occurrences of school gang activities. Furthermore, purposive sampling is very useful for situations where one needs to reach a targeted sample quickly and where sampling for proportionality is not the primary concern. With a purposive sample, you one is likely to get the opinions of his/her target population, but he/she also likely to overweight subgroups in his/her population that are more readily accessible (William, 2008). Purposive sampling is also useful when population is so widely dispersed that cluster sampling would not be efficient. It is often used in exploratory studies, e.g. for hypothesis generation and for researchers interested in obtaining ideas of the range of responses on ideas that people have.

A purposive sample outlined the procedures employed to get the research site, participants and the role of the researcher as a part of research process. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to asked individuals to purposefully participate by

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giving their valuable insights to a set of questions that sought to investigate a phenomenon (William, 2008). However, the researcher used the qualitative methods with self-developed interview schedules to gather data on teacher and learner perceptions of the relationship between gang activity and learner academic performance.

3.3.1 The role of the researcher

The term "human as an instrument" referred to the major role of the researcher as the research instrument in the qualitative research process (McMillan & Schumacher 2001). Patton (2002: 14) stated, "in the qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument". This implied that the vitality of a researcher's social relationship with the participants or human-to-human relationships required the study to identify the researcher's role and status within the group. In this study, the researcher played a key role as a participant and a researcher (McMillan & Schumacher 2001).

Firstly, in the role of participant, the researcher used his interpersonal skills, such as: creating trust, keeping good relations, being non-judgmental, respecting the norms of the situation and displaying sensitivity with regard to the ethical issues. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) advocated that by using these skills, one related to the participants as a human being not as an inhuman creature. As a result, the researcher had an unshaken self-awareness and clear consciousness of whose voice was being recoded in data.

Secondly, the researcher started by building the role of a researcher at the first meeting with the participants when the research objectives were explained. McMillan and Schwarndt, (2000) also advocated that a researcher needed to return to the participants for the scheduled interviews to ask questions in order to ascertain, get and be mindful of the lived experiences. The researcher also expected to be a good listener and be able to reflect accurately on the feelings and thoughts of the participants. Because of the researcher's personal experiences as a teacher, he could more readily identify the observed processes and the subtle participant's meaning rather than those who might lack such knowledge and experience.

3.3.2 Research Sites selection

This study was limited to a particular section in a particular unit in Cape Town townships. The researcher used the only two high schools that were in the section of that unit. Purposive sampling was employed because it allowed the researcher to sample with a purpose in mind (William, 2008) since the population of interest spread out over a larger area. The researcher also chose to employ purposive sampling since it allowed him to ask individuals purposefully to participate and give their valuable insights to a set of questions that sought to answer the research matter. This particular township had twenty-six units and a number of sections in each unit but only two high schools situated in the same section were chosen because the researcher believed they would offer more depth to the understanding of school gang activity and its effects on the learner academic performance. This selection also made the study more manageable. Furthermore, these schools were reported as having the highest occurrences of school gang activities and were both situated in the section in this particular unit known as one of the hot spot areas.

3.3.3 Participant's selection and sample size

After selecting the sites, the researcher then needed to select the participants for the research. Both these schools' environments comprised of teachers and learners from different traditional history, backgrounds, cultures and perceptions. In the qualitative methodology, the focus was not on numbers therefore the sample size was composed of thirty two participants comprising of eight teachers and eight learners in each school. The study used teachers and learners because they were the ones who best knew the problems they encountered with regard to school gang activity in their daily practices. Four female and four male teachers were used as well as four female and four male learners in each school because the researcher did not want the study to be seen as gender biased. For the purpose of this study, participants volunteered and to avoid a situation where people might be reluctant to participate.

3.3.3.1 Criteria to identify teachers

Teacher selected for the study should be:

- those who had the longer term or experience of the history and background of the school.
- involved with the discipline of the learners at the school.
- those who had knowledge and the experience of the school violence.
- knowledgeable and well-informed about township life.
- be representative of both male and female gender.

3.3.3.2 Criteria to identify learners

Learners selected for the study should:

- have experienced school violence.
- be knowledgeable of school violence in the school.
- be the learners from Grades 10-11;
- be representative of both male and female gender.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

Creswell (2002) stated that data collection was a strategy to get information in a more systematic manner from the participants through interviewing, talking and listening without interjecting one's opinion. Data collection started on the 14 July 2008 and ended on the 23 August 2008. Data collection included gathering of background information, getting views about school gang activity in schools as well as its effects on learner academic process.

3.4.1 Data collection instruments

The instruments that the researcher used to collect data was interview schedules for both teachers and learners. A typical interview lasted between thirty minutes to an hour in length. Interview schedules were used only in accordance with a strong belief that they would reveal the significant data required to accomplish the aims of the study.

3.4.1.1 Interview schedules

Since the researcher was working with two different schools, he decided to use interview schedules since they were known to allow participants from different sites (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Bogdan and Biklen, (2003: 19) further stated that interview schedules allowed for open-ended responses and were flexible enough for a researcher to note and collect data on unexpected dimensions of the topic. Interview schedules were also known to be primarily a means of gathering comparable data across sites. Interview schedules ensured that as a researcher, one could carefully decide how best to use the limited time available in the interview situation. Patton (2002) stated that interview schedules assisted in the interviewing of a number of different people in a more systematic and comprehensive way by delimiting in advance the issues to be explored. Furthermore, interview schedules ensured consistency and promoted comparability (Patton 2002). McMillan and Schumacher (2001) stated that interview schedules involved direct interaction between the participants and they were flexible and adaptable. They allowed the responses to be probed, followed up, clarified and elaborated to achieve specific accurate responses. As McMillan and Schumacher (2001) also state the interview schedules allowed one to set open-ended questions in order to explore the topic more depth.

3.4.2 Data collection plan using qualitative methods

3.4.2.1 Table one School A

Participants	Females	Males
Teachers	4	4
Learners	4	4

3.4.2.2 Table two School B

Participants	Females	Males
Teachers	4	4
Learners	4	4

3.4.3 Data analysis method

McMillan and Schumacher (2001: 267) advocated that "analysis is a reasoning strategy with the objective of taking a complex whole and resolving it into relevant parts or chunks of meaning, social scenes or events". In other words, qualitative analysis transformed data into findings. Coding was also a form of analysis to identify the properties of identified categories and themes in data. Thus, analysis was essentially making sense of data collected and using the results of this process to answer the research questions (Wickham, 2000) which in the case of this study were articulated and outlined in Chapter One and Two.

The purpose behind selecting data analysis procedures was to represent the data fairly and to communicate the given purpose of the study (Patton, 2002). Moreover, data analysis also allowed one to monitor and report the analytical procedures and processes as fully and as truthfully as possible. The management of data was therefore very important to provide a holistic description of the entire research process and findings at the end of the study (Patton, 2002). The qualitative data collected for the research was analysed using description, interpretation and explanation. The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim by the researcher for the analysis. Data was categorised thematically to uncover the experiences, views and opinions of the participants.

3.4.4 <u>Table three,</u> protocol of data analysis (Henning, 2004: 104/109)

Various steps of protocol of data analysis for this study are illustrated in the table below.

| Validating, accuracy and Credibility |
| Writing up findings |
| Thematic organisation |
| Categorising |
| Coding |
| Reading for global impression |
| Preparing and organising data for analysis |
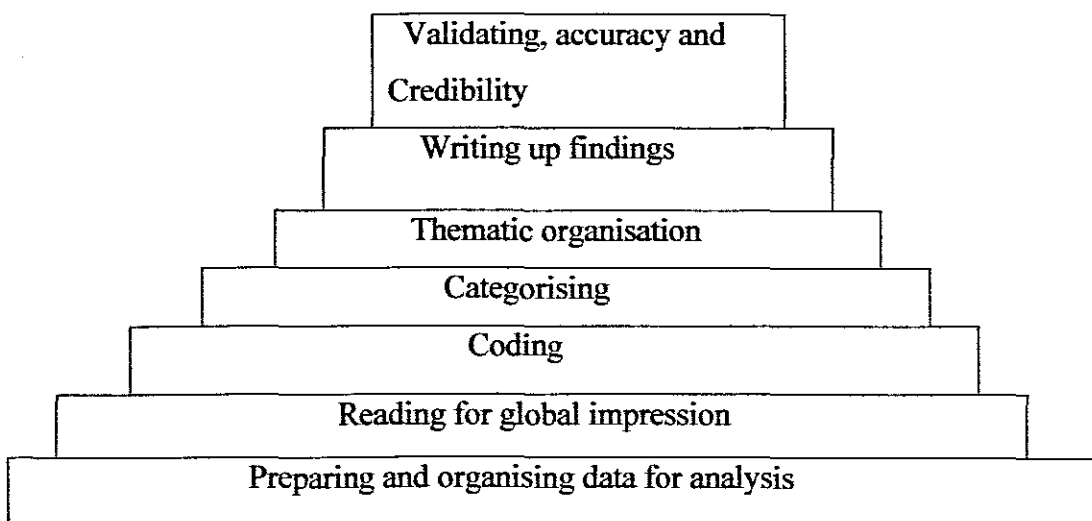
3.4.4.1 Validating accuracy and credibility

Patton (2002) argued that validity and reliability needed to be considered in terms of qualitative research that was the description of human experience and not the control and predictions of variables. In qualitative inquiry, the researcher was an instrument. The validity, meaningfulness and insights generated from qualitative inquiry had a stronger correlation with the information richness of the cases selected and the observational or analytical capabilities of the researcher than with the sample size (Patton, 2002)

It is also argued that validity is the property of knowledge not of methods (Patton, 2002). This view implies that it does not matter whether the knowledge comes from ethnography or an experiment; the participants may still be asked the same kinds of questions about the ways in which the knowledge is valid. The term validity also refers to a degree to which scientific explanations of phenomena match the realities of the world. In qualitative research, both internal and external validity is used to address the trustworthiness of the findings (Patton, 2002).

3.4.4.2 Writing up findings

The findings were the results obtained after the analysis. They were the findings with regard to the context of school gang activity and the findings in terms of the focus that was the teacher and learner perceptions of the relationship between gang activity and academic performance. At the end of the process, the researcher had to relate the findings to the existing theoretical orientation and illustrate whether it was supported or falsified by the new interpretation. Mouton (2001) advocated that interpretations also meant the taking into consideration of the contrasting interpretations of data, thus demonstrating what levels of support data rendered for referencing. Interpretations also allowed the reader to have an access to rich and detailed descriptions on teacher and learner perceptions of the relationship between gang activity and learner academic performance. Interpretations also enabled the readers to draw their own interpretations about meanings and significances (Patton, 2002). The researcher therefore hoped to write a final case study narrative; a detailed, a reader friendly and a descriptive depiction of the findings on the research phenomena.

3.4.4.3 Thematic organisation

Henning (2004: 110) advocated that theoretical organisation was coding and categorising, extracting and constructing themes from the categories. Inventing a thematic framework included both logical and intuitive thinking and ensured that original research questions were fully tackled (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

3.4.4.4 Categorising

Categorising was a step in the analysis where data was grouped or organized "to identify possible themes, interpretation and questions" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001: 465). The researcher used the data that was collected as a guide in deciding what a category should be called. Categories that were related to each other were grouped together.

3.4.4.5 Coding

Coding involved an examination of the data and then a definition of actions or events with in it to assist the researcher to receive new perspectives on the material and to focus further data collection (Charmaz, 2000). Codes were created as the researcher worked through the data and selected according to what the data meant to him. Transcripts were re-read and units of meaning identified, marked and labelled. The following codes or abbreviations were used to represent participants and to preserve anonymity and confidentiality throughout the study.

3.4.4.6 Read for global impression

A set of data was selected from the teacher and learner interview schedules and provision was made for notes and the writing of codes. The study was studied in order to obtain a global impression of the content (Henning, et al, 2004: 113). A global impression of this study was that gang activities nation wide has direct or indirect impact on learner academic achievement.

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3.4.4.7 Preparing and organising data for analysis

Data was not often obtained in an analysable form, therefore, it needed to be prepared before the analysis process could begin. The need for data preparation was crucial when a researcher used tape, audio and video recordings (Sapsford & Jupp, 1996). In the case of this study, tape recordings were used. The purpose of analysis was usually for the transcribing of the recordings or to produce a summery of what was on them. The form of transcription partly depended on how much information the recording supplied (Sapsford & Jupp, 1996).

3.5 RESEARCH PROCESS

The research process was the description of a series of actions and steps that were followed to gather the data. These steps included the request for permission from the two school principals, selection of participants and the arrangement of data collection directly from the participants. This data collection was meant to answer the formulated research questions.

The research process started immediately after the receipt of permission to conduct a research on the two particular schools from the Western Cape Education Department. The first meeting with the principals of the two schools commenced on the 14 July 2008. On those different meetings with the principals of the two schools, the researcher introduced himself as a student and a researcher at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. He made it clear to them that he was not on the capacity of the Western Cape Education Department. The researcher gave them a detailed purpose of the study with a detailed report as to why and how their schools were selected for the project. Sessions, dates, times and the results of the sessions were explained as shown on the tables below figure 4 and 5.

3.5.1 <u>Table four</u>, research process with the description of how data form learners was captured

Research stages	Date and time	Purpose	Results
1. School A & B 1st visits	14/07/08 8:00 am & 12:30 pm	To request permission to conduct Research with teacher and learners.	I was granted permission from both schools and also promised support (SMT).
2. School A & B 2nd visits	15/07/08 10:30 am & 12:30 pm	Participants selection (request for volunteers) & explanation of the objectives of the whole project.	I got twenty boys and fifteen girls from school A who eventually chose 8 amongst them and I encountered no problems from school B.
3. School A 3rd visit	24/07/08 12:30 pm	Intentions were to begin interviews sessions with learners.	All learners who had agreed were no longer willing and I had to improvise and request for records of learners who had reported incidents of violence against them and I approached those individuals and I got learners only for the target Grades Ten and Eleven. I managed to interview three learners that very same day fearing that they might change their minds too.
4. School A 4th visit	28/07/08 10:30 am	To interview the five remaining learners.	I managed to capture the required data from the five remained learners.
5. School A 3rd to 5th visits	30/07/08 & 14:30 pm 04/08/08 & 14:30 pm 06/08/08 & 14:30 pm	Interview sessions with learners in school B. Completion of learner interviews.	In all three visits, I managed to capture the required data from learners.

3.5.2 <u>Table five</u>, research process with the description of how data form teachers was captured

Research stages	Date and time	Purpose	Results
1. School A 5th to 8th visits	11/08/08 & 14: pm 14/08/08 & 14: pm 18/08/08 & 14: pm 25/08/08 & 14: pm	Interview sessions with school A teachers.	In all four visits, I managed to capture the required data from teachers without hassles.
2. School B 6th to 9th visits	28/09/08 & 14: pm 01/09/08 & 14: pm 03/09/08 & 14: pm 04/09/08 & 14: pm	Interview sessions with school B teachers.	In all four visits, I managed to capture the required data from teachers without hassles.
3. School A & B 9th & 10th visits	11/09/08 &14: pm	The aim was to thank the two principals and their SMT.	I thanked them all and promised to give them the final document to use for their resource.

3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter supplied justification on the research design that outlined a phenomenological approach to the study. It also provided justifications on the used sampling methods. Research strategies and techniques that ensured trustworthiness were also outlined. In addition, the chapter provided a clear direction for the way in which the fieldwork (research process) was undertaken. In the next chapter, this design is applied and the results are presented within a narrative, description and explanation. The researcher trusted that this narrative, description and explanation would provide the reader with adequate information on the subject that was under investigation.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS OF TEACHER AND LEARNER PERCEPTIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GANG ACTIVITY AND LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three provided and outlined the research methodology that guided the data collection. This data was described and analysed below in terms of the themes as they emerged. The researcher analysed data to answer two research questions.

Data analysis in this study started as soon as the first set of data was gathered and ran parallel to data collection. Data gathered in phase one from learners of both schools was analysed first, to give a description of the background and context of school gang activity. Secondly, data from teachers was also analysed to give a description of the views of teachers regarding school gang activity. The following abbreviations are used in the data analysis to maintain confidentiality.

L1, S A = Interviewed learner one in school A.

L1, S B = Interviewed learner one in school B.

T1, S A = Interviewed teacher one in school A.

T1, S B = Interviewed teacher one in school B.

4.2 PHASE 1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF SCHOOL GANG ACTIVITY

The background and context of school gang activity was obtained in this phase through the researcher's personal observation, learner interview questions as well as learners' interview transcripts notes.

4.2.1 The researcher's personal observation

The researcher's personal observation as a researcher enabled him to give the following description of the research sites.

Shacks closely surrounded the two high schools, and signs of gang activities in both schools were visible through graffiti that was all over the classroom walls and toilets. In addition, different, famous and dangerous prisoners' names were written on the walls. For example, writings containing names such as "Collen Chauke from Modaby prison in Gauteng, Magayva from Mdantsane prison, East London and Bonny, M from Pollsmoer prison in Cape Town, etc were here" were found in the boys' toilets' walls in both schools. Both schools were very big and school A had an enrolment figure of 1411 learners and a staff of 54 teachers. School B had an enrolment figure of 1318 learners and a staff of 46 teachers. The two schools were surrounded by broken fences in some parts of the schools with no remote controlled gates and they both had intercom systems. In both schools, the Bambanani volunteers controlled the gates and the gates remain closed during school hours. The classes in both schools had some broken furniture, windows, electric lights, water taps and doors. During the researcher's interview sessions in both schools, he noticed that parents visited the schools quite regularly. Through his curiosity, he asked the reasons for their visits and he was told that their visits were about the lack of discipline displayed by their children and other school gang activity related matters that their children participated in.

4.2.2 Learner interview guide

The following questions about school gang activity, ethos, organisational culture and day-to-day life at the school, were posed to learners. The analysis of the individual interview guide transcripts are described later in this chapter with the same protocol being used for all transcripts. The process for data analysis is also discussed in detail in this chapter.

4.2.3 <u>Table six</u>: phase 1, learner interview questions

1. Do you agree with the statement that schools are violent places?
2. In your view who is responsible for this violence?
3. Is your school experiencing any forms of gang activity/gang behaviour?
4. What impact does gang activity have on the school and its educational activities?
5. How do you feel, knowing of the presence of gangs on the school premises?
6. How do you/ the school/the community cope or deal with gang activity?
7. How do you foresee these problems being solved?
8. Do you think there is a role to be played by teachers?
9. Do you think there is a role to be played by learners?
10. Do you think there is a role to be played by the community?
11. Do you think there is a role to be played by the WCED?

4.3 PHASE 2: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF SCHOOL GANG ACTIVITIES

The background and context of school gang activity was obtained in this phase through the analysis of the teachers' valuable insights to the interview questions and interview transcripts notes.

4.3.1 Teachers' interview guide

The following questions about school gang activity, ethos, organisational culture and day-to-day life at the school, were posed to teachers. The analysis of the individual interview guide transcripts took the same process as in learners' transcripts and the same protocol was used with all transcripts. The process for data analysis is also discussed in detail as the chapter progresses.

4.3.2 Table seven: Phase 2, teacher interview questions

1. Do you agree with the statement that schools are violent places?
2. In your view who is responsible for this violence?
3. Is your school experiencing any forms of gang activity/gang behaviour?
4. What impact does gang activity have on the school and its educational activities?
5. How do you feel, knowing of the presence of gangs on the school premises?
6. How do you as a teacher/the school/the community cope or deal with this gang activity or violence in your school?
7. How do you foresee these problems being solved?
8. Do you think there is a role to be played by teachers?
9. Do you think there is a role to be played by learners?
10. Do you think there is a role to be played by the community?
11. Do you think there is a role to be played by the WCED

4.4 PROTOCOL FOR DATA ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

The protocol that was applied for data analysis was based on data analysis process as described in Chapter Three Table 3 adapted from Henning (2004: 104-109) and Charmaz (2002: 515).

During all the individual interviews in the two phases, notes were made on the interview guides of the answers given. A tape recorder was used to record the answers and the interviews were transcribed verbatim. The entire text was studied in order to get a global impression of the content. Categorising was the first step in the analysis where data was grouped or organised to identify possible themes, interpretations, and questions. Data was used as a guide in deciding what a category should be called. By grouping together categories related to one another the total list of categories was reduced to form themes.

The themes from the two phases were compared with each other and those that were related to each other were grouped together. The analysis of this data was presented under the integrated themes that emerged from the answers of the participants taken from all data sources and from the two phases.

4.5 DESCRIPTION OF THEMES EMERGING FROM ALL PHASES

Five clear themes emerged from the responses to the questions posed to both groups (teachers and learners)

Theme 1: The nature and the extent of school gang activity.

Theme 2: Community-induced violence.

Theme 3: Lack of discipline from learners is co-responsibility.

Theme 4: The impact of gang activity on learner academic performance.

Theme 5: Coping and survival strategies pertaining to the context of school gang activity.

4.5.1 Theme 1: The nature and extent of school gang activity.

School gang activity had different origins in the Khayelitsha Township schools in the mid-80s if one compared it to the situation that the schools faced at present. Firstly, with regard to the early years, the schools experienced the overcrowded classes, lacked advance learning resources and experienced political vendettas and disruptions. These contributed to school gang activity in schools where certain groups of learners often quarrelled over scarce resources, political affiliations and beliefs. As argued earlier on in Chapter Two, overcrowding in schools left learners in such schools with no other choice but to adapt and gang up for solidarity to get access to those scarce resources (Pinnock, 1997).

The situation today was different because both outside groups as well as inside groups initiated different forms of school gang activities because of the easy access to school premises, more especially to the outsiders. In the literature review as well as in the transcripts of all participants, easy access to school premises was mentioned as a major contributing factor to the insecurity that contaminated school environments.

The review of the literature revealed that the school premises that were institutions traditionally considered as safe places for learners were now perceived to be more aggressive and violent places that created an aggressive and violent youth (Thomas & Hedda, 2000).

A good example of what the literature review claimed is articulated below.

*There are groups of boys who are learning in this school, they have their friends who are not studying in this school, and these groups keep on intimidating, beating and forcefully taking our things. Em…also these groups belong to dangerous and famous well know township gangster groups like Izinyokanyoka (snakes) and some belong to a group called **Twenty Men** (it is called twenty men because it was initiated by a group of twenty boys)" (Learner Transcripts, L 1, S A, 2).*

Supporting L 1, S A that gang activities were rife in township schools, L 4, S B revealed that there were groups of learners in his school who continually perpetuate violent acts and they were affiliated to a big group called **Izinyokanyoka** (snakes). In addition he revealed that there was a group of boys from outside the school who jumped inside or entered through the school gates after intimidating the Bambanani volunteers to perpetuate gang activities in the school (Learner Transcripts).

From the sixteen teachers who participated in the study, two teachers reported two new problems with regard to gang groupings in their respective school. These problems resulted from the newly emerged groups of "over-aged learners" and the group of the **"Amakwala"** (boys from the mountains/initiation schools). These two groups carried out different forms of gang activities that ranged from bullying, threatening/intimidations, beatings, fights, aggressive behaviour towards teachers and demanding respect from both teachers and from other learners at schools.

The evidence below supports the above claim.

I am very much disturbed by a new habit in which the school is experiencing such as gang activities or gang behaviours from certain groups of "over aged" learners who beat, bully and threaten those young learners (grade eight learners) who are recently coming from primary schools. That applies to a group of boys called "Amakwalas" (boys from the mountains or initiation schools) who also beat, bully, fight, intimidate/threaten and demand respect from both teachers and other learners. These boys demand special treatment as they claim that they are men according to their culture therefore they must be treated with dignity and respected associated with their manhood. In addition, these boys are assisted by their girlfriends to hide their improvised weapons and drugs. Their girl friends also carry out variety forms of gang activities since they are known as the untouchables at the school (Teacher Transcripts, T 4, S A, 19).

Gangster groups of any kind (could be gangster groups of older learners, the Amakwala groups, outsiders' groups, etc) once they contaminate the school environment, learner academic performance was jeopardised since both teachers and

learners felt threatened by their mere presence. The mere presence of any form of gang activity in schools instigated the feelings of insecurity and resentment to everybody on the premises.

Gang activities in the mid-90s to date have taken drastic paths and things began to be severe in the schools, especially in township schools because gangs and people from the community could enter the schools at any time without permission and interfere with teachers and learning (T 1, S A,). This view supported the findings of a study that Griggs conducted on safety in Durban township schools where the findings revealed that "schools are places where thugs, drugs and weapons move as freely through the gates as the pupils" (Griggs 1997: 3).

As evidence that schools are violent places, L 5, revealed the following:

Ndingathi isituation ibad (I can say the situation is bad) as a result ndifuna ukutshintsha isikolo ndiyokufunda (I want to change school and go to study) ebeLungwini (in white schools) because I think that all schools in Khayelitsha are the same. Ukongeza (furthermore) abukho kangako ubundlobongela ezikolweni zabeLungu njengoba apha eKhayelitsha sihlala siphepha iguns siphakathi eziclassini (there is not much violence in white schools while here in Khayelitsha we always dodge guns while we are in classes), so ndifuna ukuqhubekeka nezifundo zam (I want to carry on with my studies) but not in the township schools as I will end up dropping out if I do not change the school because the conditions are not right for me nabanye abasafuna ukufunda" (and those who still want to study) (Learner Transcripts, L 5 S A, 23).

In support to the claim made above, T 7 reported that the situation in township schools was life threatening because she saw and escaped different forms of school gang activities right on school premises almost everyday and other incidents had killed some learners. She further claimed that this situation disturbed the daily school routine (Teacher Transcripts, T 7, S A).

Both teachers and learners from both schools revealed that the situation in their schools was frightening and life threatening. They revealed that gang activities had taken drastic steps, where certain learners within their schools together with their outside friends threatened, intimidated, beat, bullied and stole from both teachers and learners. These groups vandalised, broke-in, fought, carried out theft, stubbed and injured other learners and even teachers on countless occasions. Both teachers and learners in one school reported different occasions when groups of learners killed

others on school premises. Both schools reported the incidents of the bringing in of improvised weapons, drugs and guns by groups of learners onto the school premises.

The testimony provided above on the nature and extent of school gang activity from both teachers and learners in both schools clearly justified the perceptions that schools were violent places with learners as the sole perpetrators of such school violence. In all instances of school gang activities articulated by all participants, certain groups of learners were revealed as the participants or informants for the outsiders. The participation of the outsiders in school-based violence and crime was also attributed to the support rendered by certain learners to their outside friends.

4.5.2 Theme 2: Community-induced violence

Schools did not operate in a vacuum or in isolation. Therefore, notice should be taken by the thousands of people living in most under-served communities, especially in the informal settlement communities surrounding the schools of the major impact that communities have on schooling. The trials and challenges of informal settlement life manifested the experiences of everyone and that determined how schools were viewed.

An interesting observation from both teachers and learners from both schools was the revealing of school gang activities as a spill-over from the community. All participants from both schools revealed that most gang activities that took place on their schools in different occasions originated from gang activities copied by learners from the community or gang activities that had started from the community over the weekends. This view supported the argument articulated in the literature review that gang activities within the schools were a symptom of the overall social dysfunction of the community within which the school was situated (Steyn & Naicker, 2007: 13). Steyn and Naicker's views simply implied that schools were often mirror images of the communities and the families they served.

In this study, community-induced violence referred mainly to school gang activities perpetuated by people from the community. As a community-induced violence, gangsterism, robbery and bullying are discussed below to illustrate how they constitute school gang activities perpetrated by outsiders.

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Gangsterism covered the carrying of weapons, use of drugs, fighting/physical violence, threatening or injuring people with a planned purpose to disturb peace of all people in the community and then extended to the school environment

Robbery covered the demanding of one's belongings/money, theft, burglary, vandalism, trespassing and car hijacking.

Bullying (covering the use of power, verbal abuse, intimidation and threats) was also viewed as forming part of the gang culture. Reference was also made to substance abuse (use of alcohol and drugs) as contributory factors to school gang activities.

4.5.2.1 Gangsterism

This study defined gangsterism as a term used for career criminals who were, or at some point almost invariably became members of persistent violent crime organisations (Steyn & Naicker, 2007).

All participants confirmed the pervasive influence of gang culture amongst learners in their schools. This culture was evident in fashion, music, body language, symbols and graffiti. Gang-related crime and violence was reported in both schools. Participants, however, revealed that gang-related crime and violence was kept a secret or was quietly uttered by those who witnessed or experienced it since the majority of people were afraid to be targeted by gangsters-as gangsters always did for those who spoke out about their activities. Participants from both schools outlined two common forms of gangsterism in their schools: internal and external gangsterism.

4.5.2.1.1 Internal and external gangsterism

Internal gangsterism happened when learners within the school participated in planned gang-related crime and violence and in this study, both schools revealed the high prevalence of organised crime and violence executed by learners on school premises. Participants illustrated that this behaviour was now taking control over the lives of everybody in their schools. External gangsterism on the other hand happened when gangsters from outside entered the school to intimidate/threaten and harass either learners or teachers.

In addition, external gangsterism happened when gangs claimed the school as their territory and this was reported across the two school categories of interview sessions.

In support of the above explanation, L 4 revealed that:

Er...on Fridays certain groups of boys within the school or outsiders stand on dark parts like school toilets or steps to upstairs or downstairs classes waiting for us to demand money and other stuff they might need. Also right here inside the school, gangsters armed with guns jumped in or use broken fence to get in and demand jewellery and earrings from everybody in the school for drugs and alcohol. These groups of boys also target anybody who is wearing these types of hats (K way, Climafit, and Stragels) because their groups identify themselves with those hats (Learner Transcripts, L 4, S A 59).

L 4, S A revealed that in his school there were learners who belonged to the outside groups and they called themselves these names: **Italians, Izinyokanyoka** (snakes) **Amacilikishe** (small snakes/lizards), **Stragels and Klamafits** (Learner Transcripts). T.2, S B stated that the well-known groups of criminals from outside with the assistance from certain group of learners from the school carried out different forms of gang activities. Among other forms she mentioned were car hijackings right at the school gates, bullying, smoking marijuana, taking of girls' earrings, intimidation, beatings, stealing from both teachers and learners, vandalising school properties, stabbing other learners, threatening teachers, extorting money from learners and carrying weapons onto the school premises (Teacher Transcript).

Both schools reported that there were various active gang groupings in the area and that their conflict frequently spilled over from weekends into the school week where one found that certain learners had participated.

Below, T 4 gives the evidence of the discussion articulated above.

em.. I strongly believed that what is happening in my school is a reflection of what is happening in the community, as the community members are afraid as much as they are afraid to involve themselves in school activities. Their fear and lack of interest to participate, is due to their fear to be targeted by the gangsters (Teacher Transcripts 4, S A, 20). .

Both schools explained that gangsters recruited young children, particularly those learners who were doing Grade eight, to do their dirty work since they were new in the high school environment. These learners in return received protection from their affiliates.

T 2 gave good examples of learner recruitment to gangs below:

Without doubt the situation is very scary and life threatening because it results to many bad incidents in the school. Em...to mention the few, disturbance to the daily school routine, young boys are recruited to gang groups, some learners opted to drop out and some willingly role modelled those acts of violence. In some cases, you find learners joining gang members for fame or protection. The worst thing that I can think of is also em...poor academic achievement of learner as both teachers and learners loose their quality teaching and learning time (Teacher Transcripts, T 2, S A, 7).

Accounts were given of learners who had been assaulted and killed because of gang activities on school grounds.

Supporting the given accounts of assaults and the killings taking place in the school premises, T 8 stated the following;

I fully agree with the statement that "school are violent places" because during the June exams last year (2007) the school lost two learners, one of the two learners was stabbed to death right in the school premises by a group of boys who are studying in this school for refusing to give up to them his cell phone. The second one was killed outside the school premises as he was trying to escape an outside gang group called "Izinyokanyoka" (snakes) that his outside group had picked up a fight with over group territories or boundaries and killed their member (Teacher Transcript, T 8, S B,79).

The majority of teachers and learners revealed that outside gangs exhorted fear, resentment, confusion and withdrawal as their mere presence on school premises entrenched the feelings of infringement to the right to teach and learn feelings of being intimidated and feelings of being harassed. In addition, they revealed that these feelings mentioned above, occurred as well on their way to and from school.
L 3, S B, stated that he felt unsafe when he was at school, as well as on his way to and from school. As a result, it was common for him not to attend school, especially on Fridays because gangsters extorted money or any valuable assets to buy drugs and alcohol for the weekend (Learner Transcripts).

To support the arguments articulated above, L 8 revealed the following;

I do not bother to come to school every day especially on Fridays because gangsters demand money to buy alcohol and drugs for the weekend. So if you happen to have no money or any thing they can take from you, you end up in a big problem of being beaten, if you are a girl you are at risk of being gang raped (Learner Transcripts, L 8, S B, 79).

If participants were of a view that the situation in their schools was scary and life-threatening as supported by T 2, SA, clearly the culture of teaching and learning was disturbed and compromised.

While gang activity was more prevalent amongst boys and young men, girls were also implicated as girlfriends of gangsters and the very same girls were used to smuggle in drugs and weapons onto school premises. These girls also formed their gangster groups that also executed different forms of gang activities on school premises.

T 4 gave good examples of the existence of girl gangsters below:

> *The school does experience gang activities or gang behaviour from a group of "over aged" learners and from a group of boys from the initiation schools/mountains (*Amakwalas*). These two groups are assisted by their girl friends who also belong to girls' groups. These girl groups also carry out certain gang activities like their counter boy friends groups. From my understanding, most common gang activity, among girls' groups is bullying. As a Life Orientation teacher, I noticed and received reports that there are certain group of girls who pass false gossips about others or spread false rumours, carry out social exclusion, alienation and isolation and these signify bullying to other girls. This is not all that I have noticed about these girls' bullying tactics; they use facial expressions, bodily gestures, writing notes about others and passing them to their groups and thus often disrupts the class and lead to low self esteem to the victims (Teacher Transcript, T 4, S A 19).*

In support of what is claimed by T 4, S A, T 5, S A also argued that there were group of boys and girls who named themselves as **Izinyokanyoka** (snakes) and other groups of boys and girls who were affiliated to different gangster groups from outside school (Teacher Transcript).

Gangsterism posed a persistent threat to the well-being and safety of learners and staff. It destroyed school daily routine, the teaching programme, transportation to and from school and the ability of learners to concentrate in the classroom.

Supporting the claim made above, L 1 revealed that:

> *Ezimeko okanye obubundlobongela buyagrogrisa and benza ukuba ootitshala nabafundi baluze iconcentration (these situations or violence are life threatening and they cause lack of concentration to both teachers and learners (Learner Transcripts, L 1, S B, 44).*

In support of the claim made by L 1, S B, T 8, S B stated that he viewed gang activities and violence in schools as disruptive to the school daily operation/culture of

teaching and learning and mentioned this led to the high matriculation dropdown results (Teacher Transcripts). In general, the presence of gang activities in schools provoked general instability in the school and was exacerbated by the availability of drugs and possession of weapons.

L 2 revealed that:

> *There are killings, fights, robbing of money, earrings and cell phones by outside boys told by our classmates. Carrying of knives, guns and bullying are also common (Learner Transcripts, L 2, S A, 6).*

L 2, S A also revealed that certain groups of boys from the school and their friends from outside were responsible for violence in the school because they used drugs such as candy (drug tablet), tic (also a drug tablet), ganja (marijuana) and drink alcohol on school premises and after using those drugs they became wild (Learner Transcripts, 7).

4.5.2.1.1 (a) Weapons

All participants reported weapons that included sharp improvised instruments (such as pens, pencils, pellet guns, stones, compasses, screwdrivers, catties, pangas); bats/sticks, knives and firearms (either directly or indirectly exposed, within the school premises). All participants (Teacher and Learner Transcripts) reported the prevalence of these weapons across schools.

4.5.2.1.1 (b) Drugs

Both schools reported the widespread abuse of cigarettes, alcohol and drugs. Numerous examples were given of incidents when learners came to school drunk or where alcohol was consumed on school outings or at sports events. Most participants stated that learners had a nonchalant (relaxed) attitude towards drugs. Both schools reported drug abuse. Ganja (Marijuana) cocaine, tic, candy and mandrax were the most common drugs used. They also reported drug trafficking or selling on school grounds and over boundary fences (Learner and Teacher transcripts).

4.5.2.1.1 (c) Fighting/Physical violence

Fighting/physical violence, involving a fist or a weapon of some form, was reported to be common by all participants from the two schools. Both teachers and learners described how aggressive play could easily escalate into violence and eventually to group-participated violence. While physical violence was reported across all learners and gender groupings, they also reported an increase in the number of physical fights involving girls (Teacher and Learner Transcripts).

4.5.2.2 Bullying

Bullying in this study referred to power, verbal abuse, teasing, instilling fears and threats (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). Both teachers and learners from both schools reported bullying as one of the most common forms of gang activities taking place in their schools and it had now became a big problem that occurred daily.

S A principal gave evidence of high prevalence of bullying at his schools as indicated below:

> *I am not sure if it is ok for me to say that bullying is a common habit among learners because I receive reports pertaining to the bullying of girls by boys almost everyday. Intimidations, beating of learners by other learners, stealing from teachers and, learners also took place. In addition, there is an extensive habit of vandalising of school properties by criminals or gangs outside the school and sometime by the very same learners. Gangsters smoked dagga and blew the smoke in between the shatters as we use them instead of windows. There is also a habit of the taking of girls' earrings (Teacher Transcripts, T 2, S B, 50).*

Furthermore, teachers from both schools stated that bullies also intimidated/threatened other learners with violence to frighten them. These threats often resulted in increased fear, absenteeism, drop in academic performance, withdrawal, loss of concentration and a permanent feeling of not being safe (Teacher Transcripts). Learners from both schools reported that verbal abuse and teasing was a very common form of bullying in their schools, especially amongst girls. Supporting the claim that bullying was common in schools, one teacher stated that:

> *We all are culprits of bullying abuse (teachers and learners) for instance, as teachers we receive verbal abuse repeatedly where learners speak the "Tsotsi Taal" and as a teacher, you became a laughing stock if you seem not to understand the language. Learners pass some funny and nasty comments using*

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this "Tsotsi Taal". When you ask them as a teacher, they turn to interpret their saying nicely and then laugh (Teacher Transcripts, T 4, S A, 20).

Teasing mostly happened because of peer pressure. One learner revealed that a common practice at her school was the threatening of other learners by certain groups of learners using vulgar words. She reported that she was at some point threatened with these words **mtwana ndini uyandiqhela ndizakubonisa ukuba ndingubani** (you child, you think you know me, I am going to show you who am I) (Learner Transcripts, L 3, S A).

4.5.2.3 Substance abuse

Substance abuse was also reported as a contributory factor to school gang activities. Substance abuse referred to smoking and drinking of a variety of substances such as alcohol and drugs such as **candy** (drug tablet), **tic** (also a drug tablet), **ganja** (marijuana) (Learner Transcripts). One Life Orientation teacher reported that one could notice behaviour change among learners who are using drugs (Teacher Transcripts). An example she mentioned was that when she worked with learners she easily noticed some signs after they had smoked dagga/marijuana.

T 4 revealed the following as common signs of drug usage:

Their eyes are glassy and they sit and laugh annoyingly in the class repeatedly (T 4, S A, 19).

She also reported a situation where a learner collapsed because he was a new drug user (Teacher Transcripts)

4.5.2.4 Robbery

Robbery in this study referred to the unlawful charging into someone's properties or taking someone's properties by force. In addition, destruction of one's property purposefully was also included.

4.5.2.4.1 Extorting one's belongings/money

Both schools reported the habit of extorting money and other belongings of learners by certain learners. These groups of boys also targeted anybody who was wearing these types of hats **K.way, Climafit, and Stragels.** These groups identified themselves with those hats (L 4, S A, T 7, S A and T 7, S B).

4.5.2.4.2 Theft

Theft was reported as prevalent in both schools and this took various forms: stealing books, text-books, money, stationery, CDs, school bags, technology kit, and food (feeding scheme). Both teachers and learners reported that their schools lost possession of their most valuable learning resources/materials through theft (T 2, S A, T 3, S A, T 5, S A, T 6, S A, L 4, S A, and T 7, S B).

4.5.2.4.3 Burglary

Both teachers and learners reported incidents of burglary in both schools. Such incidents occurred mostly over weekends or during school holidays. Whilst incidents of burglary appeared to be perpetuated largely by outsiders, teachers from both schools reported that outsiders often had their informers or the accomplices from the inside (L 1, S A, L 3, S A, L 8, S B, T 1, S B, and T I, S.B).

4.5.2.4.4 Vandalism

Both teachers and learners from both schools reported that the schools consistently experienced problems with vandalism, perpetuated both internally and externally. Examples included: defacing desks, destroying students' work, pulling posters off walls, graffiti, damage to property, etc (T 1, S A, T 4, S B, T 5, S B, and L 1, S A).

4.5.2.4.5 Trespassing

All learners and teachers interviewed from both schools did experience problems with trespassers. These trespassers happened to be the friends of learners, strangers or gangsters in search of pupils and they often vandalised, stole or intimidated everyone at school. Both schools reported that strangers trespass on school premises owing to

the lack of adequate security. The vulnerability of the school to trespassing was directly related to the quality of protection available.

4.5.2.4.6 Hijacking

Teachers and learners surveyed from school B reported a high prevalence of car hijackings at the school gates.

4.5.3 Theme 3: Lack of discipline from learners is co-responsibility.

According to participants from both schools in as far as the discipline was concerned, learners, parents, teachers, WCED, community and police should take co-responsibility to support learners and teachers against disruptions caused by gang activities in schooling and the major impact on learner discipline. According to participants, open communication between school/teachers and learners or between parents and children minimised school gang activities. The school needed to involve learners when making rules concerning them to make them feel part of those rules and to promote ownership. In addition, teachers needed to use their professional abilities when communicating with learners to treat them with respect and dignity. Instead of forcing discipline with punitive measures, they needed to rather teach morals to their learners and try to accommodate the learners' real world in order to win them over.

The Western Cape Education Department proposed break time duty rosters in schools for teachers to enable the schools to be aware of what was taking place on the playgrounds during break-times. Therefore, teachers needed to abide to these break-time duties. These break-time duties exposed teachers to the learners' real world out of classroom and that provided a framework for teachers to expand their classroom techniques and atmosphere in a structured manner. If the above responsibilities could be shared by all involved, schools could establish systems of collaborative-discipline driven policies that would encourage the school community to resume its roles and responsibilities (T 1, S A, T 2, S A, T 3, S A, T 4, S A, L 1, S A, L 5, S B, and L 6, S B).

In support of the ideas articulated above, T 1, stated that:

> *I think parents can give the er ...the surety that they will promote good*
> *discipline practices to their children and seeing to it that they search their kids*
> *before they leave to school and teachers also searched them before entering the*

school premises and through those commitments, I think violence in schools can come down. I also feel that if the drafting of the school code of conduct can involve learners right at the onset of its draft and emphasise heavy punishment to those learners who wilfully break the school rules, that can help in bringing down gang activities (Teacher Transcripts, T 1, S B, 47).

In support of T 1, S B, L 1, S A stated that these problems could be minimised if there were surveillance cameras that were placed in the blind spots in the school and if the police could show visibility during the start and closure of the school day. Furthermore, she was of the view that if random searching of learners could take place without giving prior notification, that could help in bringing down the easy accessibility of weapons in schools (Learner Transcripts).

4.5.4 Theme 4: The impact of gang activity on learner academic performance.

In this part of the study, learner academic performance referred specifically to the perceptions that teachers/learners held about how well they would perform academically in the light of the present school conditions of gang activities. All participants from both schools complained of the great negative impact of gang activities on the learner academic achievement as learners always lost concentration since they learned with one eye to the teacher and the other to the door. Learners felt more vulnerable inside the classrooms because classrooms served as cages that trapped and put their lives (always in danger anywhere on school premises) in a worse situation since they could not see the gangsters at a far enough distance to enable their escape. In addition, concentration in classrooms would be difficult because within the classrooms, some of their classmates belonged to gangster groups who often detested the school rules, teachers and were always armed. Both schools had upstairs classes with third-floor classes so trying to escape would be committing suicide so to be in the classroom was more dangerous than to be in any other part of the school (Teacher and Learner Transcripts).

T 1 gave the evidence of the situation faced by both teacher and learners below while they were in the classrooms:

We are not safe at all when we are in our classrooms because outside gangsters barge in at any given time to demand whatever they would need from both teachers and learners. We only rely in our cell phones to phone the office or the police station. However, this makes no difference because the cell phone is first to be demanded. Furthermore, when gangsters invade the classrooms is

very safe for them since it is not easy for them to be seen by other people at school until they finish their mission. Due to these constant fears, it is obvious that large numbers of learners in township schools are dropping to the schools in the cities as it is not the order of the day that the schooling is disrupted by the outsiders or learners themselves as it is in the case in the township schools. Our matriculation results are determined by the incidents of violence that happened in school during the year and time that is lost on gang activities. It is also obvious that learners are copycats, even those learners who want to learn, sometimes they copy bad behaviour. Also teachers have not enough time to replace the lost time as it is risky and worse when one tries to do morning classes, evening classes and Saturday classes so as to try to recover the lost time (Teacher Transcripts, T 1, S A, 4).

All teacher participants revealed that learners displayed irregular patterns of academic achievements because they were always in fear of the unknown. In addition, both teachers and learners revealed that class or lesson attendance was continually disturbed by gang activities. As a result, some learners ended up without certain tasks that they supposed to submit for records and all blamed this on the destruction posed by gang activities. Furthermore, learners repeatedly displayed irregular patterns of school attendance because of the blockages by gangsters on their way to school and also owing to the fear of repeated incidents of gang activities in school (Teacher Transcripts).

Justifying the discussed conditions attributed to poor learner academic performance above, T 1 gave a clear picture of the real situation in some of the township schools in the Khayelitsha Township:

Township schools are always disrupted by learners or by the outsiders so we lose quality teaching and learning time to gang activities. So the lost time leads to poor academic achievement of learners especially the grade twelve's as we teachers are no more longer trying to do recovery plans because if we try, only few learners come and it is very dangerous to be at school when you are a small number (Teacher Transcripts, T 1, S B, 46).

The response to the question posed to S B principal that concerning the impact caused by gang activities on the learner academic performance in particular, was as follows:

I would yes gang activities impact learner academic performance to a larger extent especially the grade twelve learners because teachers are taking stress leaves as they are in direct contacts with these pervasive behaviours from learners or outsiders. Moreover, that leaves learners without teachers so trying to resolve such problems; I have to use different substitute teachers in a single class in different occasions. In my view, different substitutes in one year bring about confusion to learners as a result some learners drop their pattern of academic achievement. In other instances, learners remain without teachers for

*some months because of the scarcity of substitute teachers in certain learning
areas like Maths and Science or due to the knowledge that the school is situated
in an area known as having high level of violence. So the learner academic
performance is affected in one way or the other (Teacher Transcripts, T 2, S B,
52-53).*

In support of the explanation given by the principal from S B, all teachers and learners
from both schools reported that there was a strong correlation between gang activities
and poor learner academic performance. They revealed that everyone in their schools
was uncertain of his/her safety. Under such conditions, the culture of teaching and
learning was hampered since it was impossible for any person to perform at his/her
best when he/she taught or learnt in constant fear. In addition, the findings revealed
that both teachers and learners lose their valuable teaching and learning time to gang
activities.

Evidence of the perception that there was a correlation between gang activity and
poor learner academic performance, is given here by L 1:

*I believe that gang activities impact on my learning and academic achievement
because gangsters som times block us on the way to school irrespective of we
are writing a test or not hence that leads to one's late coming to the test and
end up not finishing the test. I also know for sure that teachers in many
instances do not understand that as learners always use gangsters on the way to
school as an excuse for their daily late coming. Sometimes group of boys who
belong to gangster groups forced the class not do other tasks from the teachers
they despise (Learner Transcripts, L 1, S B, 4).*

The findings further revealed that gang activities affected teaching and learning as
well as the learner academic performance because some of their books were torn
through gang activities if gangsters happened to get nothing they could take from
learners. Teachers put learners out of the class when they had no books even if they
explained to the teachers that it was due to gangster acts that they had lost their books
because certain learners used gang activities to cover their laziness. In addition, the
findings revealed that teachers were not teaching freely as they were also afraid of
those gangsters who were also learners (Learner Transcripts).

*Igangsters ziyayiphazamisa performance yam kuba izikolie ziyazikrazula
iincwadi zethu xa ungenanto abazakuyithatha (gangsters affect my learning and
my academic achievement because gangsters tear up our books if we happen to
have nothing to offer them (Learner Transcripts, L 8, S A).*

Learners complained that they found it difficult to concentrate on their work without
thinking of their lives. As a result, fear dominated their listening abilities. In

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addition, learners found it difficult to internalise, digest and make connections to what teachers taught them owing to the fear that contaminated the school environment because of gang activities.

Supporting the above claim, L 3 stated the following:

Em...I always get scared in such a way that I normally do not hear the teacher while he/she teaches and ask the broken pieces of information from my friends. Sometime I do not receive help from my friends as they also went through fear themselves during the time of the lesson (Learner Transcripts, L 3, S A, 15).

Gang behaviours also impacted on the majority of learners' academic performance because if certain groups of learners from the class did not complete or even attempt certain tasks, they compelled everybody not to. If you happened to disobey them, you put yourself at a risk of being targeted (Learner Transcripts).

Amaxesha amaninzi (in many occasions) I always lose concentration from teaching and learning and abafundi abaninzi (many learners) developed bad attitude to the learning. Furthermore, andenzikakuhle emsebenzini wam wesikolo kuba the school ends earlier in some days ngenxa yeviolence (I am not performing well at all in my schoolwork because sometime the school ends earlier than the normal time). Enye into iiclaas azilawulekiki kuba abafundi abaninzi bachitha (another thing the classes are uncontrollable because many learners spent) their time out of the classes (Learner Transcripts, L 1, S B, 46).

Based from the testimony rendered by both teacher and learners, it could be reasonably concluded that learners were constantly under threat if violent acts perpetuated against them remain unchanged. Gang activities instilled fear, withdrawal, resentment and encouraged more aggressive behaviour that could escalate and produce a more violent and aggressive youth. Any form of gang activities directly or indirectly threatened learners' lives. Coming to school as well as going back home in violent-practising communities was dangerous and life threatening. The situation in school and in the playgrounds was also dangerous and life-threatening. Nevertheless, threats were most intense in the classroom because the opportunity to escape danger was minimal.

4.5.5 Coping and survival strategies pertaining to the context of school gang activity.

This part of the study looks at how the school community dealt or coped with the extreme levels of gang activities in their schools.

All participants expressed difficulties when explaining how they coped with school gang activity but six clear coping strategies emerged from their responses:

- Resigning themselves to the inevitable as a means of coping strategy.
- Open communication coping strategy.
- Religious stance coping strategy.
- Cultural and traditional beliefs coping strategy.
- "If you can't beat them, join them" coping strategy.
- "Blame the victim" coping strategy.

4.5.5.1 Resigning themselves to the inevitable as a mean of coping strategy

Some participants were of the view that there was nothing they could do to help their situation since gangsters had taken control over the lives of everybody in the townships. Furthermore, the findings revealed that anyone who stood firm to oppose gang activities in the townships took a risk of putting his or her life in danger or the lives of his or her loved ones. Gangsters targeted anyone who spoke out his or her mind against their practices and as a result, people regarded gang activities in their neighbourhoods as part of their daily lived lives.

A good example of the real situation in township difficulties encountered to cope with the situation is illustrated by the view articulated below:

I cope by keeping on telling myself that there is no point of absenting myself from school since there is violence everywhere in the community (Learner Transcripts, L 2, S A, 10).

In addition, as a form of resigning to the inevitable as a mean of coping strategy, L1 S A stated that:

I only cope by not distancing myself from gangs so if they seem to ask money I just give them the money and by so doing the majority of them take me as ibhari/ umxhaka/ijanki (some one who is stupid). The money that I gave to them serves as a protection fee of some sort (Learner Transcripts, L 1, S A).

4.5.5.2 Open communication coping strategy

One teacher revealed that because she was staying in the same township, she adopted a few townships styles to communicate with the outside gangsters. As a result, the majority of gangsters in the township knew her very well. This applied to the learners at school and her good communication relations with both outside and inside gangsters enabled her to cope with everyday gang activities.

The below quote exemplifies good communication skills between teachers and learners.

> *I communicate very well with the majority of the learners at school since I know a bit of the Tsotsi Taal they use when they were about to start gang activities and in such situations I use it to calm them down. Because of my ability to understand and speak to them in a language they understand best, they regard me as one of the cool/nice teachers at school so I only find problems when there are gangs from outside who are not from the township (Teacher Transcripts, T 3, S A, 46).*

4.5.5.3 Religious stance coping strategy

A large portion of participants reported that they did not know how they survived (being of the opinion that they had no control over the situation) other than entrusting their lives to God the Almighty.

> *Er...andizazi ndicoper njani (I do not know how I cope) only God knows (Learner Transcripts, L 7, S A, 36).*

Supporting L 7, T 1 stated that:

> *I can say there is nothing I do as a teacher to enhance my coping strategies, I just see the days, weeks, months and years pass by (Teacher Transcripts, T 1, S A, 5).*

In addition, T 6, S A reported that she could not say that she coped by doing certain things as in reality she did not know how she coped (Teacher Transcripts).

4.5.5.4 Cultural and traditional beliefs coping strategy

One teacher revealed that he survived gang activities through the protection of his ancestors.

I trust my ancestors and I always ask them to protect me from harm (Teacher, Transcripts, T 8, S B, 82).

4.5.5.5 "If you can't beat them, join them" coping strategy

Findings revealed that everybody in the townships accepted gang activities among youth as an initiation phase to adulthood. All teachers interviewed on gang activities in their schools revealed that almost all gang activities in the schools find their origin from the communities and gang activities would remain part of township community culture. People in the community and in schools associated themselves with gangsters in various ways so as to get favours from them. Some people conformed to their money demands, some gave a cold shoulder to their wrong-doings, some used gangster language as a way of identifying themselves with them, etc.
One teacher stated that to survive township life one needed to live and act it (Teacher Transcripts, T 3, S A, 46).

4.5.5.6 "Blame the victim" coping strategy

Learners from both schools revealed that both the school and teachers contributed to gang activities in their schools. The majority of learners blamed gang activities in their schools to certain school rules (e.g. the closing of the gates for the late comers). They revealed that the closing of the gates left them with no options but to resort to gang activities as they went back to their homes or waited outside the school for it to close. They mentioned that some learners opted to rob people or used drugs because they had nothing to do as they were closed out of the school. Some learners opted to violent behaviour, brought weapons to school or joined gangs to seek protection or fame and defended themselves against outside school gangsters.

Evident to the above,
One teacher revealed that some of them posed and forced the school rules to learners; corporal punishment in certain instances was used as a mean of instilling discipline among learners, and these things provoked and compelled certain

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learners to participate in gang activities. These learners participate in gang activities without the consideration of its long-last consequences.

Pervin (2001: 4) talked of the "inner personal strengths" where the individuals used their qualities within them (inner personal strength) to deal with the situations they found themselves in. Both teacher and learner transcripts revealed that certain teachers and learners in their schools showed inner personal strength. Both teachers and learners built up they own survival strategies against gang activities.

4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The process of analysis that has been followed thus far was to describe the process used to analyse and describe the themes that emerged from the data of the two phases. Although there were many commonalities between the themes, it was vital to articulate a clear profile of each teacher and learner's opinion because this study sought to understand their views on the nature, the extent and correlation of gang activities and learner academic performance in order to determine what should be done to promote a safe school environment that would enhance the culture of teaching and learning in the township schools. In the next chapter of analysis, which is the conclusion, integration between themes of phases will be illustrated and recommendations made.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is two-fold as it contains the conclusions and recommendations of the study. Firstly, the conclusions give detailed answers to the research questions:

- How did teachers and learners experience school gang activity in township schools?
- How did gang activity influence learner academic performance in township schools?

Secondly, the recommendations were constructed in the framework of a proposed view to reduce gang activity and improve learner academic performance in township schools. The significance and implications of the study are also discussed.

5.2 DRAWING CONCLUSIONS FROM THE STUDY

5.2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the nature and the extent of gang activity and perceptions of this possible relationship to poor learner academic performance in township schools. The following five clear themes (the nature and the extent of school gang activities, community-induced violence, lack of discipline from learners is co-responsibility, the impact of gang activities on learner academic performance. and coping and survival strategies pertaining to the context of school gang activities) emerged from the responses to the questions posed to both groups (teachers and learners).

5.2.2 The nature and extent of school gang activity.

All participants from both schools revealed that gang activity was rife in township schools and in their schools. They revealed that there were groups of learners who continually perpetuated violent acts and they were affiliated to different dangerous groups in the community. They mentioned groups such as **Italians, Izinyokanyoka** (snakes) **Amacilikishe** (small snakes/lizards), **Stragels and Klamafits**. There was also a mention of the two newly emerged groups: a group of **"over-aged learners"** and a group of the **"Amakwala"** (boys from the mountains/initiation schools). These two groups carried out different forms of gang activities that ranged from bullying, threatening/intimidation, beatings, fights, extorting money from learners, killing, hijacking, aggressive behaviour towards teachers, demanding respect from both teachers and other learners at schools, stealing from teachers and learners, school vandalism, etc.

Evident to the perception that township schools were no longer safe places, it was revealed that the situation was worse and needed to be taken care of. If the situation stayed as it was, one must expect influx to schools allocated in the cities and much lesser numbers in township schools. There was a general view that the schools in the cities were not experiencing incidents of gang activities to the same degree as it in the townships.

From the evidence provided by all participants on the nature and extent of school gang activities, it was therefore clear that gang activity has taken control over schools. Furthermore, this information provided the lived experiences of participants and thus provided real situations in schools. In addition, this information justified the perception that schools were violent places. The conclusion that was drawn from the responses of the participants is that learners were sole perpetrators of school gang activities. Learners were the sole participants of school gang activities since they were always involved or implicated in all instances of school gang activities, as articulated by all participants. Learners happened to be the informers or accomplices or even compliances of outsiders if they were not the ones who were perpetuating these gang activities.

5.2.3 Community-induced violence

Chapter Four revealed that schools were institutions that were not operating in a vacuum; therefore gang activities within the schools were a symptom of the overall social dysfunction of the community within which the school was situated (Steyn & Naicker, 2007: 101). In addition, the findings revealed that it was through the lenses the people in the community saw through the schools that determined safety in schools. Participants revealed that gangsters were part of community dwellers who saw schools as their war zones. When gang activities happened outside schools, there was a likelihood of mass participation among learners.

Moreover, both participating teachers and learners from both schools revealed that school gang activities were a spill-over from the community. Participants mentioned gangsterism, robbery and bullying as community-induced violence. Participants viewed gangsterism in schools as organised school gang activities with these acts of violence: the carrying of weapons, use of drugs, fighting/physical violence, threatening and purposefully injuring people. Participants revealed that robbery included the extorting of one's belongings/money, theft, burglary, vandalism, trespassing and car hijacking while bullying involved the abuse of power, verbal abuse, intimidations and threats.

Conclusions that could be drawn on community-induced violence were that the existence of various active gang groupings in the area and their conflicts frequently spilled over from weekends into the school week where learners effectively participated either on school premises or outside school premises.

Furthermore, it was evident that schools in their premises reflected what was happening in the communities they were situated in. It was therefore reasonable to conclude that one could not separate school gang activities from what was happening in the areas the schools were situated in. In support of the drawn conclusions on influence of the community towards school gang activities, the two researchers in the field looked at schools as often mirror images of the communities and the families they served (Steyn & Naicker, 2007).

5.2.4 Lack of discipline from learners is co-responsibility.

The findings of the study suggested collaboration or shared responsibilities by all people involved in the education of learners in schools in an attempt to bring down school gang activities.

Parents had a bigger part to play to minimise gang activities in schools. They needed to take it as their responsibility to promote good discipline practices in their children. They needed to take it upon their shoulders that their children's school bags were thoroughly searched everyday before taken to school. Teachers needed to also check the school bags before learners entered the school gate. The drafting of the learner code of conduct that involves learner's rights at the onset of its drafting and a code of conduct that put an emphasis on heavy punishment to those learners who wilfully broke the school rules could help in bringing down gang activities.

Conclusion that can be drawn from the responses articulated by participants were that there was a great need to intensify security measures on school premises to promote free teaching and learning because easy access to classrooms by outsiders posed persistent threats to everyone at school. Furthermore, inadequate security measures such as the absence of surveillance cameras in the blind spots in school premised increased the feeling of insecurity among everyone at school. Dragging of feet by the Police Services in attending gang-related matters at schools and their failure to show their visibility during the start and the closure of the school day also put learners at risk on their way to and from schools. Furthermore, based from the views of all participants, it was reasonable to conclude that there was a strong need of collaboration of all people involved in the education of learners to participate in all endeavours to bring down violence and crime on school premise to allow free teaching and learning.

5.2.5 The impact of gang activity on learner academic performance.

Findings revealed that all participants from both schools complained of a great negative impact of gang activity on learner academic achievement as learners always lost concentration since they learnt with one eye to the teacher and the other to the door. In the previous chapter, it was revealed that both teachers and learners felt more

vulnerable inside the classrooms since classrooms made it impossible for them to see and escape gangsters while they were still at distance. Furthermore, both teachers and learners found concentration in classrooms difficult because some of their learners or classmates belonged to gangster groups who often detested everything at school.

Chapter Four revealed that owing to gang activities, learners displayed irregular patterns of academic achievements and poor class or lesson attendance. Moreover, teachers and learners repeatedly displayed irregular patterns of school attendance since gangsters on their way to school often blocked them. Hence the researcher would recommend that the school authorities and the Nation Department of Education should devise rapid measures to ensure that both teachers and learners felt safe when they were in classrooms. The deployment of police in schools to ensure safety to the school community was strongly recommended.

According to the findings revealed in the two schools on the perceptions of the possible relationship between gang activities and learner academic performance, it was concluded that gang activities and crime and violence in schools clearly threatened the well-being of teachers and learners. Both teachers and learners found it difficult to perform at the best of their abilities while studying with their eyes wide open to the door waiting for something unforeseen to happen at any time.

Moreover it was therefore a fact that influencing the school environment was a growing area of intervention that appeared to produce serious concern to all people involved in the education of learners. Research showed that the school climate and quality of day-to-day classroom interactions by gangsters influenced learner achievement (Griggs, 1998: 16).

If gang activities were understood as learned social behaviours, then the school could play a crucial role in positively influencing the ideology, attitude and behaviour of a learner. Yet schools also had the potential to reinforce gang activities through their organisational programmes (closing of the school gates to prohibit the late-comers) and internal culture (learner labelling by teachers). Therefore, if the above were the day-to-day experience of learners at the school gates, in the classroom and on the playground, learners would show unstable academic results.

With the severe nature and extent of gang activities in schools, one could conclude that if both teachers and learners were constantly teaching and learning under fear, the culture of teaching and learning would be directly or indirectly affected. Gang activities continued to instil fear, withdrawal, resentment and encouraged a more aggressive behaviour among learners that escalated to irregular patterns of academic achievements. Any form of gang activity directly or indirectly directed to schools, threatened the lives of both teachers and learners and eventually reduced learner academic achievement or the teacher's abilities to perfect their teaching at their best.

While all these mentioned gang activities occurred everywhere (outside schools or inside schools), the findings portrayed a worst general feeling of insecurity and most intense situation in the classroom. If teacher and learners felt more trapped in classrooms because the opportunities to escape danger was minimal that with out doubt would negatively affect the learner since formal learning in school mostly takes place in classrooms.

5.2.6 Coping and survival strategies pertaining to the context of school gang activity.

Chapter Four revealed difficulties when participants were asked to express their coping strategies with school gang activity. Through probing questions, six clear coping strategies emerged from their explanations. The six included: resignation to the inevitable as a mean of coping strategy , open communication coping strategy, religious stance coping strategy, cultural and traditional beliefs coping strategy," If you can't beat them, join them" coping strategy and "blame the victim" coping strategy.

The conclusions that could be drawn on the coping strategies on gang activities were best explained in Pervin's plantation on how people survived crime and violence in high violence prevalence areas. Pervin (2001: 4) talked of the "inner personal strengths". Here individuals used their qualities within them (inner personal strength) to deal with the occurrences of crime and violence in their everyday lives. Both teacher and learner transcripts revealed that certain teachers and learners in their schools showed inner personal strengths. Both teachers and learners built up their own survival strategies against gang activities.

Inner personal strengths put an emphasis on the individual abilities and qualities within to deal with gang activity, crime and violent situations. The findings of the study revealed that certain teachers and learners in their schools showed inner personal strengths that were explained through the six emerged coping strategies articulated above. It is therefore concluded that these teachers and learners coped with the school gang activities by applying temperament, a positive self-concept, by being future directed, through use internal locus of control and a sense of coherence (teacher and learner transcripts).

5.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF EFECTIVE PROGRAMMES

The most successful approaches to reduce school gang activities, crime and violence have been in those schools that acknowledged the problem as an issue affecting all members of the school community. Research indicated that effective prevention programmes shared two primary characteristics (Gottfredson, 1996);

Effective crime, violence and gang activity prevention programmes drew on an understanding of developmental and socio-cultural risk factors leading to anti-social behaviour.

In addition, the use of intervention strategies with known efficacy in changing behaviour, tested program designs and validated measurement techniques were potentially effective.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been drawn specifically from the investigation in the study and were intended to reflect their perceptions and opinions.

5.4.1 Community Development

The investigation revealed that resources needed to be organised and put into place as urgently as possible through all spheres of government to reconstruct family and community structures. Specifically, programmes must address poverty, domestic violence, community violence, gangsterism; widespread child abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, and the easy accessibility of guns and other improvised weapons in schools.

5.4.2 Youth Development

The majority of participants recommended that youth centres and different youth development programmes needed to be given priority and supported in all communities. There should be debate societies for the youth to address the problems they encounter in their daily lives.

Youth need to be encouraged to initiate their own youth clubs at schools and outside schools to keep themselves busy in constructive activities. There should be initiation, development or support to the existing youth structures in schools or communities (for example, cultural, religious and political youth structures).

It was felt by participants that schools with support equipment for youth infra-structure could be used as an effective community resource and offer a site for specific community and youth development programmes, such as life-skills programmes, youth exchanges, youth camps, adult education classes and community cultural events. If this happened, the community would develops a sense of taking the school as their facility and safe-guard it against vandals.

5.4.3 Whole School Development

A general feeling from all participants showed that schools needed to be stabilised and developed infrastructurally before they could effectively address gang activities, crime and violence. Some strategies include:

- Promote security systems and facilities. Government should ensure that each school has the infrastructure, capacity, basic equipment and materials necessary to offer an effective educational and recreational programme.
- Create a school culture that upholds punctuality, mutual respect, rules and responsibilities. This includes actively embracing cultural and language diversity.
- Promote internal human resource capacity (mobilising volunteers and mentors from the community, and resource sharing with sister schools).
- Construct a common vision in the school and improve communication between management and staff to move the school forward collectively.

5.4.4 Crime Prevention and Awwereness Programmes

All participants felt that schools and the broader community should be actively supported to initiate crime prevention and awwereness programmes. Strategies include: peer educator, peer mediation, life-skill programmes and motivational speakers.

Effective educational and recreational programmes were identified as essential components of generating alternatives to gang activities, gangsterism, crime and violence. This included after-care, extra-mural programmes and regular school sport events.

Various role players were identified, including the Departments of Education, Department of Safety and Security, Department of Welfwere and various members of the school community (principal, teachers, learners and pwerents).

5.4.5 Department of Education

Schools should be recognised as unique with their own particular set of problems and internal culture (Lauristsen, 2003). It was recommended by the majority of participants that the WCED should:

- Ensure safety and security of schools and develop school infrastructure, particularly in the township.
- Construct the skills and capacity of teachers, learners and pwerents to prevent gang activities, crime and violence (including in-service training). The content and method of teacher, learner and pwerent training should be more holistic and embrace developmental and mental-health issues. Teachers needed to be trained specifically in how to identify children "at risk", manage problem behaviour and resolve conflict non-violently.
- Support whole school development in whatever possible ways, develop educational and recreational programmes for out-of-school youth and ensure that support structures were accessible and effective.

5.4.6 Department of Welfwere

According to the participants, social workers need to be appointed in each school to assist teachers with learners with behavioural problems and service schools (through school clinics or assigned to schools on a roving basis).

A department is needed to initiate and support community and youth development programmes that address poverty alleviation, substance abuse, domestic violence and family breakdown.

5.4.7 Department of Safety and Security

It was recommended by participants that the Department of Safety and Security should:

- Lobby for resources for crime-prevention and community-policing programmes.
- Develop and implement school-based programmes through policing and community-policing structures.
- Appoint policing in schools on a permanent basis for a quick response to school complaints and assist schools in building safe corridors on the routes to and from schools.

5.4.8 School

Participants seemed to all agree to the recommendations that the schools should be supported and encouraged to identify their own problems and develop strategies that were most appropriate for them. Suggested activities included the following:

- Teachers needed to honour break duties so that they could know what was happening on the playgrounds during break-times.
- Introduce policies to control the easy access of weapons, drugs and alcohol on the school premises. Spell out penalties in advance.
- Develop a sense of community within the school, confront people who sell wrong things to learners over the fence and develop open communication between learners and teachers and between parents and their children.

All participant learners strongly criticised the policy of closing school gates for late comers and called for its immediate reconsideration since it put them at risk to be attacked by outsiders right at the school gate.

5.4.9 Teachers

All teacher participants called for the strengthening of teachers' support to learners and the promotion of coping strategies against school gang activities, crime and violence. Both teacher and learner participants recommended that teacher support needed to focus on issues such as teacher development, developing peer counsellors, creating a healthy school climate, and practising alternative, different forms of discipline.

In addition, all participants were of the view that teachers were already overburdened with larger classes and a greater workload, therefore they needed crime and violence agencies to assist and support in order to cope with the existing challenges and become more proactive in crime and violence prevention. All participants felt that teachers must:

- Teach life-skills and incorporate crime prevention, health promotion and peace education into the curriculum as one strategy to minimise school gang activities.
- Initiate development of an open communication and a caring relationship with learners since the initiation of this could encourage a positive attitude change among learners.
- Teachers needed to role model peaceful ways of handling conflict and crisis.
- It was also recommended that non-teaching and after-care staff be more effectively involved in these processes.

5.5.10 Learners

It was as well recommended by participants that learners themselves had a role to play in bringing down gang activities. The role of peers that they could play was to form relationships with the fellow learners to help them to feel more secure and accepted. Other learners could play a supportive role in which they help one another to develop safe and responsible behaviour and a healthy self-concept. Peers have equal status and power, therefore they are in a better position to influence other learners positively

to appreciate one another's perspectives. They are also in a position to negotiate and compromise, and co-operate with one another if they hope to get along or achieve joint objectives. Their equal status contributes to the development of competencies that are difficult to acquire when they are not getting such challenges at home.

In addition, it was felt by participants that learners should be made aware of the causes and consequences of gang activities, crime and violence and their role to prevent them from happening in the school premises. Learners should be aware of the responsibilities that come with their rights in a new democratic South Africa. Opportunities should be created to develop leadership within the learner representative council (L.R.C) and mobilise learners within youth development programmes.

5.4.11 Parents

Most participants also recommended that parents had a major role to play in the efforts to minimise gang activities in schools because the majority of school gang activity problems were often rooted within the homes and families. Thus there was a call for parents to become actively involved in crime and violence prevention efforts either at school level or within their communities. There was a need for open communication and co-operation between parents and teachers in the interests of the child. The school should promote collaboration by creating opportunities for parent involvement in the life of the school (for example, as classroom assistants, policy and decision-making). The school should also initiate or accommodate adult education and life-skill programmes for parents.

Findings of this study show that both parents and teachers realise that intensive parental involvement could make a difference to assist learners to cope with school gang activities, crime and violence. Moreover, findings suggested that strategies be developed to increase parental involvement and support. Thus, interventions that could increase parental involvement and support should enhance parenting and improve the social support functions of parents.

5.4.12 Broader Community

School gang activities and violence put learners at risk of violence-prone behaviour (South Africould Institute of Race Relations, 2007). Thus, in order to promote coping strategies to school gang activities and violence, it was recommended by all participants that it was eminent to strengthen the community in its involvement to schooling and encourage the community to form part of the support system of the school.

The community needed to unite and stand together against crime and violence. Community-policing forums, civic and religious structures were mentioned as particular avenues for mobilising support for community mass action. Specifically with regards to school-based programmes, the broader community:

Interventions should encourage community participation and development because schools do not exist in isolation but are part of the communities in which they exist. As one of the role-players, communities should be motivated and invited to participate in activities and programmes with regard to the well-being of learners.

The community needed to reinforce and support school efforts to incorporate people from the community (as Bambanani volunteers).

The community needed to contribute to school security (neighbourhood watch and safe corridors) and publicise school gang activities and programmes.

5.5 SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

To do research on *teacher and learner perceptions of the relationship between gang activities and learner academic performance* was very much challenging, specifically with the learners who responded in their vernacular language (isiXhosa) and the researcher was compelled to do much of the translation from isiXhosa to English language. The significance of this study confirmed and strengthened the saying that *schools are often the mirror images of the communities and the families they serve.* It was therefore of great importance to put an emphasis that gang activities in township schools have severe and drastic outcomes where killings were possible at any lengths.

The interventions that were developed and recommended emphasised the importance of collaboration of all role-players to interact and come up with amicable strategies that would decrease the out-bust of gang activities and violence in schools.

Moreover, the interventions in school gang activities include the development of a life skills curriculum for the benefit of the whole school and all interactive systems, such as learners, teachers, family, community, community-based organisation, policy makers, and police. For many years, school gang activities and violence have also put learners in a township school at a disadvantage situation, where learners were being robbed of their right to education by gang activities crime and different acts of violence.

In addition to the specific strategies suggested above, some implications towards the improvement of education in township schools included: incorporation of permanent school social workers and school policing; incorporating interdisciplinary perspectives, involving activities such as teamwork and programme development which would also provide relief to the problem at hand (school gang activities).

5.6 CONCLUSION

Research into the question of school gang activities confirmed the fact that learners whose living and learning environments exposed them to school gang activities and family or community violence compelled them to use their abilities and skills to deal with adversities. These learners were more likely to achieve poorly in their academic work. The work of well-known researchers in the field has helped the researcher to reveal the nature and extent of gang activities in the township schools. Some teachers and learners were revealed in the study as not coping with the situation they found themselves in. Interpersonal and external factors or mechanisms that appeared to protect learners from the consequences of risk factors such as school gang activities, crime and violence were deemed inadequate and ineffective at some point. Though the school clearly emerged as one site where those protective factors could be operationalised, the inclusion of the entire school community could mean more that could be achieved. The best practices the schools could adopt in promoting safety were to study the best practices in effective teaching in other areas such as educational psychology and incorporation of policing in schools.

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Western Cape Education Department

ISebe leMfundo leNtshona Koloni

Mr Sizakele Boqwana
12 Heath Street
Sarepta
KUILSRIVER
7580

Dear Mr S. Boqwana

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: AN INVESTIGATION INTO PERCEPTIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GANG-ACTIVITY AND LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from 14th July 2008 to 26th September 2008
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr R. Cornelissen at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the following schools: Matthew Goniwe High and Usasazo High.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:
    The Director: Research Services
    Western Cape Education Department
    Private Bag X9114
    CAPE TOWN
    8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

for. **HEAD: EDUCATION**
DATE: 2nd July 2008

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REQUEST LETTERS TO THE PRINCIPALS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THEIR SCHOOLS

Date: 14-07-2008

To: Principal

Dear Sir or Madam:

RE: Study on Teacher and learner perceptions of the relationship between gang activity and learner academic performance.

Presently I am studying as a Masters student at the Cape Peninsular University of Technology also a teacher at Ukhanyo Primary School. This is my second year and my supervisor is Mr. Jeremy Koeberg. I got permission from the Western Cape Department of Education to do research in Western Cape Schools (Khayelitsha Township). The reason for this letter is to request for permission and support from you and teachers through out the duration of the study. The aim of this study is twofold. Firstly, the study wishes to examine the nature and the extant of school gang activity in the township school. Secondly, the study seeks to determine the relationship between school gang activity and learner academic performance. This study investigates teacher and learner perceptions of the relationship between gang activity and learner academic performance. In observing the daily school gang activities in South African schools and the effects it had on people over the year's then one can speak of school gang activities as stressing and frustrating on both teachers and learners. This research will contribute across all disciplines because the problems around school gang activities, crime and violence have social, psychological and economic impact on the entire South African context.

2.1. (a) Site selection and sampling

Sites were selected to locate people involved in a particular event; in this study working under school gang activity conditions is the event (Mc Millan and Schumacher, 2001). A purposive sample was used to identify the sites. The participants in this study are high school teachers and learners who live in townships and attend township schools. The study uses interviews to get information on the background of the schools and the implication of gang activities on learner academic

performance. A purposeful selection of two high schools is made. The two schools are selected from the Khayelitsha Township (Cape Town).

2.1. (b) Names of schools are assured confidentiality

Purposive sampling is used and the intentions of this study are to conduct research using interview schedules for both teachers and learner and learners are from grade 9, 10, 11 and12 who meet the following specified criteria:

They should

- have experienced school violence;
- be knowledgeable of school violence at their school
- be the learners from grade 9, 10, 11 & 12;
- be boys and girls;
- be representative of all race

2.1. (c) Data collection

The first school is going to be visited until the stage of data saturation and then the second school is visited for new information. Interviews will be used as the key data-collection strategy to obtain and verify data. No information is going to be regarded as irrelevant, irrespective of whether or not it can or will be used in the research report. Patton (1990) suggests that qualitative methods are ways of finding out what people do, know, think and feel by observing by interviewing, and analysing documents. In addition, qualitative methods are that they permit a researcher to study selected issues in depth. There are four major methods (often combined) used by qualitative researchers in which some of them will also be used in this research. The aim is to gather an 'authentic' understanding of the impact of gang activity in high school learner's experiences and the correlation of gang activity and learner academic performance.

Since I will be working at the two different schools, interview schedules are going to for both teachers and learners.

2.1. (d Expectations from schools

1. Principal and the school management team to give permission and support.

2. Get written permission from parents of the learners for participation.

3. Help with the identification of participants

4. Determine times and venue for research

5. Make sure that all personal information stays confidential

Thank you very much for your support.

Sizakele Boqwana

(Masters student/ Researcher)

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF EXPLANATION TO PARENTS

16/07/08

Dear Parent:

RE: Study on teacher and learner perceptions of the relationship between gang activity and learner academic performance.

Currently I (Sizakele Boqwana) am studying Masters Degree at the Cape Peninsular University of Technology. My supervisor is Mr Jeremy Koeberg. I got permission from the Western Cape Department of Education to do research in Western Cape Schools (Khayelitsha Township).

The reason for this letter is to inform you about the study and get permission from you parent to allow your child to participate in this research. My plan is to do interviews with teachers and learners to get as much information as possible on the topic. I know that I will learn a lot from these groups of people and appreciate their support and sacrifice. The research will use interview schedules. However use the information only in my dissertation in such away that it is not recognised as information of one particular person.

Your children have been selected to participate according to the following criteria:
Should;

- have experienced school violence;
- be knowledgeable of school violence at their school;
- be representative of all race

If you give permission that your child could participate in this research please fill in the attached letter of permission and send it back to the school.

Thank you for your support

Sizakale Boqwana

(Masters student/Researcher)

APPENDIX D

LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM PARENTS

I _____ understand the importance for this

research on the topic: **"teacher and learner perceptions of the relationship**

between gang activity and learner academic performance and therefore give

permission that my son/daughter _____ _____could

participate.

Signature _____

Date _____

NOTE: Please sign and return the letter to school.

Please indicate if you as a parent could be contacted.

Contact telephone number

_____

Sizakale Boqwana

(Masters student/Researcher)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS

NAME OF SCHOOL

_____

NAME OF TEACHER

e.g. T1, SA_____

GENDER

_____

DESIGNATION

_____

Thank you that you have agreed to participate in this study. This is my private study so I am not here in the capacity as WCED official but as researcher. I appreciate the fact that you are prepared to give me some of your valuable time and chance to learn from you.

I believe that you could also benefit from this study in the sense that your knowledge of the topic will increase and a final copy of the thesis will be given to the school as resource material.

These individual interviews will be tape-recorded and then transcribed. I give you my Assurance that the information you give me is confidential and anonymous. I will however use your information and those of others in such away that it is not recognized as information of one particular person. The interviews will last between 30 – 60 minutes.

TEACHER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE INTERPRETATION

1. Do you agree with the statement that schools are violent places?

1.1. Expand/motivate

2. Is there violence in this school?

2.1. Can you give examples/types?

2.2. How frequent this violence occurs?

2.3. Can you explain how bad the situation is?

3. In your view who is responsible for this violence?

3.1. Give examples

4. How they are acting/ functioning/operating?

4.1. Give examples

4.2. How do you know this?

4.3. Can you give some examples of what you witnessed, experienced, heard and observed?

5. Is your school experiencing any forms of gang activities/gang behaviours?

5.1. What types/kind of gang activity/gang behaviour is the school faced with and from whom?

5.2. Give the examples

6. How do you view such behaviours in and around the school premises?

7. Why do you have such views?

8. What impact do these gang activities/behaviours have on the school and its educational activities?

8.1. Impact on school facilities

8.2. Impact on teaching activities

8.3. Impact on community at large

8.4. Impact on your class room atmosphere

8.5. Impact on your commitment/periods attendance teacher

8.6. Impact on learners' commitment/class attendance and obedience towards you as an educator

8.7. Impact on your learners' academic performance i.e. completion of tasks/submission of those tasks

8.8. Impact on your class room management/learners discipline/disciplinary procedures

9. How do you feel knowing of the presence gangs on the school premises?

10. How do you/the school/the community cope or deal with these gang activities or violence in your school?

11. How do you foresee these problems being solved?

12. Do you think there is a role to be played by teachers?

12.1 Give examples

13. Do you think there is a role to be played by learners?

13.1. Give examples

14. Do you think there is a role to be played by the community?

14.1. Give examples

15. Do you think there is a role to be played by the WCED?

15.1 Give examples

16. Additional comments

LEARNER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: QUALITATIVESTUDY

Name of School

Name, Age and Gender of Learners e.g.

1. L.1, SA_____

I am Sizakele Boqwana, a teacher at Ukhanyo Primary School. I am doing masters at CPUT. This is my second year and my supervisor is Mr. Jeremy Koeberg at Bellville Campus.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. This is my private study so I came here not in the capacity of WCED official but I came here as researcher. I appreciate the fact that you are prepared to give me some of your valuable time and chance to learn from you. I believe that you will also benefit from this study in the sense that your knowledge of the topic will increase. The study is two fold; firstly, it seeks to ascertain the extant and the nature of gang activities in schools that are in the Khayelitsha Township. Secondly, the study seeks to ascertain the extent of the effects of gang activities on the learner academic performance. I promise not to reveal the information that is going to arise between us except with my supervisor. The information will be used in such a way that it is not recognised as the in formation from a particular individual.

Kindly answer questions as honest as possible, as your responses will assist this study in obtaining information on the effects associated with school gang activities.

INDIVIDUAL LEARNER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree with the statement that schools are violent places?

1.1. Expand/motivate

2. Is there violence in this school?

2.1. Can you give types/kinds?

2.2. How frequent this violence occurs?

2.3. Can you explain how bad the situation is?

3. In your view who is responsible for this violence?

3.1. Give examples

4. How they are acting/ functioning/operating?

4.1. Give examples

4.2. How do you know this?

4.3. Can you give some examples of what you witnessed, experienced, heard and observe?

5. Is your school experiencing any forms of gang activities/gang behaviours?

5.1. What types/kinds of gang activities/gang behaviours the school is faced with and from whom?

5.2. Give the examples

6. How do you view such behaviours in and around the school premises?

7. Why do you have such views?

8. What impact do these gang activities have on the school and its educational activities?

8.1. Impact on school facilities

8.2. Impact on teaching activities

8.3. Impact on community at large

8.4. Impact on your class room atmosphere

8.5. Impact on your commitment/periods attendance as a learner

8.6 Impact on your school attendance?

8.7 Impact on my commitment/class attendance and obedience towards my teachers

8.8 Impact on your academic performance i.e. completion of tasks/submission of those tasks

9. How do you feel knowing of the presence gangs on the school premises?

10. How do you/ the school/the community cope or deal with this gang activity or violence in your school?

11. How do you foresee these problems being solved?

12. Do you think there is a role to be played by teachers?

13 Do you think there is a role to be played by learners?

14 Do you think there is a role to be played by the community?

15. Do you think there is a role to be played by the WCED?

16. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

EXAMPLE OF LEARNER INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Transcript of interviews with a learner/participant 2, school A.

Researcher: Do you agree with the statement that schools are violent places?

Learner: Yes.

Researcher: Expand/motivate

Learner: I agree with the statement that schools are violent places because I see and hear about violence in schools every day.

Researcher: Is there violence in this school?

Learner: Yes.

Researcher: Can you give types/kinds?

Learner: There is killing, fighting, robbing money, ear rings and cell phones by outside boys told by our class mates, carrying of knives, guns and bullying.

Researcher: How frequent this violence occurs?

Learner: every day.

Researcher: Can you explain how bad the situation is?

Learner: The situation is very bad because when you are at school you are no longer having a guaranty that you will see the next day alive. It is also difficult to focus to studies because we are scared.

Researcher: In your view who is responsible for this violence?

Learner: Certain groups of boys from the school and their friends from outside are responsible for violence in the school because they use drugs like **candy** (drug tablet), **tic** (also a drug tablet), **ganja** (dagga) and drink alcohol in the premises. After using the drugs they become wild.

Researcher: How they are acting/ functioning/operating?

Learner: They are functioning in group of learners and connected to the groups outside the school.

Researcher: Give examples

Learner: There is a very dangerous group called **izinyokanyoka** (snakes) and also a group here at school sells drugs called **Onomejent** (meaning the Merchants).

Researcher: How do you know this?

Learner: Er…most of the times I and other learners are exposed to these things on our way to and from school I also hear from my friends about other incidents of violence.

Researcher: Can you give some examples of what you witnessed, experienced, heard and observe?

Researcher: I saw many incidents at school like fore instance last week I was at the toilets when other boy who belongs to a group was pushed into the seat of the toilet to drink the dirt of the toilet as a lesson for revealing the names of other members who participated in the school break-in that happened during weekend. I also experienced an incident where in my class a bunch of gangsters bulged in and collected every thing they wanted from learners and an educator who was in the class. Also last Fridays a group of **Izinyokanyoka** entered the school to demand valuable material from learners using their slogan that "**Izinyokanyoka ziyabakhothakhotha**" (we the snakes, we are biting them) and "**siyalawula apha esikolweni nangaphandle**" (we are ruling here at school and we are also ruling the outside world). This phrase means that they are the gangsters with the ability to contaminate the environment if they happen to be in any environment. All of them were **high/babeqhunyiwe** (they were all under drugs). **Izinyokanyoka** have their own second division or recruitment called **Amacikilishe** (lizards or small snakes).

Researcher: Is your school experiencing any forms of gang activities?

Learner: Yes.

Researcher: What types/kinds of gang activities/gang behaviours the school is faced with and from whom?

Learner: Last week, I was in the toilets where other boy who belongs to a group was pushed into the seat of the toilet to drink the dirt of the toilet as a lesson for revealing the names of other gangster members who participated in a school break-in that happened during weekend. I was also a victim of gangsters last Friday when a group of **Izinyokanyoka** entered the school to demand our things using their slogan that **Izinyokanyoka Ziyabakhothakhotha** (we the snakes, we are biting them) and **siyalawula apha esikolweni nangaphandle** (we are ruling here in the school and we are also ruling the outside world). This phrase means that we the gangsters have the ability to contaminate the environment if we happen to be in any environment. All of those boys were **high/babeqhunyiwe** (they were all under drugs). **Izinyokanyoka** have their own second division or recruitment called **Amacikilishe** (lizards or small snakes).

Researcher: How do you view such behaviours in and around the school premises?

Learner: I view these violent behaviours as very bad because the incidents that go along with gang behaviours in one way or the other drag the name of the school on the mud.

Researcher: Why do you have such views about these kinds of behaviours in and around school premises?

Learner: I have these views because the majority of learners find difficulties as on defending themselves against gang activities.

Researcher: What impact do these activities have on the school and its educational activities?

Learner: The impact is negative

Researcher: Tell me about the impact on school facilities

Learner: Em...my school walls are filled with bad drawings done by the gangs so if they are erased to day then the next day you find new ones where one finds the names of famous gangsters throughout the world. Desk and other writeable materials experience the same. Also the school is painted with gangster colouring. Fencing is broken, windows and doors also broken.

Researcher: Tell me about the impact on teaching activities

Learner: I can say em...the teaching and learning is largely disturbed because while you are in the class you are also exposed to bad things. Classes are always disturbed by these violent activities taking place in the school.

Researcher: Tell me about the impact on community at large

Learner: Em... I can say, the community experiences the very same thing for instance here at school there are places known to belong to gangsters only. Those places are known as gangster territories. A number of house breakings that happen in the community one will find out that one or two learners from this school were there. People are robbed time and again by the skolies (gangsters) who are learners from my school

Researcher: Tell me about the impact on your class room atmosphere

Learner: The class room atmosphere is very tense because in each class you find that one or more boys belonging to these groups therefore the situation left every one in the class with difficulties to communicate freely.

Researcher: Tell me about the impact on your commitment/periods attendance as a learner

Learner: Em...I can say that it is very difficult to attend periods because each time we are changing classes we become a given opportunity to the gangsters to rob or forcefully demand any thing they want.

Researcher: Tell me about the impact on my commitment/school attendance and obedience towards my teachers

Learner: It is very hard to come to school every day especially on Fridays because the gangsters need money to buy alcohol and drugs.

Researcher: Tell me about the impact on your academic performance

Learner: I can say gang-behaviours affect me in my learning and academic achievement because some of our books are thorn by the gangsters if you happen to have nothing that they can take from you. Even the teachers sent you out of the class when you have no books even if you explain to them because some of us learners use gang-behaviours to lie. Also gang activities impact greatly on one' academic performance since some learners forcefully copy from their text books or from others. In addition, teachers are not teaching freely as they are also afraid of those gang activities in classes.

Researcher: How do you feel knowing of the presence gangs on the school premises?

Learner: Em...I can say em...I feel not good at all because I know that if gangs are around they are only there for one reason and that reason is to rob or threaten every body.

Researcher: How do you cope or deal with this gang activity or violence in your school?

Learner: I cope by keeping on telling myself that there is no point of absenting myself from school since there is violence everywhere in the community.

Researcher: What are the coping strategies/survival strategies employed by the school?

Learner: The school has the Bambanani Volunteers and sometimes police to fight gang activities in the premises but still gang activities take place.

Researcher: What are the coping strategies/survival strategies rendered by the community to assist you in your learning?

Learner: Em...I don't know but I think Bambanani volunteers are the people who are coming from the community to safe guard the school during school hours.

Researcher: What are the coping strategies/survival strategies rendered by the WCED to assist?

Learner: I see nothing which is done by the WCED because it only comes after an act of violence and after that it disappears till the next incident.

Researcher: How do you foresee this problem being solved?

Learner: Em...I don't know if there can be something to resolve the problem of gang activities because gangsters are every where and even the police at time seem to fear these gangsters as the police themselves live in the community.

Researcher: Do you think there is a role to be played by teachers?

Learner: I think there is nothing the teachers can do since they are not bullet proof and there are many incidents that happened to teachers who seem to be firm against gang activities. Apart from that they have tried in many occasions to protect us but the fact that gangsters are the untouchables will always remain a big challenge.

Researcher: Do you think there is a role to be played by learners?

Learner: I think that learners can try because it is the learners who are the perpetrators and also who are the victims.

Researcher: Do you think there is a role to be played by the community?

Learner: I think that the community can play a role if only if the community members can stand up against crime not only individuals who are easy to be targeted and also those parents who have gangsters in their homes can come up and not defending children who are gangsters. Also those parents/brothers/sisters who are not working can volunteer in schools in their numbers.

Researcher: Do you think there is a role to be played by the WCED?

Learner: Em... the WCED needs to pay those volunteers so as to motivate them. The WCED also needs to appoint the police also to be visible during school hours.

APPENDIX H

EXAMPLE OF TEACHER INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Transcript of interview with an educator /participant 4, school A.

Interviewer: Do you agree with the statement that schools are violent places?

Interviewee: Yebo, I agree with the statement.

Interviewer: Expand/motivate

Interviewee: Every day the school does encounter various forms of violence because we have the over-aged learners who demand respect and do all sort of violence to other learners in the school.

Interviewer: Is there violence in this school?

Interviewee: Yes, there is violence at the school.

Interviewer: Can you give examples/types?

Interviewee: Bullying is the most common form of violence in the school. Gangsters from outside the school pose serious threats to both us teachers and learners. Also fights, intimidations, threatening, beatings and using and carrying of drugs and dangerous weapons to the school premises are amongst the forms of violence that I can think of.

Interviewer: How frequent this violence occurs?

Interviewee: The majority of school violence happens on Fridays.

Interviewer: Can you explain how bad the situation is?

Interviewee: I can say the situation is very bad because violence contributes to a lot of incidents ranging from disturbing the daily school routine, learner drop out, some learners imitaterole violence from thugs. Mn....violence contributes to learners' poor academic achievement as both teachers and learners loose the valuable teaching and learning time.

Interviewer: In your view who is responsible for this violence?

Interviewee: Esh! er violence in this school is a collection of many things.

Interviewer: Give examples

Interviewee: I think the upbringing of some learners contribute to some of violence that happens in the school. I say that because we are teaching learners from squatter camps and those learners are exposed to very bad violent situation and violence is regarded as the only survival strategy. I also believe that poverty produces violent learners for instant hungry learners are easily used on wrong things by the elders.

Hungry learners also saw stealing as a solution to their problem. Also poverty in many instances makes parents to be negligent and accept stolen things from their children to put food on the table.

Interviewer: How they are acting/ functioning/operating?

Interviewee: Violence in many instances in this school is conducted by a group of learners or group of outsiders.

Interviewer: Give examples

Interviewee: In this school there are learners who belong to the outside groups and they call themselves with these names **Italians, Izinyokanyoka** (snakes) **Amacilikishe** (small snakes/lizards), **Stragels** and **Klamafits**.

Interviewer: How do you know this?

Interviewee: I see other incidents of violence and many learners tell me their experiences as I am teaching Life Orientation. The school has a box where learners put in the events of violence they had experience either in the school or outside the school so among their experiences, one can find out that bullying, beating, fights, intimidations, stealing and use of drugs so on and so on.

Interviewer: Can you give some examples of what you witnessed, experienced, heard and observed?

Interviewee: I use to handle the situation where learners are introduced to drugs and sometimes they collapse in the process. The school has a box where learners put in the events of violence they had experienced either in the school or outside the school so among their experiences, one can find out bullying, beating, fights intimidations, stealing and use of drugs. I also experienced a case where one learner came in a class smoking dagger and I was forced not question him because he was challenging and provoking me as he used to be in a class when I criticised the use of drugs by any person.

Interviewer: Is your school experiencing any forms of gang activities/gang behaviours?

Interviewee: Yah...., the school does experience gang activities/gang behaviours.

Interviewer: What types/kinds of gang activities/gang behaviours is the school faced with and from whom?

Interviewee: The school does experience gang activities/gang behaviours from a group of over aged learners who beat, bully and threaten those learners who are recently coming from primary schools. There are also a group of boys from the initiation schools (**Amakwalas**) who beat, bully, demand respect from other learners

and intimidate other learners. A group of boys and their girl friends also carry out number violent behaviours.

Interviewer: How do you view such behaviours in and around the school premises?

Interviewee: I view these behaviours as disturbing and out of hand as every body fear for his/her life when it comes to the confrontation of gangsters.

7. Why do you have such views?

Interviewee: Well, well I have these views because these learners/gangs do fear nothing and it seems that they are determined to eliminate any body that stands on their way.

Interviewer: What impact do these gang activities/behaviours have on the school and its educational activities?

Interviewee: Without doubt, the impact is negative.

Interviewer: Impact on school facilities

Interviewee: Gang activities have a major impact on school facilities as gangsters write their paintings on the walls, break windows, doors, school fencing and steal valuable leaning materials like computers and other staff. Also gangsters jump over school fencing to recruit learners to join gangs as a result the majority of learners at school speak the **Tsotsi Taal** where as an educator you become a laughing stork if you seem not to understand the language. Learners pass some funny and nasty comments using this **Tsotsi Taal** and when you ask them they interpret their saying nicely and then laugh.

Interviewer: Impact on teaching activities

Interviewee: I can say teaching itself is derailing because both teachers and learners teach and learn in constant fears that something bad can happen. Both teachers and learners are reluctant to come for morning, evening and Saturday classes.

Interviewer: Impact on community at large

Interviewee: I strongly believe that what is happening at school is a reflection of what is happening in the community as the community members are afraid as much as they are afraid to involve themselves on school.

Interviewer: Impact on your class room atmosphere

Interviewee: The situation in the class rooms is very bad because there is no trust between the class mates as every one in the class is careful of what he/she saying. These gangsters do what ever they like to any body at any time. In addition, both

teachers and learners show sings of emotional disturbances. Some learners are not concentrating on teaching due to their fears.

Interviewer: Impact on your commitment/periods attendance as an educator

Interviewee: Gang activities affect my period attendance as I do not know what awaits me in the class as a result I always dishonours some of my classes.

Interviewer: Impact on learners' commitment/class attendance and obedience towards you as an educator

Interviewee: Both teachers and learners absent themselves at school especially on Fridays as most of gang activities happen on Fridays. Some learners copy the bad behaviours from the gangsters and practice those behaviours to teachers and other learners.

Interviewer: Impact on your learners' academic performance i.e. completion of tasks/submission of those tasks

Interviewee: I can say learner academic performance is greatly affected as their school attendance is continually disturbed by gang activities. As a result the majority of learners do not have certain tasks that they have to submit for the records. Some learners do not perform to their standard because they are in constant fear. Also learner academic performance is unstable as the school time is disturbed time and again.

Interviewer: Impact on your class room management/learners discipline/disciplinary procedures

Interviewee: I find it difficult to mange my class as certain learners role model gang activities. Also learners are ungovernable as they know that nothing will happen to them.

Interviewer: How do you feel knowing of the presence gangs on the school premises?

Interviewee: The situation is scary, frustrating and hopeless knowing of the presence of gangs on the school premises as at the mean time there is no solution to alleviate gang activities in school.

Interviewer: How do you/the school/the community cope or deal with these gang activities or violence in your school?

Interviewee: I cannot say that I use certain mechanism to cope as I just survive by the grace of God. The school use cameras and Bambanani volunteers against crime to try to eradicate violence in school. These bambanani volunteers are people from the

community who offer their free services to assist in bringing down gang activities in school.

Interviewer: How do you foresee these problems being solved?

Interviewee: I foresee these problems being solved if only if every body can join hands in an attempt to eradicate the root cause of gang activities not only teachers as it is happening at present.

Interviewer: Do you think there is a role to be played by teachers?

Interviewee: There is a big role to be played by teachers, as they are the ones who spend much more time with the learners. Teachers need not to distance themselves to the learners as it is happening in the school.

Interviewer: Do you think there is a role to be played by learners?

Interviewee: Learners need to be engaged in all attempts to eradicate gang activities and be given the responsibilities in the daily running of the school.

Interviewer: Do you think there is a role to be played by the community?

Interviewer: The community needs to play a bigger role as these learners are theirs. Parents need to check their learners' school bags to look for drugs and dangerous weapons. Parents also need to ask their learners about what is happening in school.

Interviewer: Do you think there is a role to be played by the WCED?

Interviewee: The WCED needs to workshop every body who is involved in the education. Social workers also need to be deployed in schools so as to help both teachers and learners with regard to the behavioural problems that arise in the schools.

PARTICIPANTS PROFILE

PROFILE OF LEARNERS FROM BOTH SCHOOL (A) AND SCHOOL (B)

1. L 1, S A

Grade	: 12
Age	: 18
Gender	: Male

2. L 2, S A

Grade	: 11
Age	: 17
Gender	: Male

3. L 3, S A

Grade	: 11
Age o	: 17
Gender	: Female

4. L 4, S A

Grade	: 9 D
Age	: 16
Gender	: Male

5. L 5, S A

Grade	: 9 D
Age	: 16
Gender	: Male

6. L 6, S A

Grade	: 9 D
Age	: 16
Gender	: Female

7. L 7, S A

Grade	: 9 D
Age	: 16
Gender	: Female

8. L 8, S A

Grade	: 8 E
Age	: 15
Gender	: Female

1. L 1, S B

Grade	: 11
Age	: 17
Gender	: Female

2. L 2, S B

Grade	: 11
Age	: 18
Gender	: Female

3. L 3, S B

Grade	: 11
Age	: 17
Gender	: Male

4. L 4, S B

Grade	: 11
Age	: 17
Gender	: Male

5. L 5, S B

Grade	: 11
Age	: 17
Gender	: Male

6. L 6, S B

Grade	: 11
Age	: 19
Gender	: Male

7. L 7, S B

Grade	: 11
Age	: 18
Gender	: Female

8. L 8, S B

Grade	: 11
Age	: 17
Gender	: Female

PROFILE OF TEACHERS FROM BOTH SCHOOL (A) AND SCHOOL (B)

1. T 1, S A

Grade Teaching	: 10
Age	: _
Gender	: Female
Designation	: Post level one

2. T 2, S A

Grade Teaching	: 10
Age	: -
Gender	: Male
Designation	: Post level one

3. T 3, S A

Grade Teaching	: 11
Age	: -
Gender	: Female
Designation	: Post level one

4. T 4, S A

Grade Teaching	: 10
Age	: -
Gender	: Female
Designation	: Post level one

5. T 5, S A

Grade Teaching	: 10
Age	: -
Gender	: Male
Designation	: Post level one

6. T 6, S A

Grade Teaching	: 8
Age	: -
Gender	: Female
Designation	: Deputy Principal (Post level 3)

7. T 7, S A

Grade Teaching	: 11
Age	: -
Gender	: Male
Designation	: Post level one

8. T 8, S A

Grade Teaching	: 9
Age	: -
Gender	: Male
Designation	: Post level one

1. T 1, S B

Grade Teaching	: 11
Age	: _
Gender	: Female
Designation	: Post level one

2. T 2, S B

Grade Teaching	: -
Age	: -
Gender	: Male
Designation	: Principal (Post level 4)

3. T 3, S B

Grade Teaching	: 10
Age	: -
Gender	: Female
Designation	: HOD (Post level 2)

4. T 4, S B

Grade Teaching	: 10
Age	: -
Gender	: Female
Designation	: Post level one

5. T 5, S B

Grade Teaching	: 10
Age	: -
Gender	: Male
Designation	: Post level one

6. T 6, S B

Grade Teaching	: 10
Age	: -
Gender	: Male
Designation	: Post level one

7. T 7, S B

Grade Teaching	: 11
Age	: -
Gender	: Male
Designation	: Post level one

8. T 8, S B

Grade Teaching	: 9
Age	: -
Gender	: Male
Designation	: Post level one