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Perceptions of parents concerning school violence in a secondary school in Alexandra

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2016-07-28

<http://hdl.handle.net/10539/20751>

Mthimkhulu, Maurious S (2015) Perceptions of parents concerning school violence in a secondary school in Alexandra, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, <<http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/handle/10539/20751>>

Abstract

This research intended to explore the perceptions of parents concerning school violence in a secondary school in Alexandria. It was guided by the following questions, namely: (1) How has school violence affected learners? (2) What factors do parents think contribute to school violence? (3) What interventions do parents think are needed to address violence in schools? Because this was a qualitative study, an interpretive research paradigm was adopted in order to gain an in-depth understanding into the descriptions and information that the participants shared. Purposive sampling was chosen as a method of collecting data from the participants. The sample consisted of ten participants (parents of the learners) whose children were attending a selected high school in Alexandria. Two parents from each grade (grades 8 to 12) were selected. Participants' ages ranged from 30 to 65 years. The results revealed that many factors such as domestic violence in families were pivotal contributors to school violence. Peer pressure, substance abuse and a new generation with a new set of rights were also identified as the causes of school violence. Anger that has developed due to unfavourable home and community conditions was another trigger identified. Effects of school violence on the learners included concentration lapses in the classroom, bunking classes, academic decline and the internalisation of violent behaviour. Educators were also been identified to be affected by the school violence, this presented as loss of interest in the teaching profession and fearfulness in the teachers as well as behaviours associated with this fearfulness such as being cautious of their behaviour around learners. It is imperative that all stakeholders collaborate in addressing the problem of school violence. More research needs to be done so that society may understand the ways in which this violence can be avoided. Participants expressed that parents are willing to take part and be involved in addressing school violence, even though they think they do not have much to contribute.

Keywords

School violence, School Governing Body, Corporal punishment, Alexandria, Causes of violence, Township schools, Parent