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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND



CONTEMPORARY SCHOOL-BASED VIOLENCE: ADOLESCENT FEMALE PERCEPTIONS OF IDENTITY FORMATION

Masters in Community-based Counselling Psychology

Jogini Packery

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I would like to thank Maha Saraswathi for Blessing me with the patience, passion and thirst for knowledge. It is through enlightenment that change becomes possible.

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This research is dedicated to my dear nephew, Mayuran Mikyle Devante Packery (Date of Birth: 5th February 2015). You are Truly Heaven Sent and Destined for Greatness.

Always reach beyond the stars!

"All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream."
Edgar Allan Poe

DECLARATION

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Declaration of Authenticity of this Research Study

I, Miss Jogini Packery, declare that the following research report is my own unaided work.

All in-text citations, references, and borrowed texts have been duly acknowledged.

This report is being submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Community-based Counselling Psychology, at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

This report has not been previously submitted at any other university for the purpose of any other degree or examination.

_____

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Signed on _____ day of _____2015.

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Chapter One - A Glance of the Research Study



"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."
Marcel Proust

1.1 Overview of the Research Study

This introductory chapter will serve to briefly present and outline the research study that was undertaken. This will be achieved by briefly announcing the chapters contained in this research report. It will begin by creating an overall understanding of this research study by concisely presenting a review of the existing literature that informed this study. It will then reveal the theoretical approach that guided this research study and the method in which this research study was implemented. A brief description of the findings and conclusions that were inferred from the analysis will also be presented. Based on the aforementioned, this chapter will then continue to introduce the aims of this research study, as well as the rationale for undertaking this research study and the research questions that were addressed during this research study as a result.

1.1.1 Introduction to the Review of Literature

Following a number of violent altercations between female university students in the United States of America, Avis Thomas-Lester (2011) reported in *The Washington* that "violent episodes between females are on the rise… on playgrounds, in high school hallways and on college campuses across the country, where at least four women have been charged with killing female students since March [2011]". Thomas-Lester (2011) continues by emphasizing that the types of violence between females have been progressive, exhibiting a variety of violent acts such as assaults, group or gang fights and malicious one-on-one attacks. This excerpt highlights that school-based violence amongst female learners is an international endemic. The social website, *schoolfights.co.za*, reveals that the scourge of female-induced violence is prominent in South Africa as well (http://schoolfights.co.za/video-two-south-african-schoolgirls-in-a-violent-fight/). Therefore, Burton and associates have confirmed that violence is a serious concern in South African schools, showing the involvement of both male and female learners in violent behaviour (Burton, 2008; Burton & Leoschut, 2012).

Boulton and Smith (1994) reported that at the time of their study, no girls were classified as bullies. However, later research surrounding violent video games and aggression amongst children indicated that female-induced violence has evolved over the ten year period since Boulton and Smith's (1994) findings. This progression in female-induced violence at schools is supported by Gentile, Lynch, Linder and Walsh (2004). They supported this argument, indicating that the prevalence of female-induced violence within the school

environment warranted the presence of grave concern. Their comparative research reported that 17% of the female participants confirmed engaging in arguments with their teachers on a daily or weekly basis, comparative to the 28% of male participants that confirmed similar aggressive behaviour (Gentile *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, it is apparent that there is an increasing concern for violent acts committed by females in schools in South Africa and internationally. In addition, incidences of violence induced by female perpetrators in South Africa communities have been following these worldwide patterns of female-induced violence at schools (Haffejee, Vetten, & Greyling, 2005). Hence, these issues of female-induced violence in schools and communities has led to inquiry into the progressively escalating violence in South African schools, as well as internationally (Burton, 2008; Burton & Leoschut, 2012; Haffejee *et al*., 2005; Klopper, 2003; Pretorius & Botha, 2009; Rosario, Salzinger, Feldman, & Ng-Mak, 2003).

The concern regarding female-induced violence indicates that a shift has occurred. This shift presented as the movement from which females play a role as victims during violence to adopting the role of the perpetrators of violence. In viewing the phenomenon of violence and who the perpetrators are, it has been shown that there are more female perpetrators of violence as compared to past incidents (Haffejee *et al.*, 2005). However, despite this shift, female-induced violence has not been addressed as a matter of urgency or importance in research. As a result, this research study stresses that the pattern of female-induced violence has experienced a steady yet drastic shift that emphasizes a need for a greater understanding of this social phenomenon (Haffejee *et al*., 2005; Pretorius & Botha, 2009; Rosario *et al*., 2003). Therefore, this study hypothesises that female-induced violence in South African schools is rapidly becoming a risk concern. It thus argues that an attempt to understand school-based violence should be done from a broader lens, rather than a narrow lens that limits the possibility of female perpetration.

In this research study, this demand for an understanding will firstly be addressed in the next chapter, the review of related literature, by exploring the aetiology of violence in South Africa and South Africa's historical experiences of violence as a nation. In doing so, emphasis will be placed on aspects of gender roles during incidents of violence, allowing the researcher to compare the role of gender as perceived in relation to violence. Secondly, the evolution of female-induced violence will be discussed in accordance with female experiences of violence or exposure to violence in and around their immediate surroundings.

This will allow for the discussion of female-induced violence within the school settings, which is the main focus of this research study. Paat (2010) emphasizes that the causes of behavioural problems, such as violence, are multi-faceted. Therefore, other areas of exposure such as the home setting, community, religious institutions, as well as social structures outside of the home will also be discussed in the review of related literature in chapter two. The discussion below will introduce the integrative theoretical approach adopted in this research study in order to enrich the understanding of violence as a social phenomenon.

1.1.2 Introduction to the Theoretical Approach

The discussion provided above surrounding the aetiology of violent behaviour amongst adolescents offers a multi-faceted view of the origin of violence. This implies that violent behaviour is a product of social interactions with various social settings. As such, current research on violence within school settings shares the idea that violent behaviour is a result of social interaction (Burton & Leoschut, 2012; Nuttall, Valentino, & Borkowski, 2012; SACE, 2011). Thus, the home setting, school culture and the community setting of learners need to be taken into consideration when attempting to understand the violent behaviour of individuals in and around schools (Bowen & Bowen, 1999; Leach, 2003; Patchin, Huebner, McCluskey, Varano, & Bynum, 2006).

This study has taken a stance against the pure analysis of socially interconnected environments or ecological levels when studying the individual development of humans. Instead, it adopts the notion that these ecological systems or interconnected networks, as well as the social dyadic interactions that occur on these various social levels, contribute to learned behaviours, such as violent behaviour. Thus, this conception points toward an integrative socio-ecological model that focuses on the constant and simultaneous interactions amongst the existing social environments and the individual; whilst the development of the individual remains the focus of analysis (Darling, 2007). The following discussions will elaborate on the value of an integrative approach to understanding individual human development and behaviour.

How to be an individual; how to behave acceptably; and how to live together as a social being and social agent refers to the development of individuals within their social contexts. To best understand human development and the development of individuals, traditional theories of development provide an effective starting point (Hook, Watts, & Cockcroft, 2002). The integrative approach of an ecological systems theory, utilizing a

psychosocial developmental perspective, allows for a socio-ecological understanding of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994a, 1994b; Darling, 2007; Hook *et al.*, 2002).

A socio-ecological model as such, aims to uncover the integrated self which consists of the core individual who cannot be isolated from the multitude of social environmental interactions that occur simultaneously. These core social interactions are known to either directly or indirectly impact on the individual's development, their contextual roles, and their identities (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Erikson, 1980; Hook *et al.*, 2002). Thus, this integrated model, as shown in diagram 2.1 in the following chapter, encourages a holistic understanding of human development; an understanding of an individual as an agent in society who actively impacts on different social settings and is, in return, impacted by them (Darling, 2007). These social settings will be interchangeably referred to as the levels of interaction, socio-ecological environments and social levels in the discussion that follows.

1.1.2.1 Erik Erikson's developmental stage of psychosocial development

Erik Erikson's developmental stage of psychosocial development will be used as a starting point for understanding adolescent individuals, but Bronfenbrenner's theoretical model has been used to provide the overarching theoretical framework. Erikson's theory of psychosocial development is a lifespan approach to understanding individual personalities and behaviours in response to social interactions (Erikson, 1977, Erikson 1980). Addressing the adolescent developmental stage, this theory allows for the discussion of identity which is known as the conscious sense of self that individuals develop through social interaction (Erikson, 1968, Erikson 1980). However, this research would not benefit from applying Erikson's theoretical stage of development alone, as it does not account for the multi-dimensional and complex nature of psychosocial development.

Erikson's theory of psychosocial development is criticised for its tendency to be overly focused on the individual and the reciprocal dyads in which the individual interacts and develops. This approach, although effective to some extent, does not account for the complex nature of interconnected interactions that occurs between these interconnected dyads and the active social environments in which they occur (Bronfenbrenner, 1994a; Hook *et al.*, 2002). Therefore, this research argues that the development of individuals should account for the cumulative development that occurs across one's lifespan, focusing on psychological, social, and ecological factors. This aspect of complex interconnected interactions will be addressed by the integration of Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model.

1.1.2.2 Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological model

An integrative perspective is taken where an overarching ecological model such as Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, will allow the researcher to evaluate core individual development, especially individuals' formation of identity, in relation to the various ecological systems that are in constant interaction. The latter is understood by Bronfenbrenner as 'person-context interrelatedness' (Bronfenbrenner, 1994b; Darling, 2007). Bronfenbrenner's model thus highlights that 'person-context interrelatedness' contributes to the individual's development of self (Addison, 1992; Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Bronfenbrenner, 1994a, 1994b; Darling, 2007). However, Erikson's theory allows the researcher to focus on the developmental stage known as 'identity formation versus role confusion', in gaining an integrative understanding of how adolescents develop a sense of self in relation to their environmental interactions (Erikson, 1968; Erikson, 1980). Therefore, this integrated model emphasises the importance of both the individual and the fundamental influences of social environments through which the individual develops a sense of identity in a reciprocal manner (Hauser, Powers, Noam, Jacobson, Weissand, & Follansbee, 1984; Hook *et al*., 2002). In addition, the integrated model is extended in order to concentrate on the element of gender during identity formation during adolescence. For this purpose, Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity is integrated as discussed below.

1.1.2.3 Judith Butler's perspective of performative gender identity

Expanding on this theoretical integration, the aim of this study is to understand processes in which individuals develop a sense of self which pertains to their self-identity within violent environments. Judith Butler's perspective of performative gender identity has been used to inform and expand on this process. Butler's perspective of performative identity emphasizes gendered identity as developed through social interactions at various social levels that she refers to as social stages (Butler, 1988). As such, her concepts of gender, gendered identity and gendered behaviour provide further insight into how interactions with one's social environments and the direct or indirect relationships between those environments contributes to how individuals understand themselves as social agents (Bronfenbrenner, 1994a; Butler, 1999).

A deduction is made that the performative roles within society are then determined and in some cases, restricted by the gender aspects of individual identities that are reinforced by social acceptance. This coincides with Butler's (1999) definition of 'gender identity' as the performative acts performed by individuals. Butler (1999) views these acts as stimulated

by social responses at varying degrees in various contexts. The repetition of these acts is thought to reinforce aspects of one's identity, consolidating personal traits and characteristics (Butler, 1988; Gergen & Gergen, 2011).

The development of one's gendered identity and identity as a whole is recognized as critical during adolescence as it comprises the interactional processes in which adolescents discover their self-identity in relation to others (Erikson, 1980). This implies that the way in which people behave in different contexts relate to their social environment and this relationship, in turn, contributes to how individuals perceive themselves in terms of their subjective core sense of identity (Butler, 1999; Erikson, 1980). The position taken in this research study is that the shift in performative gendered roles among adolescents is a contributing factor to the increase of female-based violence within secondary schools in a disadvantaged community in Gauteng, South Africa.

Therefore, based on the presenting research, this study was undertaken to expand on the existing understanding of the development of individual identities among adolescent female populations, especially pertaining to the performative gendered aspects of identity among adolescent females. The focus of this research study will be on a group of females who have been exposed to school violence, and the manner in which they relate to themselves, to others, as well as within various social environments. This study narrows its scope of development analysis to gendered identities as per Butler's perspectives of performative gender identity. In doing so, it highlights an interest in identifying issues of internal conflict that materialized from the negotiation of gendered embodiment at an individual level, as well as on the various interacting social levels that the individuals engaged in (Gergen & Gergen, 2011). The integration of Erikson's psychosocial development theory within the broader levels of interaction stipulated in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model will be discussed later in chapter three of this report.

1.1.3 Introduction to the Research Inquiry

This research study was informed by qualitative underpinnings of the research process (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). It was therefore of an exploratory nature. This allowed the researcher to explore the performative experiences of gender roles in the presence of violence. These experiences were partially unique to the individual adolescent females that participated in this research study (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006).

In order to extract these experiences through the means of semi-structured interviews, an interview schedule was developed. Due to the development of a semi-structured interview schedule prompted by the researcher, a pilot study with two participants was carried out in order to validate the questions of the interview schedule, as well as to confirm the appropriateness of the language used in the semi-structured interview schedule. As a result, separate semi-structured interviews were conducted with two adolescent females aged between eighteen and twenty that had encountered the government education system in their past schooling experiences. These interviews were transcribed and the data collected was analysed. The focus of the data analysis was challenges that arose during the interview process. Consequently, the findings of the pilot study showed that the language used in the semi-structured interview was not suitable for the level of education of some of the adolescent females. Hence, the semi-structured interview schedule was emended and the amended version was implemented in this research study.

Preceding the pilot study, adolescent females between the ages of eighteen and twenty years that had attended one of the government secondary schools in Benoni were invited to participate in this study. A requirement for the sample group was exposure to school-based violence during their previous schooling experiences. Once the sample group was obtained, the participants were asked for consent to participate in a semi-structured interview as well as to consent for audio-recording of the interviews. The interviews were transcribed and compiled into a dataset that could be analysed using qualitative methods. The data analysis process was informed by the researcher's acquired knowledge of qualitative research and thematic content analysis. Therefore, the process of thematic content analysis was employed to extract essential themes that emerged from the findings of the research study (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Krippendorff, 2004; Patton, 2002).

The ethical considerations during the course of this study included ethical clearance, informed participation and consent to participate and to be audio-recorded. The participant information sheet to introduce participants to the study and the informed consent emphasized the voluntary nature of the study. The informed consent also reiterated the strict confidentiality process during data collection and handling which assured anonymity during the reporting processes (Ponterotto, 2005). Therefore, the identities of the participants were known only by the researcher and research supervisor. Accessibility of interview recordings was restricted to members of the research process, ensuring confidentiality of responses. The

participants were informed that the research would be used for academic purposes. They were also informed that feedback on the group trends found in this study will be made available, upon request, approximately a year after the data is collected. Participants, who experienced emotional discomfort during the interview process or after, were referred to the Emthojeni Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand or Lifeline Ekurhuleni for counselling.

The results and findings that emerged from the data will be introduced in the section below.

1.1.4 Introduction to the Results and Discussions of this Research Study

The findings of this study focus on the individual experiences, as reported by the participants, whereas the discussions surrounding the central themes and sub-themes that emerged from the shared experiences of participants. The central themes, as alluded to below and explicated in chapter six, found that the central themes were based on the impact and influences that violence in one's social settings has on one's perceptions of the world and oneself, as hypothesized by the related literature.

However, the central themes yielded from this study presents as a combination of deductive and inductive themes. The deductive themes are, namely: *Perceptual Experiences of Violence* and *Perceptual Development of Violent/Aggressive or Non-aggressive Identities: Inter- and Intra-personal Elements*. The latter concerns aspects of perceived inter- and intra-personal factors that aid identity formation whilst *Perceptual Experiences of Violence* discusses the nature of violence as subjectively defined by the participants that participated in this research study.

The inductive themes that emerged from this research study's findings involve the discourse of violence amongst adolescents who have been exposed to violence in one or more social contexts. These themes express the manner in which adolescent females, who have been exposed to violence, engage in desensitised discussions of violence. It also highlights the stigma attached to reporting violent acts and a subsequent culture of silence surrounding exposure to violence. Therefore, the results of this study allude the reader to aspects developing social trends that preserve and maintain the continuation of violence in disadvantaged communities that are at risk.

1.2 The Aims of the Research Study

The overarching goal of this study is to understand how adolescent females develop their sense of identity within violent environments. In doing so, this research project aimed to explore young females' experiences of school violence, as a factor contributing to their identity formation. It examined the usage of performative gender identity to adapt one's gendered behaviour and roles according to one's social setting; such as being around peers at school or around family at home. The focus was placed on adolescent females who previously attended government schools in a disadvantaged and violent community in Benoni, on the East Rand of Johannesburg and have been exposed to school-based violence.

This research project pursued to uncover their experiences of femininity; the expected female personality traits, and masculinity, which is known as the socially accepted male personality traits. It also pursued the current issues that these young females are faced with in an attempt to conform or deviate from socially acceptable behaviours of violence and gendered norms.

1.3 Rationale of the Research Study

Globally, investigating the fields of school-based violence has been centred on the experiences of gendered-based violence or male-induced violence (Bowen & Bowen, 1999; Burton, 2007; Burton 2008; Burton, & Leoschut, 2012; Cameron & Frazer, 1987; Henry, 2000; Leach, 2003; Leach & Humphreys, 2007; Patchin *et al*., 2006; Rosario *et al.,* 2003). Research conducted by SACE (2011, 2012) has established a firm understanding of the effects of school-based violence on the behaviour of the male youth in South Africa. Research has also shown the impact that exposure to violence within communities has on the development of these young individuals (Chadwick, 2007; Patchin *et al*., 2006). However, this approach is largely focused on violence perpetrated by male learners against female learners or younger male learners, creating an unsafe learning environment for the learners. This approach fails to account for the changes occurring at the level of schools regarding the nature of gendered violence of which females are no longer just the victims of violence, but in some cases are the active agents in contributing to these issues (Leach & Humphreys, 2007).

Further research has found that not all incidents of school-based violence were being reported to the South African Council of Educators. The South African Council of Educators (2011) has confirmed that many of the violent incidents that occur in schools are unreported.

They believe that the failure to report acts of violence in the school environment stems from two influencing factors: the stigma of being a victim of violence and feelings of intimidation from feeling victimised. With the increase in the severity of school-based violence, the phenomenon has been pushed to the forefront by education policy makers (SACE, 2011) with the hope that local media will assist in identifying and exposing these events. This concern is thus aimed at reducing the reluctance to report violent acts which results from the inherited acculturation[1] of aggressive and violent behaviour. The latter is perceived as acceptable behaviour. The schools of interest in this study hold no record of violent incidence that occurs in and around the school vicinity, therefore the researcher has chosen this site for research in attempt to uncover the reasons for maintaining a culture of silence by not reporting school-based violence to authorities, such as educators or police officials.

As a response to this gap in research, recent studies conducted by Haffejee and colleagues (2005), Pretorius and Botha (2009), and Roasrio and associates (2003), have shown vast interest in females who behave in ways that are considered to be 'out of character', and as such, projecting internal conflicting forces between self-expression and social expectancies of behaviour. This is thought to result in internal negotiation of expected and acceptable gendered roles within society (Leach & Humphreys, 2007). The effects of these socially constructed gender roles on individual identity are supported by Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development which looks at individuals' development across the socio-ecological spectrum such as globally, nationally, socially, and culturally, amongst others (Butler, 1999, 1988; Hook *et al*., 2002; Klopper, 2003). This contributes to a better understanding of the social environmental levels of development that young females in South Africa engage with, as well as how being exposed to violence affects their behaviour and interpersonal relationships on other interactional levels in their lives.

For the purpose of this study, focus is placed on the exposure of violence as a factor that contributes to the identity formation of adolescent females between the ages of eighteen and twenty years. Ex-learners who have completed their secondary school education and/or are no longer attending high school, were included for participation as they were considered to be completing their stage of identity formation according to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1980). However, the study restricted the age limit to that

[1] "Acculturation comprehends those phenomena, which results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns for either or both groups" (Van de Vijver & Phalet, 2004, p.216; Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936, p.149).

of twenty years of age in an attempt to ensure that participants are not too distant from their high school experiences and exposure to violence within the school settings. Thus, individuals who are in this age range (ages eighteen to twenty) are more aware of their identity aspects than adolescents who are still primarily negotiating initial aspects of their identity (Erikson, 1968).

Thus, this research study aims to contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon of performative gender identity that is adopted by young females as a response to exposure of violence in schools situated in disadvantaged social settings. This understanding provides insight regarding adolescent development in areas that resemble these characteristics of violence, as well as direction for intervention and approaches to best fit the issues that these young females are faced with currently.

1.4 Research Questions

The discussions above serve as the foundation upon which the following research questions were established in order to further explore the role of gender during violence in various social settings, with focus on the school environment. These questions were informed by the hypothesis that exposure to violence influences the development of adolescent identities. Therefore, they were developed with the aim of gaining a better understanding of how violence in one's social settings may impact on the way one perceives the world and self.

1. How do young females, who have been exposed to school-based violence, experience this social phenomenon?

    - Specifically, this overarching question sought to uncover the perceived experiences of violent situations, as informed by gender roles and rules for females.

2. In which ways does school-based violence contribute to the manner in which adolescent females develop their sense of self identity? This question was apportioned into three specific parts:
    - How does school-based violence contribute to identity formation of adolescent females?
    - How do these young females negotiate the use of gender roles to formulate aspects of their identity?

- Does identity, as manifested through behaviour, change in relation to various social settings and to what degree do these changes occur?

1.5 Concluding Comments

This introductory chapter provided an outline of this research report. In doing so, it briefly discussed the available background information which contributes to a better understanding of violence as a social phenomenon. Thereafter, it declared the chosen theoretical approach in the form of an integrative socio-ecological approach which allowed for a multi-faceted research inquiry. The methodology implemented during this research study was briefly discussed, as well as the ethical considerations taken during this research inquiry. Each of these introductory areas will be elaborated on in the chapters that follow.

Chapter Two – Exploring the Related Literature



"Any fool can know. The point is to understand."
—Albert Einstein

2.1 Introduction

The following chapter will outline the review of related literature as undertaken by the researcher. It will achieve this by firstly attempting to define school-based violence with emphasis on the subjective nature of the social phenomenon. It will then discuss the cycle of violence and the recent patterns of school-based violence, both internationally and at the national level. It will then briefly discuss the role of female-induced violence within the school setting before exploring the role of other stakeholders in human development such as the domestic and communal factors. In conclusion, this chapter will highlight the main factors and impact of violence in and around schools in South Africa.

2.2 Defining School-based Violence

The traditional definition of violence is "the use of force toward another that results in harm. Simplistic versions of this definition limit the concept of violence to extreme physical harm" (Henry, 2000, p.17). However, when attempting to understand school-based violence, such narrow definitions do not suffice as it fails to account for cases of intimidation and other less overt forms of violence such as gender-based violence against both male female learners, cyber-bullying and transactional sex between teachers and learners of both genders[2]. Burton (2008) agrees that in order to capture the complexity of this problem, the entire range of school-based violence, such as mental, psychological, and physical violence, must be considered. This does not situate the exploration of school violence within the rigid walls of the schools alone as content specific, but requires a perspective that is open-minded to the various forms of violence that originate out of the school vicinity and are incorporated within the school. Therefore, this approach to studying the social phenomenon of violence will steer away from limiting the types of deviant behaviour and crimes that are otherwise devastating within the school context and allow for a fuller, more in-depth understanding of school-based violence. An example of such an approach is highlighted in the discussions that follow.

An example of a multidimensional approach to understanding violence has been adopted for the purpose of this study and will be focused on in the discussion below. Hagan, as cited by Henry (2000, p.22), identifies three dimensions upon which all types of school violence can be evaluated. The first dimension is focused on "the relative seriousness of crime based on the harm that it has caused". Crimes that harm only the participant, such as substance abuse, are known as victimless crimes. However, recent cases of school and

[2] Gender, as referred to in this study, can be defined as the social demarcations of 'male' and 'female' with direct reference to biological differentiation of sexual reproductions organs.

campus massacres result in harm, not only to the victims of direct crossfire, but also the victims' families, friends and communities. Therefore, such crimes are categorised by the severity of impact and harm upon others. These social interactions impact individuals within their learning environment as well as within their communities. The relative seriousness of the crime or violent act can be firstly measured by the *degree of victimisation*. The second dimension reverts back to the social response to particular violent behaviours which determine the perceptual and consensually accepted degree of wrongfulness. This dimension will be discussed below.

The second dimension of Henry's (2000) definition of violence indicates that the *degree of wrongfulness* is determined by the social response. This implies that society's consensual agreement and moral values will be the main determinant of behaviours that are deemed wrong and those that are righteous (Henry, 2000). As a result, society maintains an essential role in determining acceptable and desirable behaviours which are aimed at maintaining social order and control. These interactions are deemed critical during the early childhood and adolescent stages of human development, since it is at these stages where children are taught positive behaviours (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Erikson, 1977). Therefore, this study adopts the view that schools play a role in the teaching of, not just educational knowledge needed for future careers, but also positive behaviours so that children can develop the adequate social skills in order to work and contribute to South Africa's capitalist social and economic well-being.

Finally, the third dimension of evaluating violent behaviour lies within the boundaries of *overt punishment by authoritative figures* and extends to *informal reprimands and social ostracism* by teachers and peers within the school setting (Henry, 2000). These dimensions must be considered when evaluating the escalation of school violence within South Africa as reported by SACE (2011, p.3) which has highlighted that school violence in South Africa has "shifted from cases of bullying to more serious forms of victimisation that involve violence". This dimension supports the assumption that the responses to violence and the reactions of punishment for violent acts may be contributing to the continuation of violence by not recognising and acting on the severity of this progressing issue. Hence, the following section will continue to illuminate the phenomenon of school-based violence in South Africa by discussing the origins of violence, as well as the contributing factors to persistent violence in South African and international schools.

Henry's (2000) approach to defining violent acts is in accordance with Erikson's psychosocial theory, as well as Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model (Lerner, 2006; Lewthwaite, 2011). Therefore, social interactions on various ecological levels form the knowledge of violence, as it is known today. This perspective indicates that violence transforms as societies evolves and contemporary violence, especially pertaining to the South African context, must be cognisant of the environmental circumstances in which it occurs. This perspective is expanded to the performance of violence acts which illuminate that social recognition, social judgement and social responses to violence guide and in some cases govern the behaviour of social agents (Gergen & Gergen, 2011). This supports Butler's claims that social behaviour is a response to the presence of a social audience which deems the behaviour as deviant or desirable (Butler, 1988, 1999).

Bronfenbrenner's model thus indicates that the performative expression of one's identity through behaviour is governed by the culmination of the traditional and current macro-systemic interactions (Gergen & Gergen, 2011; Lewthwaite, 2011). This over-arching social level superintends the knowledge of social behaviour on the inner levels of the ecological model, enforcing boundaries on the inner-most level; 'the person in the centre' (Addison, 1992; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Darling, 2007). It is upon this utmost inner level that social interaction and dyad relations are instigated (Erikson, 1977, 1980; Lerner, 2006). These dyadic relationships are fostered through communication which results in dynamic actions. These dynamic actions are then reciprocally invested in other social interactions and directly or indirectly exerted on the broader social understanding, values and norms of social being. Therefore, this dynamic definition, as stated by Henry (2000) is apt to understanding violence as an evolving social phenomenon, as purported by the researcher.

The following section will depart from the defining elements of the social phenomenon of violence and introduce concepts of contemporary violence pertaining to the broader macro-systemic context of South Africa.

2.3 The cycle of violence

South Africa is often described as a violent nation based on its history of political violence during the apartheid regime and the continuous current high rates of poverty and crime (Cooper, Morroni, Orner, Moodley, Harries, Cullingworth & Hoffman, 2004; Usdin, Christofides, Malepe, & Maker, 2000). This statement surmises that violent behaviour is trans-generational and provides the context for the development of violent generations to

come. Hence, this study wishes to focus on the assumption that violent behaviour may also be a result of a cyclical pattern stemming from past generations (Adinkrah, 2000; Haffejee *et al*., 2005; Pretorius & Botha, 2009). As such, the researcher was guided by this assumption and prompted a view into the history of violence and how it may have impacted societies of the twenty-first century. The following discussion will comment on the degree of violence in the twenty-first century societies, relaying back to the assumption that 'violence begets violence' (Widom, 1989; Widom & Maxfield, 2001).

The common assumption of violence in a patriarchal world is that violent behaviour is commonly correlated to masculinity and masculine identities amongst male populations (Bhana, 2005; Langa, 2008; Kim, Watts, Hargreaves, Ndhlovu, Phetla, Morison, Busza, Porter, & Pronyk, 2007). This understanding, coupled with Henry's dimensions for defining violence, indicate that violence is met with a condoning attitude by society as a sign of manhood (Henry, 2000). This view appears problematic as it has given rise to issues of gender-based violence and set precedence for power dynamics that deem males as the dominant gender. Therefore, it is said that "violence against women is an explicit manifestation of gender inequality and is increasingly being recognized as an important risk factor for a range of poor health and economic development outcomes" (Kim *et al.,* 2007, p.1794). This highlights that violence, as traditionally known to be perpetrated by males, is continuously increasing and causing great concern for gender-equality around the world. However, this discourse does not account for the increase of violent acts such as self-defence and ultimately female-induced violence against males and other females. The discussion below further explicates how exposure to violence may encourage a progressive pattern of violence in society.

Adinkrah (2000) provides further insight into how being exposed to violence might contribute to this progressive pattern of female-induced violence by suggesting that much of it has stemmed from the need to defend against being a victim of violence in one's past. Consequently, exposure to violence is indicative of responses of violent behaviour toward perceived threats and distress; causing a recurrent pattern of violent reactions where the victim becomes the aggressor and the cycle of violence is completed (Pretorius & Botha, 2009). Thus, this cyclical relationship is seen as a contributing factor to an overall increase in violent behaviours (Haffejee *et al*., 2005). Considering the high rate of violence and crime in South Africa, as reported by the official fact sheets of Africa Check (2013; 2014), these

concerns appears valid. These concerns highlight that violence across the various social levels are problematic and uncontrollable at present. Henceforth, the evolution of violence in homes, schools, communities and society at large should become the forefront of social development initiatives, encouraging research on female-induced violence, as well as its counterparts; male-induced violence in today's society.

Despite this argument of bringing female-induced violence to the forefront of research inquiries, the evidence provided above show that academia, media and society are not as concerned about the increase of female-induced violence as compared to traditional male-induced violence at schools. South Africa's focus of school-based violence remains on the aspect of female learners being the victim rather than perpetrator. This discrepancy is highlighted by studies that have shown an increase of female inmates in comparison to the male counterparts over the past years (Haffejee *et al.*, 2005; Pretorius & Botha, 2009). Haffejee and colleagues (2005, p.41) reported that "between 1995/6 – 2002/3 women's imprisonment increased by 68% while that of men increased by 69%". This indicates a gap in the research which contributes to a poor understanding of why female-induced violence appears to be rising in incidence and severity.

In addition to this, considering the high domestic violence rates against women in South Africa, this evidence depicts a problematic discourse surrounding the views and approaches to gender-based violence in South Africa (Kim *et al.*, 2007; Pretorius & Botha, 2009). This gives rise to the possibility that female-induced violence may be negated on both social and political platforms. As a result, limited resources and focus are invested in research and intervention development of preventing the further spread of female-induced violence. Thus, both local and international literature supports the investment of resources into South African-based research and intervention programs aimed at monitoring and addressing prevalence rates of violence induced by adolescent female perpetrators in South Africa (Rodriguez, Quiroga, & Bauer, 1996, Rosario *et al.*, 2003). The following discussion will highlight the social struggle surrounding school-based violence, emphasizing the role of females in this progressively risky behaviour.

2.4 The Role of Gender in the Cycle of Violence

Research indicates that some interest has been shown toward the increase of violence against women throughout the world such as the studies of Haffejee and colleagues (2005), Pretorius & Botha (2009), and Rosario and colleagues (2003). These studies are aimed at

monitoring and addressing prevalence rates of violence induced by adolescent and adult female perpetrators in South African communities (Haffejee *et al*., 2005; Pretorius & Botha, 2009; Rosario *et al*., 2003). Haffejee and associates (2005, p.40) confirm that "the prevalence of violence against women in South Africa has prompted a growing body of research into this problem". However, despite these promptings and the vast research on gender-based violence, there remains an absence of research into female-induced violence from both local enquiries and academia. As previously mentioned, this study aims to address this gap in research by contributing to a better understanding of the role of performative gender roles in violent situations as prompt by the evident raise in female-induced violence.

The studies mention shared the common finding that women who were exposed to violence at some point of their lives were prone to react violently later in life. This speaks to the discourse of vulnerability and empowerment, leading women to respond to violence in the only way that they may know; self-defence through means of inducing violence themselves. Haffejee and colleagues (2005) support this argument and add that there is a strong statistical relationship between violent behaviour of female perpetrators and their previous exposure to gender-based violence prior to their incarceration. Their study, conducted in three prisons in Gauteng, South Africa, found that an average of one out of eight women (15%) incarcerated in these prisons were raped before the age of fifteen (Haffejee *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, their study showed that one in ten of their participants reported being raped by an unknown perpetrator after the age of fifteen (Haffejee *et al*., 2005). Therefore, this study suggests that exposure to violence in one's everyday life and past may be a contributing factor to the progressive pattern of female-induced violence around the world and seeks to explore this social phenomenon amongst adolescent females who were exposed to school-based violence.

As mentioned above, despite the knowledge of a progressively violent female youth within and around school environments, international media and South African media remains focused on portraying these acts of violence by females as pacified versions of non-confirmative behaviours (Klopper, 2003; Cameron & Frazer, 1987). Hence, media and research reiterate that the role of females in acts of violence is that of the victim, whereas males are portrayed as the common perpetrator (Bowen & Bowen, 1999; Burton, 2007; Burton 2008; Burton, & Leoschut, 2012; Cameron & Frazer, 1987; Henry, 2000; Leach, 2003; Leach & Humphreys, 2007; Patchin *et al*., 2006; Rosario *et al.*, 2003). Harriét Klopper (2003, p.119) protests against the usage of the term "non-confirmative" behaviour when

referring to violence perpetrated by females, as she believes that it highlights "the androcentric and chauvinistic attitudes of theorists toward females since the first attempts had been made at explaining the behaviour of young females at risk".

As a result, it appears that thinking of violence induced by females as anything other than violence in its pure sense highlights and conserves the impact of patriarchal systems on twenty-first century societies. An example of violent acts perpetrated by females recently is the global trend of female suicide bombers (Bloom, 2007; Merkel, 2011; Zedalis, 2004). Therefore, Merkel (2011) argues against women being subjected to different social rules and regulations in the light of violence as it re-engages with the discourses that maintain gender inequality. This study adopts this stance on gender relations within school settings and argues that being overly focused on male-induced violence whilst females are subjected to empowerment campaigns might be a careless and fruitless task undertaken by schools. Therefore, female-induced violence should be addressed through research so that adequate interventions can be derived and implemented at school-level.

In closing, this protestation implies that the discourses of human behaviour and its shifting patterns may be stuck in an era where women remain inferior within social settings; limiting understanding of female-induced violence and its concerning progression (Bloom 2007; Merkel, 2011). This indicates that the risks that face women in the twenty-first century are restrained and negated, even when women are thought to be at risk of being victims of violence and progressively becoming perpetrators of violence themselves (Perry & Albee, 1998). The discussion that follows will look at the possible factors that aid in the exposure to violence that is assumed to conserve and prompt future acts of violence.

2.5 Other factors that contribute to violent behaviour

The discussions above established a need for research geared at gaining a deeper understanding of the impact that exposure to violence has on individual development and the conservation and continuation of violent behaviour. Hence, this research study aims to address this gap in research and contribute to a better understanding of female-induced violence. Furthermore, the cycle of violence as proposed by literature (Haffejee *et al*., 2005; Pretorius & Botha, 2009; Rosario *et al*., 2003) should be a primal concern for all parties and stakeholders concerned. It has been noted that female-induced violence has evolved on many levels; involving various stakeholders at various levels. These levels are namely homes, educational settings and communities and larger societies. The above discussion has

highlighted a raise in female-induced violence on a global, national, and local level. Therefore, the stakeholders referred to here may be distinguished as overt influences such as policy makers, social and cultural stalwarts, educators, peers, community members and caregivers, as well as additional influences such as social and cultural norms, socio-economic factors and supportive and risk factors (Roasrio *et al*., 2003; Schad, Szwedo, Antonishak, Hare, & Allen, 2008).

For the purpose of this study, the levels of investigation are those which appear as relevant to the adolescent participants of this study, with particular emphasis being place on the home, school, communal, and political environments. The interaction of these social systems confirms that multiple factors should be considered when attempting to understand social phenomena. Therefore, the multi-faceted perspective of violence as a social phenomenon supports the approach taken in this research study since Bronfenbrenner (1994b, p.37) notes that "in order to understand human development, one must consider the entire ecological system in which growth occurs". Furthermore, to enhance the understanding of the problem of violence within the South African context, national policies, such as educational policies, and policy makers (SACE) will be discussed further under Section 2.5 in this chapter.

2.5.1 The impact of domestic violence on adolescent learners

Research conducted by SACE (2011, 2012) and researchers, Burton and Leoschut (2012) suggest that *family processes* are among the main causes of learned violent behaviours and other behavioural problems in children. It further suggests that "parenting practices and parental well-being emerged as good predictors of behavioural difficulties and prosocial behaviour at school entry, pointing to the importance of supporting parents in order to promote social competence in young children" (Hartas, 2011, p.763). Therefore, family dynamics and functioning should be understood before individual behaviour can be more clearly grasped. Dynamics and functioning of the familial system are expanded on in the following discussions.

As previously shown, family dynamics also referred to as the structure of the family and the interactions between these structures, as well as the functionality of the family system aids in the development of individuals who are socialised within that system. Research conducted by Murray A. Strauss (1979) focuses on conflict, hostility and violence within the family system, concluding that reasoning, verbal aggression and violence within family systems are amongst the main indictors of violence as a means of conflict resolution (Strauss,

1979). He notes that "one family might resolve the issue of which TV program to watch by rotation, another by a "first there" strategy, and another by a threat of force by the physically strongest" (Strauss, 1979, p.76). As shown in this statement, the conflict resolution strategy that a family adopts may vary drastically from that of other families.

Therefore, the role of parents in this system becomes paramount as they are ideally responsible for choosing a stratagem and implementing it consistently in order to socialise the family accordingly. Hauser and colleagues (1984) emphasizes that the consistency and affective or constraining responses of parents toward situations of conflict within the home founds the core strategies that children will rely on when faced with conflict out of the home. As such, it may be noted that parents, guardians or primary caregivers play a significant role in the social and psychological development of children, violent behaviour included (SACE, 2011). These parental roles will be alluded to below.

The main social role for parents in the home is that of parenting (Strauss, 1979). The way in which parents choose to carry out this role may vary as previously noted. Thus, parenting may be carried out in a number of ways and styles. Blissett, Meyer, and Haycraft (2010) highlight that *parenting styles* are valid predicting factors for behavioural problems in children. Four such parenting styles will be discussed below; namely, overly permissive, uninvolved, authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles (Blissett *et al*., 2010). Overly permissive parenting styles which involve indulgence, limited responsiveness and less demanding responses, as well as uninvolved parenting styles identified by low responsiveness, few demands and limited communication, are more strongly related to behaviour problems than that of the authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles.

The authoritarian parenting style emphasises the adherence of strict rules which are set by the parents and are punishable if disobeyed, whereas the authoritative parenting implies that a set of rules and guidelines be set by parents and enforced in a non-restrictive manner, allowing for exploration and self-discovery (Blissett *et al.*, 2010). These parenting styles are arguably valid in their own right, however the purpose of this study restricts in-depth evaluations of these parenting styles and concludes that each of the four styles discussed may be successfully implemented, although the authoritative parenting style is commonly favoured.

For the purpose of this study, however, focus is placed on parenting styles that are unhealthy and detrimental to adequate individual development. Research shows that children

who are exposed to maltreatment such as abuse and neglect may tend toward abusive behaviours in their adulthood (Daisy & Hien, 2014). This not only confirms that the cycle of violence remains a prominent concern amongst current social issues, but that a lack of parental skills may be a prime factor in addressing these concerns. Schwartz, Hage, Bush and Burns (2006, p.211) agree that "an unhealthy family of origin can lead children to not only model negative conflict resolution skills, but also have deficits in appropriate social skills". Hence, the role of parents in facilitating the development of adequate social skills through socialisation processes is a role of utmost importance. Unfortunately, the African, and more specifically, South African context gives rise to additional challenges facing children and adolescents who are expected to develop into desirable adults who are capable of contributing to the country's economic growth. Such challenges are child-headed homes, high HIV prevalence, and poverty. These challenges will be deliberated on in the following discussion.

As mentioned above, child-headed homes, high HIV prevalence, and poverty pose serious issues that impact on the healthy development and well-being of children throughout Africa. The absence of parents due to HIV and AIDS, as well as cases of child-headed homes in South Africa and cases of children living with extended family members, should also be considered even though it is not focused on in this study. These cases are usually associated with early parentification of the elder siblings of a home. *Parentification* is defined as "a phenomenon whereby parental roles and responsibilities are abdicated by parents and carried out by children and adolescents" (Hooper, Wallace, Doehler, & Dantzler, 2012, p.811). These are the experiences of children who are expected to provide care for younger siblings or extended family members, be it practical or emotional in nature. Research supports that these experiences may contribute to and in some cases impact on the holistic development of children; including their psychological development in terms of emotional maturity, as well as scholastically (Nuttall *et al.*, 2012). As such, community initiatives and support are important in these lower-economic societies in South Africa. However, community responses are not always favourable and have proven to be an additional contributing factor to violence amongst adolescents. The role of communities in the development of adolescents and the cycle of violence will be expanded on in the following section.

2.5.2 The influence of community-based violence on adolescent learners

"What transpires in the context of schools is usually a reflection of what is taking place in the broader social contexts in which schools are found" (SACE, 2011, p.7). A study carried out by Patchin and associates (2006, p.307) has shown that "youth who witnessed

more violence in their neighbourhoods were more likely to self-report assaultive behaviour and weapon carrying". These community interactions supports both Erikson's development theory, as well as Bronfenbrenner's ecological model by depicting that individual behaviour occurs in response to social stimuli. This therefore indicates that responses to social stimuli produce active manifestation of individual identity which may be carried over into various social spheres of the individual's life. In doing so, aspects of individual identities are reinforced and crystallised by the repetitive nature of their behaviour. The sections that follow provide discussions of the theoretical frameworks in which this is situated. This allows insight into the development of identity as a response to social interactions and interconnections.

Considering the multi-faceted causes as mentioned above by Paat (2010), the *immediate social environments* in which children develop does not comprise solely of their homes and schools, but the communities in which their homes and schools are situated. Research shows that "community-level factors such as disadvantage, disorder, and disorganization have been linked to a variety of antisocial and illicit activities" (Patchin *et al*., 2006, p.307). In addition, studies revealed that "youth who witnesses more violence in their neighbourhoods were more likely to self-report assaultive behaviour and weapon carrying" with the intention of defending oneself if faced by violence or maintain a social image deemed acceptable and admired within those settings (Patchin *et al*., 2006, p.307).

Thus, the *community* of the learners, their household cultures, as well as the community in which the schools are situated, play a vital role in the normalising of gendered behaviours that learners are expected to conform to within their various social environments (Roasrio *et al*., 2003). This provides evidence that children, who are exposed to violence from a young age, assimilate such behaviour under the assumption that it is acceptable to resolve social issues with violence (Patchin *et al*., 2006; Roasrio *et al*., 2003; SACE, 2011, 2012). Hence, when children are not socialised to resolve conflict and differences within their homes and communities during their early years of life, their behaviour within the school setting reflects these parental inefficiencies. The following discussion will focus on the manifestation of female-induced violence within the South African school settings.

2.6 *School*-based violence and its influence on learners

The South African Council for Educators (SACE) (2011) confirms that school violence is indeed a growing problem in South Africa and that violence among females within the school settings are on the rise. "Violence is a serious worry in both primary and

secondary schools, across age, gender, race, and school categories" (SACE, 2011, p.4). In a later report published by SACE (2012, p.4) it is reported that "in 2008, the majority of misconduct was reported as occurring in primary schools (51%) while in 2009 the largest number of cases was reported from secondary schools (46%)". This not only shows the severity of the concern of violence in South African schools, but the inclusion of gender in these statistics substantiates that female-induced violence in schools does exist at the ground level. However, literature explaining the shift of females from being the victims of school-based violence to becoming the agents thereof appears to be disproportionate to the reported statistics of female-induced violence, especially within the South African context.

Further research evidence indicates that the school setting, albeit commonly regarded as a site for productive learning and development, has globally become sites of violence as well (Burton, 2007). This is further substantiated by Henry (2000, p.19) who supports this notion that "schools are becoming more like prisons than places of learning." Historical accounts show that gender-based violence has infiltrated the school setting and has been incorporated into daily practices. The School-Based Violence Report (SBVR) released by the South African Council of Educators (SACE, 2011) show that there has been a sufficient increase of evidence within South African societies to raise red flags about the state of violence within its schools.

SACE (2011) identified that the manifestation of school-based violence is not novel and that the government is fully aware of its presence and extent. "The serious problem of ongoing violence within schools in South Africa… is of a major concern to the government, the teaching profession, as well as civil society" (SACE, 2011, p.3). Seeking to understand the prevalence of school-based violence led the researcher to studies concerning the origin of violent behaviour in terms of socialisation agencies such as the family, community and educational sites as previously discussed. This however, fails to explain why individuals choose to behave violently in light of the violence around them. However, understanding the social settings that play a role in the development of learners is essential for understanding how these learners, as individuals, negotiate their own gender roles within their social settings and adapt these gender roles accordingly. The discussion below will be based on female-induced violence as prompted by gender-based violence and gender inequality within the schooling system.

SACE (2011) states that violence in schools has become an issue of gender-based violence ever since girls were awarded equal access to education as boys. This claim reinforces the defining factors that view gender-based violence as violence against women and children. Leach & Humphreys (2007, p.51) reiterates this understanding by stating that "recent recognition that schools can be violent places has tended to ignore the fact that many such acts originate in unequal and antagonistic gender relations, which are tolerated and 'normalised' by everyday school structures and processes". This brought about awareness related to girl's safety, not only on the way to school and back home, but also within the school in terms of bullying and girls being taken advantage of by male teachers for good grades or money (SACE, 2011; SACE, 2012). Therefore, violence in schools has been embedded within political discourses since the liberation of females in public spaces.

However, despite mainstream studies being focused on the victimisation of girls in their school settings and close surroundings, recent studies in sub-Saharan Africa have shown a movement from the exclusively 'girl-as-victim' perspective and acknowledged that girls may be bullying boys and other girls as well (SACE, 2012). The following excerpt of an international news report supports the argument that being exposed to violence in one's social settings encourages internalisation and fosters violent behaviour into the person's state of being.

> "The emergence of "girl's gangs" is a disturbing new trend contributing to the rise in violence in the nation's schools. According to education and law enforcement sources, female students with links to criminal gangs are behind the recent upsurge in bullying, fights and other violent behaviour, particularly in secondary schools. National Parent/Teacher Association (NPTA) president Zena Ramatali says she is concerned about this development" (Geisha Kowlessar, June 20, 2011, *Guardian Media, Port-of-Spain*)

This encourages further inquiry into female-induced violence within the school setting. Thus this research study explores individual adaptations of socially expected female behaviours, in the form of performative gendered roles, as a response to exposure of violence within their social settings (Leach & Humphreys, 2007).

Hence, when exposure to violent behaviour is positively received by one's social affiliations, it motivates the expression of violence in other spheres of social belonging

(Haffejee *et al.*, 2005). Thus, the social interconnected contributions to individual development have a ripple effect that manifest at different degrees within various social spheres that the individual is a part of. The duo-connections or socio-ecological interactions that contribute to the development of individual identities imply that behaviours of individuals do not only express who they are as social agents, but also reflects back and impacts on the social settings in which they belong at that particular time (Watts, Cockcroft, & Duncan, 2009). This implies that adolescent females who are exposed to prolonged acts of violence, such as the participants of this research study, may tend toward violent behaviour themselves.

SACE (2011) reports that the proportion of time the children spend at school, compared to their time spent at home, deems the school setting as the second most significant agent of socialisation. As a socialising agent, it is surmised *schools* would reinforce behaviours that are acceptable, as well as promote healthy interaction among learners. It is expected, by Burton (2008), that schools should teach learners to respect each other, their learning environment, the educators, and school staff alike. Burton (2008, p.1) states that "schools, if considered holistically, are environments where children not only acquire knowledge, but also where they learn to know, to be, to do and to live together." However, for schools to be effective sources of secondary socialisation, it is firstly assumed that acceptable behaviours and healthy interactions have been taught in the earlier years of childhood. Secondly, it is assumed that the various school settings are equipped to assume this task over and above the role of dispersing knowledge to learners. Therefore, supporting evidence indicates that structural deficits in educational policies, and implementation and management of policies may influence the way in which adolescent children are being brought up and taught.

2.7 Concluding Comments

This chapter concludes by reiterating that violent behaviour in South Africa suggests a violent predisposition of South Africans due to past exposure and past experiences of violence. These experiences of violence, as seen in South African communities, are listed as crime, physical violence and sexual violence that create vulnerability toward these occurrences in the future. In agreement with Paat (2010), who states that although young children are receptively influenced by their family's ability to effectively perform the role of socialization agents, the causes of behavioural problems, such as violence, are multi-faceted.

Therefore, parents, community members, peer groups and school bodies play an integral role in creating an understanding of behaviour that is socially acceptable and desirable.

Chapter Three – Understanding the Framework of Theory



Urie Bronfenbrenner



Erik Erikson



Judith Butler

"I will love the light for it shows me the way, yet I will endure the darkness for it shows me the stars."
Og Mandino

3.1 Introduction

In order to understand the impact that the social phenomenon of violence has on the development of individuals, the process of human development must be clearly understood. Psychological theories provide many such understandings of human development that vary philosophically from individual analysis to analysis of persons within social environments. They also explore developmental aspects that vary amongst many others such as moral development, cognitive development and the development of individual personality, as well as cross-sectional analysis to lifespan approaches of developmental stages (Hook *et al.*, 2002; Lerner, 2006). This study focuses on the analysis of an integrative lifespan model of human development of identity in relation to social and ecological interactions. Hence, this socio-ecological stance explains the development of individuals within their social environments, with focus placed on the developmental aspects of self-identity that occurs during adolescence (Lerner, 2006; Lewthwaite, 2011).

This chapter sets out to provide the theoretical framework upon which this research project is based on. It will firstly discuss the work of Bronfenbrenner by expanding on the fundamental aspects of his ecological systems model of human development. For the purpose of this study, the focus will be shifted away from Bronfenbrenner's later work which evolved as the bio-ecological model and incorporates the biological component of human development. In doing so, this study will focus on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model, which emphasizes the person as a system within an interconnected network of structural external systems. This study will then expand on Bronfenbrenner's model of ecological systems by incorporating the life stage of adolescent development purported by Erikson's psychosocial theoretical explanations of how adolescents form a sense of self or self-identity in relation to their social settings. Focusing on and expanding on the social aspects of this integration, Butler's perspective of performative gender identity will serve to contribute to the understandings of identity formation amongst adolescents. This will illustrate how one's identity is a result of numerous gender roles and performances in various social settings, keeping in mind Bronfenbrenner's ideas of person-context interconnections, as seen in the following diagram:

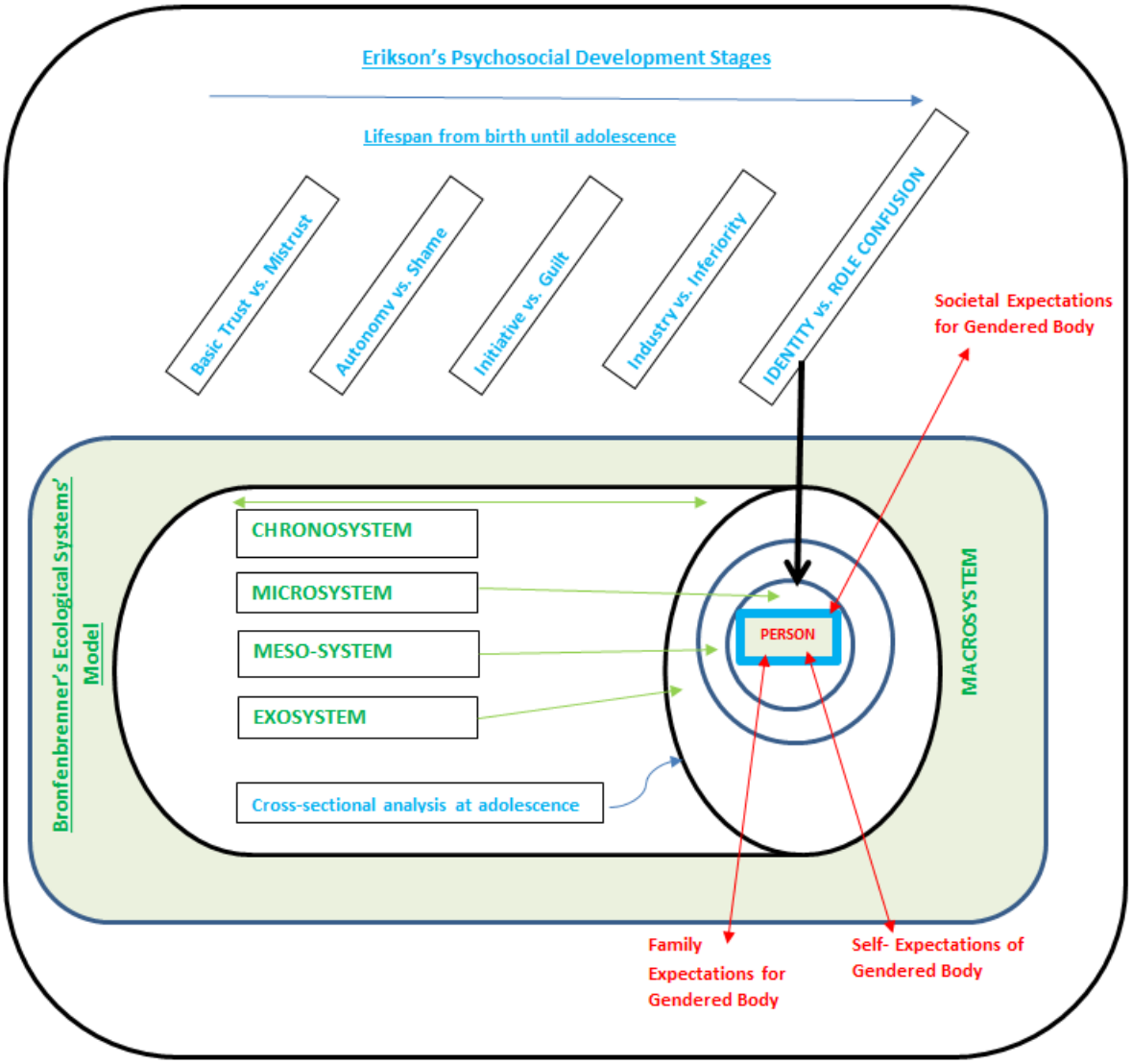


Diagram 3.1 Illustration of the Proposed Integrative Theoretical Framework

The diagram presented above depicts the integrative approach used in this research project which focuses on the development of identity in relation to interacting social environments over time. This focus will allow the researcher to gain a better understanding of the social phenomena of violence and violent cycles in South Africa, as well as allow readers to gain a better understanding of the conceptual framework utilized as the foundation of this study.

In the above diagram, the green text and arrows highlights the influences of individual human development adapted from Bronfenbrenner's model of ecological systems, whereas the blue texts and arrows delineates aspects of Erikson's psychosocial theory and the red text

and arrows shows the adapted influences of Butler's perspective of identity development in individuals.

3.2 Bronfenbrenner's Model of Ecological Systems

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917 – 2005) claimed that individual human development occurs "through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate environment" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994b, p.38). This definition was formed upon his initial ideas that human development is the continuous change in the manner that a person interacts with his or her environment; the way he or she thinks and deals with the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 2005; Lerner, 2006). As such, his ecological systems model interprets that an individual's behaviour is associated with personal characteristics and the social situations in which one interacts (Lewthwaite, 2011, p.9). This model extends this understanding by emphasizing the interconnectedness of social settings, highlighting that the social experiences that an individual experiences over his or her lifespan contributes to the way in which he or she will relate to the self (internal experiences), others (face-to-face interaction within the immediate environment) and various environments (varying in proximity) (Lewthwaite, 2011; Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009).

Bronfenbrenner (1994b) emphasized that the entire network of interconnected structures in which growth occurs must be considered in order to understand human development. Therefore, understanding the ecological processes in which Bronfenbrenner asserts that development occurs, cannot be done if the foundations of the ecological systems have not been clarified; that is, the ecological systems in which individual development occurs, must first be explained. In its essence, the systems referred to in Bronfenbrenner's model pertain to the individuals' ecological environment in which a range of structures are nested and interconnected (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Lerner, 2006; Lewthwaite, 2011).

These systems can be further defined as socially interacting environments that are interconnected and interdependent on each other to form a holistic system (Bronfenbrenner, 1994b). Bronfenbrenner's model equates the importance of both the person and the fundamental environmental influences through which the person develops in a reciprocal relationship. The underlying premise of this model assumes that identity development, in the case of this study, is the result of the interaction between the person and their immediate surroundings, as well as the external structural surroundings, through a systematic structure

of influences (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 2005). It is argued that each interconnected social environment within the system must be taken into account in order to understand how individuals' grow and exist within their own systems. This relates back to Bronfenbrenner's later works which accentuates that individuals develop not only as a result of their interactions within their systems and ecological environments, but that their interactions with their environments are in turn informed by their personal characteristics that are stimulated in various environments (Tudge *et al.*, 2009).

The ecological environments within one's system are known to be multi-faceted and allows for analyses across these environments, informing the processes of development (Paat, 2010; Tudge *et al.*, 2009). A system is therefore a composition of broader structures such as the political, economic, social, cultural, educational, and more specific, face-to-face interactions that occur within immediate environments. Some examples of immediate environments are home, school, neighbourhood, and church (Bronfenbrenner, 1994b). Accounting for individual growth that occurs across these structures, illuminates the complex nature of ecological development as it is multi-levelled and multidimensional (Bronfenbrenner, 1994a, 1994b).

At the centre of these multiple levels which comprise of various structures, lies the individual (Darling, 2007). Despite the common ideology that Bronfenbrenner's model is vested in the context, the interrelatedness of person and context - whereby the person is paramount - is the basic premise of this theory. Hence, this theory assumes that the processes of development occur, over time, via these person-context interactions (Darling, 2007; Tudge *et al.*, 2009). As such, the individuals that form a society, are salient stakeholders according to the ecological systems model, but they cannot exist in isolation or absence of environmental interactions and vice versa (Bronfenbrenner, 1994a, 1994b). As cited by Hook *et al.*, (2002, p.313), Bronfenbrenner opposed laboratory based studies of development on the mere basis that "the developing child never exists in social isolation, nor does the child exist outside of an acutely unique socio-political, historical and ideological set of circumstances." This is substantiated by Addison's (1992) claims for this model's ability to propose that an active changing or conflicting factor in any one of the active spheres of the individual's surroundings will result in a ripple effect throughout the remaining spheres. Coinciding with the complex nature of human studies and understanding the psychological functioning of human behaviour, no aspect can be fully understood in isolation or universal comparison and

must be appreciated for the unique features of behaviours within its relevant context (Addison, 1992; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

Darling (2007) notes that the first central force considered in the systems' perspective is that of the active person. The active person is said to contribute to the shaping of environments, evoking responses from them, and in return, reacting to them (Darling, 2007). This places emphasis on the role of the individual or the active person in creating change within their context and exerting their personal characterises when actively interacting (Tudge *et al*., 2009). Tudge and associates (2009) explain that individuals possess three categories of personal characteristics; namely, demand, resource and force characteristics. Demand characteristics refer to personal stimuli such as the demographic characteristics of age, gender, race, ability, and so on. Additionally, resource characteristics refer to immediate mental and emotional factors such as past memories and intelligence. Force characteristics refer to varying temperament and other internal forces such as motivation, persistence and determination (Tudge *et al.*, 2009). It is from these assumed categories that the individual interacts with their environments.

In addition to these interactions, Bronfenbrenner emphasized that a balance between the person-context dynamic must be maintained, leading this discussion back to the contexts in which growth occurs through these complex interrelated processes (Bronfenbrenner, 1994a, 1994b). When examining the impact that the environment has on the individual, Darling (2007) highlights that the foundation of this interaction is subjective, as well as reciprocal in that actions exerted in the environment creates consequential responses from the environment and actions exerted toward a particular individual, warrants individualistic reactions. The latter emphasizes that "different environments will have different affordances and will be responded to in different ways by different individuals" (Darling, 2007, p.204).

The frequent interactions with significant social structures within immediate environments, also known as the proximal processes, determine the values and beliefs that the individual assimilates (Tudge *et al.*, 2009). It is through these interactions, which stem from socialisation, that Bronfenbrenner theorizes growth of self is achieved (Bronfenbrenner, 1994b, 2005). Therefore, socialisation refers to Bronfenbrenner's claims that the aim of human development is to mature into members of society that can co-exist within social situations, environmental settings and political institutes, amongst others (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Saarinen, Ruoppila, & Korkiakangas, 1994). This indicates that the individual cannot be analysed in isolation from his or her environments and is dependent on these

environments for basic survival such as: food, water, shelter, safety, security, and knowledge. In addition to basic resources needed for survival, social interactions derived from these interactions suggest that individual development occurs alongside and is interdependent on social development and human development as a whole (Bronfenbrenner, 1994b). This highlights that as a society develops and evolves over time, so do individuals, emphasizing the importance of this lifespan approach to understanding human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994a, 1994b; Tudge *et al*., 2009). The following discussion will unpack the various environmental levels proposed by Bronfenbrenner and the structures and processes that may be found at each level.

Bronfenbrenner (1977) notes that ecological human development comprises of progressive accommodation throughout one's lifespan, with focus on the interrelations between the growing individual and their changing environments. However, Bronfenbrenner's model of ecological systems devotes equal focus on "not only the immediate settings containing the developing person, but also the larger social context" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p.513). Hence, the ecological frameworks for human development concerns various levels of ecological and social environments that directly and indirectly influence the development of individuals (Bronfenbrenner, 1994a, 1994b, 1977; Lerner, 2006). This reiterates that the ecological systems model considers an individual's development within the various contexts that form their systems and the relationships that in turn, form his or her environment.

The ecological levels that Bronfenbrenner identified within his model are that of the centre sphere (the developing individual); the microsystem (face-to-face interactions in immediate social environments), mesosystem (the interactions between various active microsystems); exosystem (major institutions of the society such as labour world, neighbourhood, media, government, etc.); macrosystem (cultures and subcultures from which social norms and values are derived); and chronosystem (human development through experiences over time) (Bronfenbrenner, 1994a, 1994b, 1977, 2005; Tudge *et al*., 2009).

The following illustration depicts the interconnected levels in which human development occurs. The discussion that follows will elaborate on the illustrated model, explaining how a person is thought to develop, as purported by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Model.

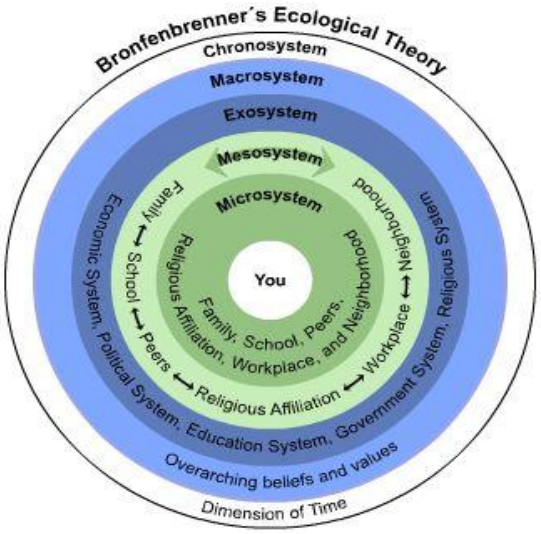


Diagram 3.2 Illustration of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Model
(Retrieved from http://faculty.weber.edu/tlday/human.development/ecological.htm)

Bronfenbrenner defines each environmental setting as "a place with particular physical features in which the participants engage in particular activities in particular roles… for particular periods of time" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p.514). These roles may be that of a daughter, parent, teacher, employee, amongst others. Based on this quote and the illustration above, the following section of this chapter will speak about each of the four inter-related ecological levels, namely: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and the macrosystem. Furthermore the researcher will describe the 'interactional proximal processes' and briefly discuss the social environments and structures found at each level. It will then continue to discuss the person in the centre of these levels, as well as discuss the chronosystem through which these processes occur.

3.2.1 The Microsystem

The microsystem is defined as "any environment such as home, school, or peer group, in which the developing person spends a good deal of time engaging in activities and interactions" (Tudge *et al.*, 2009, p.201). Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1994b) refers to these engaging activities (behaviours) as the interconnected network of relations between the individual and their immediate surroundings. In his later work, Bronfenbrenner adds that:

> *A microsystem is a pattern of activities, social roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social and*

> *symbolic features that invite, permit or inhibit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment. Bronfenbrenner* (1994b, p.39)

Bronfenbrenner provides examples of micro-systemic structures such as family, school, peer group, workplace, neighbourhood, church group, sport group, etc. (Bronfenbrenner, 1998, 1994a, 1994b, 1977; Darling, 2007; Tudge *et al*., 2009) and notes that the significance of the environment as perceived by the developing individual is the underlying premise for individual development and behaviour (Darling, 2007). Bronfenbrenner (1994b, p.39) adds that "it is within the immediate environment of the microsystem that proximal processes operate to produce and sustain development… [But] their power to do so depends on the content and structure of the microsystem". This implies that different individuals will experience different social environments in different ways. For example, not all children will be brought up in a structured home with parental figures and care-givers as discussed in the previous chapter.

The subjective experiences of the various microsystemic structures are focused on the reciprocal dyad of influences that the environment has on the developing individual, as well as the impact that the individual has on the changing environment (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Darling, 2007). This however, does not limit the influential impact that the outer layers of the ecological system has on human development, but warrants that each level be respectively valued, as the parts of each add together to inform the way individuals perceive the world (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Tudge *et al*., 2009).

3.2.2 The Mesosystem

The following ecological level identified in this model is the mesosystem. When individuals interact frequently in more than one microsystem, such as when a developing child begins school and shares time between home and school, or an adolescent frequently interacts with his or her peer group, school setting and home, then Bronfenbrenner's theoretical framework places interest on the interactions among them (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Tudge *et al*., 2009). These interactions are referred to as a system called the microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The microsystem simply translates to the connections and relationships between existing microsystems such as the individual's experiences at school and experiences at home, or home and peer

groups. It is through these connections and relationships that values and norms are developed and assimilated into individual behaviour (Tudge *et al.*, 2009).

Bronfenbrenner (1994b) emphasises that even though all individuals exist within these ecological levels, the interplay and the influence thereof would be of an individualistic nature, constructing the way each individual perceives their world in relationship to their experiences with the world. In addition, learning processes such as reading are known to be enhanced when microsystems such as the home and school are synchronised. The quality of the relationship between the two microsystems (home and school) is hypothesized to strengthen the experiences within each (Darling, 2007; Tudge *et al.*, 2009). The individualistic nature of these experiences validates the effectiveness of applying this theoretical framework to this study that is based on the school experiences of a South African sample of adolescent females. South African research substantiates this process of interconnected activities (Burton, 2008; Burton and Leoschut, 2012; SACE, 2012). Such research states that schools are meant to serve as a secondary socialization agent, reinforcing the values taught within the home, as well as striving for the common goal of aiding the development of socially adapted individuals (South African Council of Educators, 2011; Burton, 2008).

3.2.3 The Exosystem

The exosystem is defined as the "extension of the mesosystem embracing other specific social structures, both formal and informal" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p.515). Therefore, this ecological level analyses the environments and structures that the developing individual does not directly engage in, but is influenced by and in some ways impinged upon by these major institutions of society. Examples of the structures and environments encapsulated within the exosystem are: the government, world of work, the media, neighbourhood and school governance boards and committees, resource distribution and transportation. (Bronfenbrenner, 1994a, 1994b, 1977; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Darling, 2007; Lerner, 2006).

The exosystem operates as a concrete expression of macro-systemic functions. As such it influences ecological factors such as socioeconomic scales and policy dissemination at the local level (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). These influences manifest on a bi-polar scale of negative and positive impacts (Tudge *et al.*, 2009). For example, violence in South Africa's broader society would manifests negatively on the local level should one become a victim of

crime and violence. However, not directly engaging with violence does not negate that impact that living in a violent and crime-infested society has on the perception that individuals' have about their internal and external worlds. Additionally, exosystems can act as a structure of empowerment. For example, one's socioeconomic status, access to quality education and health services may positively influence the way in which one would perceive one's internal and external world.

3.2.4 The Macrosystem

> "*A macrosystem refers to the overarching institutional patterns of the culture or subculture, such as the economic, social, educational, legal, and political systems, of which micro- meso- and exo- systems are the concrete manifestations*" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p.515).

Bronfenbrenner defines the macrosystem as the general prototypes that exist across various cultures and subcultures, that inform the patterns for structures and activities that take place at a concrete level (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1994b). As such, the macrosystem is thought to envelop the inner ecological levels, impacting on as well as being impacted on by the constant interconnectedness of the individual and these direct and indirect social environments (Tudge *et al*., 2009). The functions of the macrosystem are known as the socially constructed blueprints that implicitly, or in some cases explicitly, may direct or restrict human activities or behaviour (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Lerner, 2006). Implicit influences are that of cultural values and customs, social norms and other social philosophies and ideologies that inform the patterns of engagement and activity within the person-context interrelations (Bronfenbrenner, 1994a, 1994b, 1977).

3.2.5 The Chronosystem

The chronosystem refers to both the developing individual's lifespan and their socio-historical context (Bronfenbrenner, 1994a, 1994b; Lerner, 2006). This dimension of time relates to the individual's subjective experiences of their environments. "A chronosystem encompasses change or consistency over time, not only in the characteristics of the person, but also of the environment in which that person lives" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994b, p.40). Examples of the influence that time has on the development of an individual are family life stages, socioeconomic status, residence, employment, stressful events, trauma, births and deaths and chronological age (Bronfenbrenner, 1994b; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Tudge *et al.*, 2009).

The family life stages, as well as the familial, political and social historical contexts all combine to complete the chronosystem of an individual. Consequently, the personal and environmental changes or consistencies occur across the ecological levels (Darling, 2007; Bronfenbrenner, 1994b). The impact that present time constructs, as well as that of the past can be better understood within the South African context, by using the case of apartheid. This political regime had impacted on each of the ecological levels by influencing governmental policies of the past and present and impacted on social, educational and cultural interactions that occurred during apartheid and consequentially, still occurs post-apartheid. Hence, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) differentiated between constructs of micro-time (occurring during an activity or interaction), meso-time (frequency and consistency or activities and interactions in the developing individual's environment, and macro-time (the overarching construct of time known as the chronosystem). Therefore, Bronfenbrenner's approach suggests that in order to gain an understanding of how individuals develop and assimilate various behaviours, their development in terms of reciprocal environmental interactions must be considered in their present, past and inherited historical contexts.

3.2.6 The Person in the Centre of the Circles

The previous discussions addressed the development of an individual's personal characteristics as it occurs across various ecological levels (Lerner, 2006). As such, the illustration of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model points out that the individual comprises of various demographical aspects such as age, gender, and health (Bronfenbrenner, 1994b). However, individuals interact with their environments from their situated position; the centre of the model. This emphasises the reciprocal nature of human development. Henceforth, as the individual changes and grows, the environment experiences change. In his later work, Bronfenbrenner refers to the process-person-context-time (PPCT), stressing that the ecological systems theory does not completely negate the analysis of the developing individual, rather it remains focused on the person-context interrelatedness (Bronfenbrenner, 1994b, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Darling, 2007; Tudge *et al.*, 2009). This approach is appropriate for gaining an understanding of how social environmental factors influence the development of 'the person in the centre of the circles', especially in terms of socially constructed thoughts and behaviours such as gender ideologies and violent acts (Darling, 2007). This was stressed by Bronfenbrenner as he expressed concerns that

researchers had begun to negate the role of the developing person (Darling, 2007; Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

3.2.7 Critique related to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System's Model

Considering Bronfenbrenner's later concerns regarding the negation of the salient 'person in the centre' and despite the efficacy of this model in enhancing understandings of social phenomena such as gender ideologies and violence, Bronfenbrenner's theory is criticised for not being able to empirically validate the model due to its extensive scope and complexity. As such, his model has been frowned upon for being vague and difficult to apply to the development of social intervention (Lerner, 2006; Tudge *et al.*, 2009). As such, the extensive nature of the theory, although inclusive, is criticised for shifting the focus of intervention at any particular ecological level, requiring that many levels be addressed at once. His theory was criticised for not being able to outline how individual development occurs as a result of the interconnected ecological levels, whereas Erikson's theory provided an understanding of how crises may be resolved or fixated (Darling, 2007; Hook *et al.*, 2002; Lewthwaite, 2011).

These criticisms highlight the need for an integrative approach which would allow for simultaneous multi-activation of intervention strategies at the various ecological levels. The main purpose of such integration would be to illuminate the essence of individual development within non-segregated and inseparable environmental influences, such as those of the social setting. As seen in the psychosocial approach to human development discussed below, individuals learn and grow from the experiences and encounters with other social members who they reciprocally impact on as well (Lerner, 2006). The following discussion will elaborate on the proposed integrated socio-ecological approach.

3.3 Integrated Socio-ecological Approach to Understanding Human Development

Due to the common assumptions of the ecological systems model and psychosocial perspectives, integration is conceivable. Lerner (2006), shows two salient points of commonality between the ecological systems model as proposed by Bronfenbrenner and a psychosocial perspective of human development set out by Erikson. These commonalities are viewed as the lifespan approach, as well as the interconnected, reciprocal nature of interactions between the developing individual and their developing relationships, as well as their developing environments (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Hook *et al.*, 2002; Lerner, 2006; Lewthwaite, 2011).

As a result, the proposed shift toward an integrated theoretical framework serves to account for the criticisms of the pure ecological systems approach. Integrating Bronfenbrenner's model with Erikson's psychosocial stage of 'identity versus role confusion' during adolescence creates a platform upon which both the core individual and social interactions are key factors in a social interactional model. Such a model would equate the individual and his or her social settings, requiring that the reciprocal impact on and from the various interconnected social spheres are emphasised as much as the relationship between individual agencies and social agencies.

3.3.1 Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Human Development

Erikson revised Freud's psychosexual approach to personality development and provided a psychosocial theory that is concerned with development from birth to death (Lerner, 2006). He identified eight sequential stages of development in which an individual must resolve a set of crises in order to attain the associated life skills or virtues (Erikson, 1968, 1980). The first five stages are applicable to childhood with the fifth being concerned with identity formation during adolescence (Erikson, 1980). Thus, Erikson's theory creates an imperative foundation for understanding the flexible and performative nature of gender identity, as intended in this study.

Erikson's theory of psychosocial development is also known as a lifespan approach to understanding individual human behaviour in response to social interactions, much like the ecological systems approach developed by Bronfenbrenner (Bronfenbrenner, 1994a, 1994b; Erikson, 1980). However, unlike Bronfenbrenner's model, the psychosocial theory comprises of eight stages of development that accounts for life experiences from infancy to death that have been empirically proven (Erikson, 1980; Hamman & Hendricks, 2005; Taubenheim, 1979).

Each stage represents an area of life in which individuals must achieve a degree of competency in order to gain ego strength or ego quality, also known as internal sense of mastery (Erikson, 1980). Thom and Coetzee (2004) recall that toward the end of each developmental stage, an individual reaches a turning point which Erikson (1968, 1977, 1980) refers to as a 'crisis'. Thom and Coetzee (2004, p.183) indicates that these crises are "brought about by conflict between maturational changes in the individual and new demands that society makes because of these changes". The effective resolution of these crises would therefore result in what Erikson referred to as, 'mutuality' (Erikson, 1968; Thom & Coetzee,

2004). However, the degree of mutuality between an individual and society at each critical life-stage is dependent on the recognition of the individuals' needs by others, as well as his or her reliance on social acceptability (Thom & Coetzee, 2004).

On the other hand, however, poorly managed stages result in a sense of inadequacy of the respective stages' expected outcomes (Lerner, 2006). Nevertheless, adjustments can be made to unresolved emotional conflict of a particular stage at any other time of the maturity timetable that is biologically guided and otherwise known as the chronological age (Hamman & Hendricks, 2005). It is important to note that although adjustments can be made at other stages, they do not replace the cardinal nature of the prescribed stage at that time (Hook *et al.*, 2002; Lerner, 2006; Thom & Coetzee, 2004). Since this study is focused on the identity formation stage, which Erikson (1980) purported to occur during adolescence, the crises experienced at this stage surrounds the development of a self-identity or sense of self in relation to other social beings (Thom & Coetzee, 2004).

If one fails to resolve the crises of identity formation and role confusion within the prescribed adolescent period, they would experience unstable and insecure identity roles, and personality difficulties, in which they will question their own sense of self (Hamman & Hendricks, 2005; Taubenheim, 1979). For example, upon entering an intimate relationship with a significant other, aspects of their identity such their sexuality and gender roles will be questioned (Hamman & Hendricks, 2005). The following section expands on the developmental stage in which identity formation is at its optimal state in terms of self-identity.

The stage in which ego identity is expected to be consolidated is known as '*Identity versus Role Confusion'* and is focused on adolescents' interaction which falls between the ages of 12 to 18 years. Thus, this stage involves the development of a personal sense of identity within teenagers. Success in this stage leads to a strong sense of self and "is experienced pre-consciously as a sense of psychosocial wellbeing" (Erikson, 1980, p.127). Failure in this stage results in a weaker sense of self coupled with role confusion[3] and ego diffusion[4] that manifests as behavioural problems in adolescents (Klopper, 2003; Erikson,

[3] According to Watts *et al.*, (2009, p.298), role confusion is the "inability to settle on an occupational career, a sexual object-choice or a fundamental social role, leading to the inability for form a secure identity"

[4] Ego diffusion, however, is a broader issue concerned with the "inability to settle on a stable and well-founded sense of self which stems from failure to integrate a central identity, to bring one's moratorium to a

1980). A concerning behavioural problem experienced amongst South African youth is that of violence. This study narrows its focus to the problematically increasing act of violence amongst female learners in South Africa. As a result, one of the settings of interest in this study is that of schools that frequently experience acts of violence. Hence, this study focuses on this stage of development, as it aims to better understand the nature of this social phenomenon of female violence. In doing so, it also aims to gain a better understanding of how these female adolescents are able to negotiate aspects of their identity through social roles in various social settings. The aspect of role performance will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The development of Ego Identity[5] is one of the main elements of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development of personality. Ego identity is known as the conscious sense of self, also referred to as self-identity that individuals develop through social interaction and biological maturity (Erikson, 1968, 1980; Taubenheim, 1979). At this stage of development, "growing and developing young people … are now primarily concerned with attempts at consolidating their social roles" (Erikson, 1980, p.94). Thus, ego identity is concerned with social roles that have the potential to change and adapt according to relevant social interactions with others. This is similar to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model which indicates that the development of the 'person in the centre' is concerned with the interconnected interactions that reciprocally prompt change in individuals (Lerner, 2006; Tudge *et al*, 2009).

Erikson (1980), similarly, believes that this process is motivated by the negotiation of internal and external (socio-political and cultural) factors; the latter referred to as macrosystem structures and institutions in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model (Bronfenbrenner, 1994a, 1994b, 1977; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). This confirms the criticisms of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model mention previously. It does so by highlighting the need for inner concentric levels within the 'person in the centre' of the model. Therefore, integrating Erikson's' psychosocial stage of adolescent development assists in achieving Bronfenbrenner's goal of equal focus on the role of the developing person (Darling, 2007; Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

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productive close, or to resolve major conflicts between roles or with opposing value systems" (Watts *et al.,* 2009, p.300).

[5] 'Ego Identity' is the term used "to denote certain comprehensive gains which the individual, at the end of adolescence, must have derived from all his preadult experiences in order to be ready for the tasks of adulthood" (Erikson, 1980, p.108).

Erikson's theory however, does not account for interactional issues across the various external and interconnected social spheres; accounted for in Bronfenbrenner's model. The importance of accounting for how the various interactional dyads co-exist and possibly collide, at times, is paramount as it might contribute to internal conflict such as gender identities and gender roles in relation to different social settings (Darling, 2007). For instance, an adolescent female who is in the exploration stages of developing her sexual identity, might be faced with the internal conflict pertaining to the degree of provocativeness that she is comfortable with as a developing woman (Taubenheim, 1979).

The aforementioned internal conflict, albeit based on previously developed ideologies influenced by society's expectations, may contribute to females' internalised sense of gender roles and responsibilities as a female (Hamman & Hendricks, 2005; Taubenheim, 1979). It will also urge her to engage with her perceived social expectations, such as the expected level of provocativeness that is accepted by her social peer group, her family, and her community; all of which may differ from her own level of comfort, but will reflect back onto her social backgrounds. Correspondingly, the internal personal negotiation that results in violent behaviour amongst adolescent females may be influenced by the social expectations of their various social groups of belonging, as well as by the broader external structures in which they exist (Haffejee *et al*., 2005; Roasrio *et al*., 2003).

These practical examples each depict the use of performative gender identities as defined previously by Butler (1988). Thus, by applying Butler's (1988) perspective of gender identity (performative acts according to social relations) to aspects of Erikson's theory, the researcher is allowed to fill the gap presented by the integration of Erikson's and Bronfenbrenner's understandings of human development. This tri-merger of perspectives allows for one to gain a deeper understanding of both the internal and external structures that contribute to adolescent identity formation within the chosen sample of South African adolescent females from adverse backgrounds. The following section will, therefore, unpack Butler's perspective of the performativity of gender identity.

3.3.2 Judith Butler's Perspective of Performative Gender Identities

"...for the young individual must learn to be most himself where he means most to others – those others, to be sure, who have come to mean most to him"(Erikson, 1980, p.109).

The quote provided above speaks to the social nature that directs the way in which individuals create themselves in relation to those around them. It assumes that individuals are conscious and active agents in their own development and that their development is reliant on cues from their various environments such as social interactions and responses to their behaviours, available resources and opportunities. According to Zigler, Lamb, and Child (1982, p.50), the development of a social individual can be simplified into two super-ordinate themes "the development of a multifaceted concept of self, and the development of social concepts and relationships with others". These two themes combine to form a process that is formally known as socialisation[6]. Developmental understandings, such as Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, that acknowledges that personal development occurs throughout the lifespan, concur that all events and relationships experienced by individuals (especially throughout their childhood) influences their personality development (and identity) and continue to do so throughout their lifespan (Darling, 2007; Erikson, 1977; Zigler *et al*., 1982).

The concept of identity in childhood development is initiated through the illumination of gender differences (Butler, 1988; Butler, 1999). This process is the initial stage of socialisation and is evident as early as during pregnancy and infancy. Once a baby is born, entering the first stage of psychosocial development, it is either registered as a male or female for the usage of population census. The child is then primed by its' first social institution, the family, who often enforce that baby boys wear boys clothing and reserve dresses for baby girls. Zigler and colleagues (1982, p.56) agree that parents play an important role in setting down the foundation for gender identity by "repeatedly noting the child's sex by buying toys and clothes selectively". It is such acts of repetition throughout time that comes to socially define and enforce the concept of gender identity (Butler, 1988). This coincides with Butler's (1988, p.520) definition of gender identity as "a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo".

Butler's perspective on the performativity of gender identity is that the manner in which one expresses their gender is dependent on their historical and current social teachings. As such one's historical situations are inherited as cultural and one's social traditions of behaviour stem from one generation to another (Butler, 1988). The creation of one's gender identity therefore occurs through the different ways in which gendered bodies are acted out as a response to society's expectations of gender (Butler, 1988; Butler, 1999). This implies that

[6] Socialisation is "concerned with analyzing the way people come to behave in a manner that permits them to get along successfully in the culture in which they live" (Zigler *et al.*, 1982, p.4).

the body or individual, as a social agent, is actively involved in embodying cultural and historical meaning through means of gendered behaviour. Extending on the concept of gender and gender identity, Butler (1988, p.520) expressed that "if gender is instituted through acts which are internally discontinuous, then the appearance of substance is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief".

Thus, it is inferring that performativity of gender identity, as a somewhat stable aspect of personality, allows individuals the ability to adjust to their social setting without dramatically altering the individuals' behavioural patterns or overall personality. This brings about the assumption that an individual may alter their behaviour from one social setting to another without changing their identity or personality, but rather expressing different aspects of their identity to suit the required social demands of a specific setting (Butler, 1988). For example, an adolescent female may be more comfortable wearing certain clothing such as short skirts whilst in the company of her peers, whereas she may not feel as comfortable in a short skirt when engaging in religious or familial events.

The formation of performative gender identity and expression thereof can be explained solely by Erikson's theory if a linear model is being applied. However, the researcher proposes an interactional model that places emphasis on both the role of society in individual development, as well as the role of individuals in the different interactional social spheres. This requires the integration of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development and a more interconnected ecological model such as Bronfenbrenner's ecological model in order to capture the essence of the contributions that social interactions have on identity formation. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model will be further discussed in the section that follows.

3.4 Concluding Comments

The integration of Erikson's psychosocial stage of identity development to that of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory provides a socio-ecological framework from which identity development in adolescence can be understood. As proposed in this study, this integration appears effective because each theory complements the other in terms of the criticisms, such as empirical validity and challenges regarding units of analyses. For example, Erikson allows for the cumulative development of individuals through social relationships up until the age of interest which is adolescence whilst Bronfenbrenner expands on these phenomena on the various interconnected social spheres, reflecting the reciprocal impact on

the individual and environment, and therefore contributing to the individual's holistic development. Placing the focus on how the relationships are maintained, as well as how they contribute to individual development rather than why, allows the researcher to explore how acts of gender roles and performative gender identity in violent communities can be a reflection of the exposure to violence within the various social spheres interacting with that community and its members. The aforementioned allows for a deeper understanding of the current state of gender identities that manifest as violent attitudes and behaviour among adolescent females within their school environments. To achieve this in-depth understanding, the answers to the research questions presented in this study will be discussed in chapters four and five.

Chapter Four – Research Inquiry



"As it is, the lover of inquiry must follow his beloved wherever it may lead him."
Plato, Euthyphro

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will describe the process of the research inquiry undertaken in this research project. Based on the qualitative nature of the research inquiry[7], it will explain the methodological decisions that were made in order to achieve the aims of this research project. Expanding on the use of qualitative techniques, it will then document the methodological processes utilized to obtain a research sample and collect qualitative data. It will also describe the process of data analysis that was employed to make meaning of the collected data. This chapter will then discuss the measures used by the researcher to ensure that ethical procedures were maintained throughout the lifespan of this research project and conclude by reflecting on the research process undertaken.

4.2 The Nature of this Research Design

4.2.1 Qualitative research

This research project is aimed at uncovering experiences and performances of gender identity as perceived by adolescent[8] females in Gauteng, who have been exposed to violence within their school setting. Considering the aims to explore the perceptive experiences and theoretical framework based on the variation of individualised experiences, this study is qualitative in nature (Gravetter, & Forzano, 2009). Joubish, Khurram, Ahmed, Fatima, and Haider (2011) purports that qualitative research is suitable when the constructs being studied, such as experiences of violence, cannot be easily measured and quantified. Hence, the explorative design of this study was deemed appropriate.

The qualitative nature of this research study encouraged the use of a semi-structured interview approach for data collection and the use of qualitative techniques for data analysis. This qualitative approach established the view that reality is a construction of the individual mind and is interpreted from the foundations of one's own emic[9], intrapersonal knowledge and perceptions of the world (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). This approach is also denoted as idiographic which refers to the individual characteristics and perceptions of the world and self that one may have. Therefore, this research inquiry accommodates the research aims and

[7] "Qualitative research methods involve the systematic collection, organisation, interpretation of textual material derived from talk or observation" (Malterud, 2001, p.483).

[8] Erikson locates the adolescent stage of development between the ages of twelve to eighteen years (Hook *et al.*, 2002). However, for the ethical purposes of this proposed study, adolescent females between the ages of eighteen and twenty only will be included as participants.

[9] An emic viewpoint is based on studying social behaviour and experiences from within the system or unit of analysis (Olive, 2014).

research questions which seek to explore and better understand the perceptual experiences of adolescent females who have been exposed to violence within their social settings.

This approach, as discussed above, moves away from the deterministic view that reality is a universal entity that can be applied across various populations, as well as within specific communities. Instead, this approach notes that people from disadvantaged communities, such as the one studied in this research project experience realities different from those of privileged backgrounds (Terre Blanche *et al.,* 2006). This research study was influenced largely by contemporary perspectives of performative gender identity such as Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity. This perspective was adopted by this study to aid as a complementary tool of understanding the development of gendered identities. Thus, the nature of this study led to the exploration of subjective realities of gendered identity development when exposure to violent systems is present. Henceforward, this study is explorative in that it explored the emerging experiences with the secondary aim of validating the theoretical framework (integration of an ecological systems model and psychosocial theories) in order to achieve an in-depth understanding of the shift of gendered behaviour that result in female-induced violence (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

4.2.2 Employing qualitative methods of research

The results were based on field research within naturalistic settings, supporting the theoretical approaches and framework employed in this research study (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Data was collected at one point in time; therefore, this study was of a cross-sectional, snapshot nature. The qualitative method of inquiry employed a social constructivist approach to improve understandings of social phenomena. Malterud (2001, p.483) supports the adequacy of this nature of research for this specific study because this approach is effective in the "exploration of meanings of social phenomena as experienced by individuals themselves, in their natural context". As such, the constructivist approach allowed the researcher to engage with the subjective experiences of the participants, listen attentively, and interact with the participants in an attempt to be guided through their perceptions of their experiences (Terre Blanche *et al.,* 2006).

4.3 Sampling Techniques and Research Sample

4.3.1 Sampling technique and sampling process

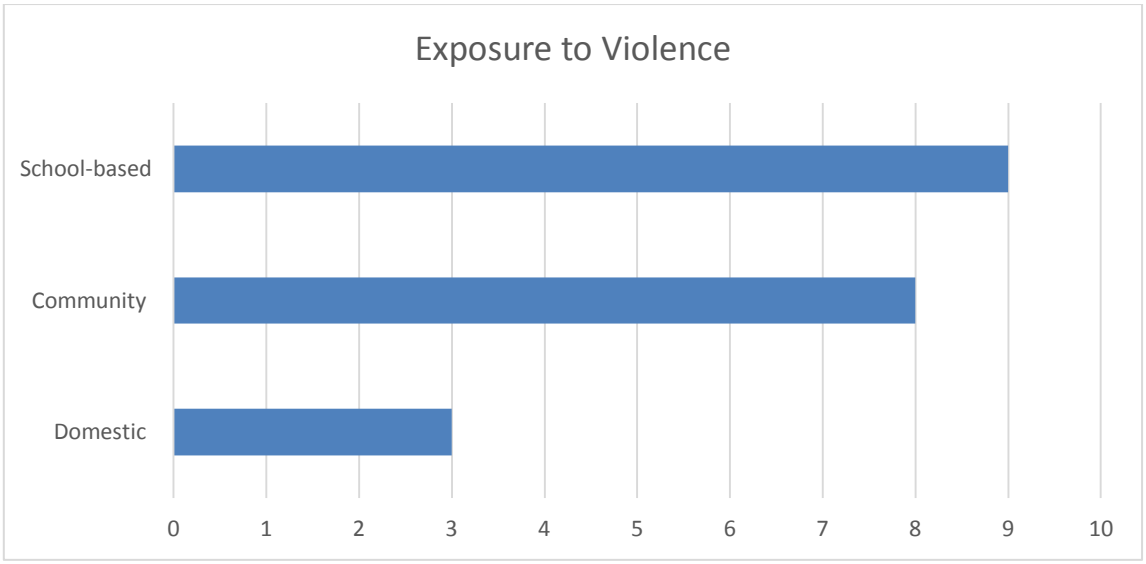
This study proposed that a purposeful sampling technique be administered in order to obtain a multiracial sample of adolescent girls from Benoni, Gauteng. "The logic and power

of purposeful sampling derive from the emphasis on in-depth understanding. This leads to selecting *information-rich cases*" which will deeply explain how violence was experienced during the participants' schooling lives (Patton, 2002, 46). The snowballing technique was used to hand-pick interested and available participants. This process required an entry point to the population through a community tuition program that the researcher was and remains involved in. Thus, the learners in this program were asked to encourage ex-learners who have schooled in the required schools of this area to volunteer in this study. Ex-learners who met the criteria of being between the ages of eighteen and twenty, having attended a co-educational government school within the Benoni area, and showed interested and availability to part-take were interviewed for the study. These ex-learners also confirmed that they had experiences and/or observed violence at the secondary schools.

4.3.2 Research sample

Before the research study commenced, a pilot study was administered. The research sample used in the pilot study consisted of two female adolescents who met the criteria for participation in the actual research study. The actual research sample comprised of a total of nine adolescent females aged between eighteen to twenty years, as delineated by the theories of adolescent development in chapter three. The participant criteria restricted participation to ex-learners who had attended one of the government funded co-educational schools in the Benoni area, in Gauteng. These schools were demographically diverse in terms of race and presented an opportunity for the researcher to demonstrate different experiences from different racial groups. However, the results emerging from this study are reported according to the volunteering sample at hand, as depicted in Table 5.1.

The following graph depicts the participants' exposure to violence which deemed each of the participants suitable for participation in this study. An explanation of the graph will follow thereafter.



Graph 4.1 Graph of the types of violence that the participants were exposed to

Of the nine participants, all confirmed that they were exposed to school-based violence during their schooling experiences. Three of the participants reported experiencing domestic violence within their families or child abuse at home. Additionally, eight of the nine participants reported being exposed to community-based violence as shown in Graph 4.1 above.

4.4 Overview of the Research Process

4.4.1 Research procedure

Once ethical approval[10] was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee (School of Human and Community Development) at the University of Witwatersrand-submitted in March 2013), a pilot study was conducted. This preliminary study was conducted to validate that the main research instrument (semi-structured interview schedule) was adequate in yielding information that speaks to the aims of this study. Therefore, the pilot study was used as a precautionary measure to ensure that the research questions of this proposed study would be adequately addressed and answered.

The pilot study was conducted with two previous members of a community tuition program who met the inclusion requirements of this study. The pilot study participants were given the participation letter, an explanation of the study and study process, as well as a thorough explanation regarding consensual participation and audio-recording. One-on-one

[10] See Appendix A for Ethical Clearance Certificate.

interviews were held with the two adolescent females using the proposed interview schedule. The interviews were recorded and data collected was analysed using content analysis, as proposed for the actual study itself (see Pilot Study Findings in Section 4.5 below).

Following the analysis of data collected from the pilot study, adjustments were made to the semi-structured interview schedule. Thereafter, the researcher approached the members in the community tuition program, as well as the ex-members who have participated in the pilot study, asking them to suggest participants. The researcher also approached young ladies from the communities who would meet the criteria; referring them to contact the researcher or collecting their contact details allowing the researcher to initiate contact. The researcher then contacted interested potential participants. The potential participants were given the information letter and provided with a clear explanation of what the study aimed to accomplish. They were also informed about what participation entailed, as mentioned above during the pilot study. Consequently, interview dates and places were scheduled and the interview process commenced. Participants that provided written consent to part-take, as well as consent to the audio-recording of the interview, were interviewed individually by the researcher.

The duration of the interviews that were conducted varied between twenty and forty minutes. These interviews followed the semi-structured interview schedule and were recorded on a mobile audio device. The recordings were stored on the researcher's password protected private computer. "Computer programs are useful for storing, ordering, and retrieving information, but they cannot do the analysis itself" (Malterud, 2001, p.486). Thus, upon completion of the interview processes, the recordings were transcribed into Microsoft Word format and were again electronically stored according to safety measures mentioned earlier. The data was analysed using thematic content analysis. The themes that emerged from the content analysis for all the participants were then captured. From this, further analysis and comparisons of themes allowed for the themes to be distilled and sorted into main overarching themes, as well as subthemes. The raw data and preliminary analysis of data was submitted for supervision. This ensured that the analysis was carried out in a professional manner, reducing the influence of researcher subjectivity.

4.4.2 Data collection

4.4.2.1 Data collection techniques

Being a qualitative study, the semi-structured interview schedule referred to in Appendix B, served as the main tools of data collection. Semi-structured individual interviews conducted with the participants were conducted and analysed using the technique of thematic content analysis. This was done in order to "make sense of feelings, experiences, social situations, or phenomena as they occur in the real world" (Terre Blanche *et al.,* 2006, p.287). Using this instrument as a means of extracting accounts of human behaviour, the researcher facilitated individual semi-structured interviews and ensured that a standard process was maintained (Terre Blanche *et al.,* 2006; Gillham, 2005). This implied that each of the participants was asked the same questions that related to broader themes. The responses to these questions were completed in approximately the same time allocation across the sample, varying according to speed of speech (Terre Blanche *et al.,* 2006). The participants were asked a broad question under a theme and allowed to develop the topic as it related to them, as shown in Appendix B. Failure to attain seemingly fruitful data from just the main question resulted in subtle probing questions (Gillham, 2005).

The semi-structured approach to interviewing was chosen because it allowed for flexibility within structured and standardised processes (Gillham, 2005). The semi-structured interviews also provided a space for intrapersonal, as well as interpersonal, experiences to emerge through the discourses. Different participants would elaborate on different aspects of their experiences as perceived as relevant to them. Therefore, this approach allowed the researcher to gain insight to the unique experiences of each participant whilst drawing out commonalities across the nine interviews (Terre Blanche *et al.,* 2006; Gillham, 2005).

4.4.2.2 Data collection process

Audio-recordings of the interviews were be made for the purpose of transcription whilst the researcher observed physical interactions of the participant to both the researcher's presence, as well as the non-verbal communication of experiences within violent contexts. Interviews were conducted at a neutral venue, as preferred by the respective participants. Once a quiet room was obtained (usually at the participants' home) and set up for recording, the interview commenced as per the semi-structured interview guideline. This process was repeated for all the participants in the pilot study and actual study.

4.4.3 Data analysis - Thematic content analysis

Analysis followed the guidelines of content analysis to unfold a better understanding of the performative gender identity phenomenon as a response to violence within at least one social sphere of these adolescent females' lives, namely; the school setting.

Content analysis was conducted as per Hsieh and Shannon's (2005, 1281-1283) guidelines. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p.1281), "the goal of a directed approach to content analysis is to validate or extend, conceptually, a theoretical framework or theory". Content analysis, itself, is a tool of data analysis that looks at who is saying what (interviewee speaking on a construct), to whom it is being said (who is carrying out the interview), and via what channels of communication (interview- personal, telephonic or electronic, one-on-one or focus groups) (Krippendorff, 2004).

This approach embraces that existing research or theory can be used to focus the research question as proposed in this study. It can provide predictions about the domains of interest or about the relationships among domains that emerge from the collected data, thus helping to determine the initial coding scheme or relationships between themes (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). This approach is referred to as deductive category application (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). The direct content analysis approach was suitable for such a study. This approach satisfied the researchers' purpose of establishing an overall understanding of performative gender identity through existing theory and investigating its practice among female adolescents in a South African context.

4.5 Pilot Study Findings

The researcher conducted a pilot study with two participants who met the criteria of the research study as discussed above. The pilot study was conducted as per the procedure set out for the actual study and served as a means of confirmation and validation of the semi-structured interview schedule that was developed for this study.

The findings that emerged from the pilot study indicated that the language used in the proposed interview schedule needed adjustment. This depicted that the level of education achieved by the participant at the time of the interview impacted on the understanding of the language in the interview schedule. In order to account for this challenge, the researcher adjusted the language used in the interview schedule so as to be more suitable and understandable. Some examples of these adjustments are as follows:

"observed" was replaced with "*seen",*

"nature of the fights" was replaced with *"reasons for the fights",*

"perpetrators" was replaced with *"the people who started the fights",*

and

"being exposed" was replaced by *"seeing and experiencing".*

Thus, it can be concluded that the semi-structured interview schedule that was developed by the researcher for the purpose of this study was adequate and valid in its use in this research study.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Once ethical clearance was obtained, indicating that the study complied with the ethical guidelines for research at the University of the Witwatersrand, potential participants were approached and given information about the study. The participant information sheet was served to introduce participants to the study. This letter was also intended to encourage participation by guaranteeing that their choice to participate was not based on coercion. Therefore, participation was voluntary. The identity of the participants remained confidential and was only known by the researcher. In addition, strict confidentiality of identity was maintained throughout the study and pseudonyms were assigned to both written and audio interview material. This was done to assure participants that only the researcher and supervisor would have access to the interview material; namely the audio-recordings and transcripts. Thus, confidentiality of responses was ensured. All interview material will be stored in a secure archive at the university and may be used for future references, as well as for publication and academic conference presentation. The interview material will be destroyed approximately five (5) years after the research has been conducted.

The participant information sheet further highlighted that the participant would not individually benefit from the study. However, participants were informed that their participation would contribute to academic knowledge. In addition to this, each participant reserved the right to choose not to participate in the study without facing any risks or negative consequences. The participants also reserved the right not to answer any questions that made them feel uncomfortable and could withdraw from the study at any point without penalty. The participants had to consent to both participation in the interview and the audio-recording

of the interview. The participants were also informed that the results of this study (including sanitised quotations) would be included in a research report for submission to the research supervisor, the Faculty of Humanity, and external supervisors at the University of Witwatersrand. The participants were also informed that the report could be submitted for and used for publication, psycho-education seminars and conference presentations.

Participants were informed that feedback on the group trends found in this study would be made available on request; approximately a year after the data was collected. It would be presented in a one page summary sheet and would be made available to participant upon request. As a possibility that some participants may have been directly affected by school violence (as a victim or perpetrator) or might be currently affected by exposure to violence in a different setting (relationship, domestically, or communally), the researcher acknowledged that these issues might have raised and distorted the interview process. In the instances of emotional discomfort, the researcher administered discretion to continue with the interview provided that the participant was contained and willing. Alternatively, interviews would have been stopped by the researcher and the participant would be referred to the Emthojeni Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand or Lifeline Ekurhuleni for counselling. They were provided with the number of both centres for future reference. The participants were provided with the researcher's contact details in case of any queries or need for assistance regarding the interview or study.

4.7 Researcher's Reflexivity

Qualitative research is often criticised for being fictional and lacking rigor. Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) argue against this critique of qualitative research. Morse and colleagues (2002) also state that although the qualitative research process is usually reflected on upon completion of the research inquiry, aspects of reliability and validity can still be appropriately evaluated throughout the lifespan of the research process in all scientific paradigms. Hence, the researcher employed traditional evaluative strategies undertaken in qualitative research also known as trustworthiness in the verification process of the research inquiry throughout its lifespan (Guba 1981; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 2000). The discussion below will be based on the aspects of trustworthiness.

As mentioned above, various researchers have established means of evaluating rigor, reliability and validity of research undertaken within social sciences. However, for the

purpose of this study, the focus will be placed on the qualitative guidelines proposed by Guba and Lincoln (1994; 2000). The following discussion will outline and briefly discuss each evaluative and verification strategy, applying it to this research study. By doing this, the researcher will be reflecting on the research process, highlighting areas of strengths of this study. The limitations of this study will be alluded to in this section, but further explicated in chapter seven.

The standards used to evaluate the quality of naturalistic or qualitative inquiries merely serve as guidelines for researchers to assess their work processes (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 2000; Morse *et al*., 2002; Shenton, 2004). One facet of the evaluation of rigor in qualitative research is *trustworthiness*. The aspects of trustworthiness will be discussed in more detail below.

4.7.1 Research trustworthiness

Researcher trustworthiness concerns issues of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 2000). Research trustworthiness seeks to evaluate whether the research study explores the constructs of interest as stated in the research aims and questions and whether the process of inquiry is consistent in its means of execution (Groth-Marnat, 2009). Guba & Lincoln (2000) outlines the criteria of trustworthiness as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Each of these criteria will be elaborated on below:

4.7.1.1 Credibility of the research process and findings

Guba and Lincoln (1994) liken the concept of credibility to the aspect of internal validity in quantitative research. Therefore, this concept evaluates both the expertise and trustworthiness of the researcher to reduce any biased practices when representing suitable and correct experiences of reality as reported by participants. Shenton (2004) recommends that ‘prolonged engagement’ with participants and the naturalistic field in which the research is being conducted aids in a better understanding of lived experiences as understood by the participants. This therefore concerns the researcher’s experience in this field so as to present accurate interpretations as discussed later in this chapter, under section 4.8. Hence the researcher’s level of expertise and background understanding for this area of study, as well as prolonged engagement within this research setting aids in ensuring that the process and results are of a credible nature.

4.7.1.2 Transferability of the research process and findings

Transferability of the research process and findings relates to the ability to transfer understandings of this research to other research settings which are comparable (Guba & Lincoln, 2000). Similarly, external validity assesses the ability to compare the conditions of one research inquiry to the conditions of a similar setting. As mentioned earlier in this research report, the transferability of any qualitative study is limited as it aims to provide emic experiences of social phenomena rather than generalised experiences. Hence, this study may be used for extrapolation for other disadvantaged South African communities and schools that have concerning rates of violence and crime. Despite this, caution must be observed at all times since community factors such as access to resources and community interventions – or lack thereof – may impact on the transferability of this study's findings to other South African communities. However, the discussion below supports that the findings from this study may be transferred within the community focused on as the unit of analysis in this study. Therefore, the following discussion will elaborate on the dependability of this research inquiry, highlighting the consistency in the procedure employed to collect, analyse and interpret the findings.

4.7.1.3 Dependability of the research process and findings

Much like reliability factors of quantitative research, dependability refers to the consistency of the process of data collection and handling over the lifespan of the study (Guba & Lincoln, 2000; Shenton, 2004). Although this study was conducted in the naturalistic field of the participants, the use of the semi-structured interview schedule allowed for the researcher to conduct a standardised interview process (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006; Gillham, 2005). This method therefore satisfied both aspects of reliability, namely consistency and the ability to collect data surrounding the experiences of violence as experienced by the participants without discrimination. By this, the researcher was able to collect sufficient data of each participant's experiences of violence without leading the participants' discussions. Thus, participants were allowed to emphasize aspects of their experiences that they perceived to be salient, allowing for the exploration of emic experiences.

Furthermore, this study has adhered to the standardised process of data handling and analysis, ensuring consistency. As mentioned above in section 4.4.2, each interview was conducted in a comfortable space, either at the home of the participant or that of the researcher. These arrangements assured that each participant was awarded a respectful place in which confidentiality was maintained (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). In addition, all

interviews were recorded, transcribed and securely stored for the perusal of the researcher and research supervisor only. Therefore, this research study has adhered to a consistent and standardised procedure.

4.7.1.4 Confirmability of the research process and findings

Research confirmability refers to the researcher's ability to remain unbiased and indifferent when analysing the data. As previously mentioned, qualitative research inquiries are greatly criticised for being fictional and expressing the subjective interpretations of the researcher (Morse *et al,* 2002). However, this critique fails to acknowledge the means in which researcher subjectivity can be minimized. Firstly, this research study has extensively declared the researcher's interest in the chosen topic of violence and its impact on adolescents, as referred to chapter later in this chapter. Secondly, the researcher has cross-referenced the findings from the data analysis process by critically comparing these findings to the related literature that currently exists, as well as receiving extensive supervision in order to maintain both the research-related and personal reflexive processes. This process of cross-referencing is known as triangulation which calls for the employment of multiple sources of reference in order to present the data in an accurate manner (Denzin, 2009, 1978).

Therefore, it can be said that the researcher has fulfilled the criteria for confirmability required from qualitative research. However, this research inquiry would have benefitted from a mixed method research approach, as well as cross-referenced interviews with other members of the schooling system such as teachers, maintenance staff, principals and board members (Jick, 1979). These limitations will be expanded on in chapter seven, as previously stated that the purpose of this section was to reflect on the research processes employed during the lifespan highlighting some areas of limitation.

4.8 Personal Reflexivity

The "researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions" (Malterud, 2001, p.484). This critique, albeit more so for qualitative approaches to research, can be extended to its counterparts, quantitative studies as well. To ensure that the researcher's predisposed views minimally bias the research investigation, transparency and disclosure of the researcher must be thoroughly documented throughout the process (Terre Blanche *et al.,* 2006).

The declaration of the researcher's beliefs at the beginning of the research process is essential. Preconceptions need to be brought to light, along with the presentation of previous personal and professional experience within the field of studies and or exposure or interactions with the research sample. Malterud (2001, p.484) states that the "…prestudy beliefs about how things are and what is to be investigated, [as well as] motivation and qualifications for exploration of the field" must be clearly disclosed and documented. Therefore, the researcher was encouraged to tape and transcribe reflective thoughts and emotions following the one-on-one interview sessions. The benefit of reflection was twofold: to ensure that reflexivity and researcher subjectivity is used in ways to question the findings and hypothesized ideologies of data collected, and secondly, to monitor the quality of interviews carried out. The researcher's reflections will be documented below.

4.8.1 Pre-study beliefs on gender-based violence in schools

The researcher had been involved in promoting education in this area for four years prior to conducting this study. At the beginning of 2010, the researcher set out to establish a volunteer-based learning development program within the Benoni area in which the participants in this study had schooled. This program was and continues to be aimed at providing scholastic assistance to learners who experience scholastic difficulties and could not afford remedial or tutorial services. In addition, the program also serves as a support group for learners who experience personal difficulties and challenges within their homes. Thus, the program allows the learners to interact with other learners from their schools and other schools in the area (both primary and secondary schools). Through these interactions, the learners develop interpersonal skills, as well as social skills, and are able to support each other in overcoming their challenges. These processes are facilitated by the researcher who is a trained counsellor at Lifeline Ekurhuleni.

The researcher's beliefs on gender-based violence in schools were therefore informed by these interactions, as well as the researcher's own experiences within the very same school setting almost a decade ago. Even though female-induced violence was prominent during the time that the researcher attended secondary school, the frequency and severity of these violent acts was less of a concern amongst learners and parents. Hence, prior to establishing the learning development program, the researcher was aware of female-induced violence within schools. The researcher understood school-based violence as problematic as it contributed to the tainted reputation that the schools and community had developed.

4.8.2 Motivation for conducting a study about gender-based violence in schools

It is through the researcher's experience as a tutor that the researcher identified that school-based violence had escalated above that of school-ground bullying and gender-based violence in which female learners were victimized. This knowledge arose through assisting the learners with understanding their experiences of violence within their school settings and exploring how their strengths could be utilized to overcome these experiences and benefit their journey of learning. In order to assist the researcher in gaining a better understanding of these experiences of school-based violence that the female learners were faced with on a regular basis, the researcher set out to explore these experiences in this academic research study.

This study was also motivated by the idea that gaining a better understanding of these experiences will aid the researcher in better assisting learners who are still in the schooling systems and are still directly exposed to school-based violence. Furthermore, the findings of this study can be used to assist the principals and teachers of these schools and other schools that are faced with the same challenges. The findings of this study will also assist within the psychotherapy realm in that it would provide background information of the type of challenges that adolescent learners are experiencing in their school settings and how it may impact on the development of identity. Therefore, the aim of conducting this study was two-fold; an academic requirement of the Masters of Arts in Community-based Counselling Psychology at The University of Witwatersrand and secondly, to contribute to the intellectual improvement of the researchers so that these social issues can be better dealt with within the learning development program and future therapeutic gains.

4.8.3 Personal experiences whilst conducting the study

Prior to the proposal of this study, the researcher was exposed to both the parents and learners who were impacted on by the experiences of violence within these school settings. Most of the participants in this research study were associates and peers of past members of the learning development program, and as such were familiar and comfortable within the researcher's presence. Despite this sense of comfort, as well as the learner's prior interactions with the researcher surrounding their experiences of violence, clarifying ethical aspects such as confidentiality and anonymity were essential.

It appeared that the participants' lack of understanding for and lack of exposure to such an inquiry required that they be well informed of the process throughout their

participation. The researcher had chosen to conduct the study with learners who were of age to consent for participation, as it limited parental participation, and the participants seemed more at ease knowing that their parents would not be involved in the study. This was important for the researcher as some of the learners had moved on to tertiary studies and would sometimes return for academic assistance or volunteer to assist in the program. As such, it was important for the researcher to protect the established relationship with these participants whilst ensuring that these relationships do not impact on the quality of information obtained for the purpose of the study. Hence, professional conduct as a researcher was salient. Participants who were not involved in the learner support program were not as comfortable at first and required constant encouragement and reassurance with regards to the process, and the conditions of their participation.

Once the proposal phase had been ethically approved, the researcher conducted a pilot study to validate the developed semi-structured interview schedule. In doing so, the researcher was able to declare that the data collection instrument was effective but that a language difficulty arose. Despite having basic secondary level education, the researcher found that the English language in which the participants conversed in were not adapted for certain academic terms. As such, the language in the semi-structured interview schedule was revised. This finding reiterated the need for such a learning development program in the area, as well as made the researcher aware of the researchers own use of the English language. It appeared that the researcher may have over-compensated the researchers own struggles with adapting to academic requirements of the English language. This personal challenge continued to arise throughout the interviewing phase, as well as the report writing phase, and the researcher undertook to constantly reflect and seek supervision throughout the study.

In conclusion, the researcher has disclosed aspects of subjectivity that may have impacted on the research process throughout this study. By doing so, the researcher has objectified aspects that may unknowingly confound the results of the study. This knowledge equipped the researcher with a soundboard for which personal reflection could be scrutinised. Therefore, declaring the researcher's views on the research topic, research sample and research processes, minimizes any possible biases that the research may have towards the research study (Terre Blanche *et al.,* 2006).

4.9 Concluding Comments

In conclusion, this research inquiry has declared its position as a social science inquiry following the qualitative guidelines of research. Furthermore, this chapter has documented the sampling procedure undertaken, describing the research sample utilized in this research study. It has also provided an overview of the research process, alluding to the data collection and handling processes. In addition to these discussions, the ethical considerations were also discussed. This chapter then concluded by reflecting on the strengths and limitations of the procedures undertaken throughout the research inquiry as well as the researcher's personal experiences and position within the studied population.

Chapter Five – Findings and Results



"Man cannot discover new oceans unless he has the courage to lose sight of the shore."
André Gide

5.1 Introduction

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the researcher had collected the data through means of individual semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted with adolescent female participants that had previously attended one of the government-funded schools in Benoni, within the east region of Gauteng. The focus of this chapter is to extract the findings from each interview by discussing the answers to each question asked during the semi-structured interviews. The responses to these questions have been reported verbatim, according to the relevant participant. It is the intention of this researcher is to assist the broader population in identifying the shared experiences of violence in and around the school environment. Therefore, the responses presented in this chapter serve to detect any unique experiences reported by the participants during the data collection and analysis process. In addition to this, the intention of this researcher is also to allow readers to gain an understanding of adolescent development within the South African context.

The findings that emerged from the data analysis showed that being exposed to violence within the school setting had a considerable impact on the identity formation of each of the young females who participated. The results highlighted that though the participants' experiences of school-based violence was similar, it had to be interpreted from an emic standpoint. This implies that although all the participants were exposed to school-based violence, their experiences were therefore uniquely expressed.

Therefore, the focus of this chapter is to discuss the shared and unique experiences of school-based violence that emerged from the data collected. The following discussion will provide a brief description of the participants' demographic information.

5.2 Demographic Description of Participants

The following table describes the demographic details of the nine participants.

Participant Number	Age	Race	Experiences of Violence			Level of Education
			School	Home	Community	
1	20	Indian	Yes	No	Yes	Tertiary
2	18	Indian	Yes	No	Yes	Matric
3	19	Coloured	Yes	Yes	Yes	Tertiary
4	18	Coloured	Yes	Yes	Yes	No Matric
5	20	Indian	Yes	No	Yes	Tertiary
6	18	Indian	Yes	Yes	Yes	No Matric
7	19	Coloured	Yes	No	No	Matric
8	20	Coloured	Yes	No	Yes	Matric
9	19	Coloured	Yes	No	Yes	Matric

Table 5.1 Tabulation of the demographic details collected for each of the nine participants

Each participant had been allocated a number by the researcher so that their responses were identifiable and consistently presented. This was done in order to ensure anonymity. The demographic details for each of the participants are presented in the table above. The sample comprised of nine adolescent females between the ages of 18 and 20 years. The participants were from Indian and Coloured racial backgrounds and were all South African citizens. All the participants reported being exposed to school-based violence. In additional to this, three of the participants reported that they were exposed to domestic violence and eight of the nine participants confirmed being exposed to community-based violence. From the nine participants, three were currently completing a tertiary degree or diploma. Four of the participants had matriculated and were employed at the time of the interviews, whereas the remaining two had left school before completing a matric qualification. All participants were fluent in basic English, therefore, the interviews were conducted, analysed and reported in English.

The discussion that follows will provide an in-depth discussion of the results that emerged from the collected dataset.

5.3 Research Results

The results were extracted from the individual interviews conducted with the nine participants. As mentioned above, these results will be reported as sanitised quotes. Therefore the words of the participants are used to insure that the interpretations are not skewed or distorted during the qualitative processes. The restated questions will be followed by reporting the significant responses provided by the participants. The 'significance' of responses was determined by the researcher. The semi-structured interview approach allowed the participants to elaborate on related issues that were important to them whilst answering the posed questions. The accuracy of the responses was dependent on each of the participant's ability to focus on the topic of the question posed. Additional answers which seem to deviate from the topic of the question will be discussed thereafter, under each question. This process will be repeated until all the questions in the semi-structured interview schedule have been discussed.

The discussion below will begin with the first question from the semi-structured interview schedule.

5.3.1 How do young females, who have been exposed to school-based violence, experience this social phenomenon?

Each participant was asked to narrate their understanding about any form of violence that they observed or experienced at the high-school that they attended. This question was designed to gain more information on how young females, who have been exposed to school-based violence, experience this social phenomenon. The responses of the participants outlined the following themes: firstly, the types of violence at disadvantaged schools, secondly, the types of violence in the surrounding community of disadvantages schools, thirdly, the nature of violence at disadvantaged schools, and last, the frequency of school-based violence experienced by the participants.

5.3.1.1 Types of violence at disadvantaged schools

This sub-category allowed the researcher to understand the types of violence that the participants were exposed to. Even though the main focus of this study is school-based violence, other forms of violence were also reported as prominent and salient variables. Therefore, the participants reported being exposed to various forms of violence. The discussion that follows will be based on the types of violence that the participants observed or were subjected to.

Participant 1 explained that her previous high school was notorious for its violence, stating that: "*it* [her previous high school] *was known for the children's violent behaviour"*.

Participant 2 spoke about violence in class which she perceived as a result of interpersonal differences and petty arguments, as well as gang-related school violence. She noted: *"there was a gang that came to the school to fight with the school boys and boys from the school use to phone people from outside to bring weapons if they knew that they were going to fight after school".*

Participant 3 confirmed Participant 1's experience, stating that: "*in schools there is gangsterism and bullying. All the smaller children would all get bullied for whatever reason, just to benefit the bullies or the gangster's in getting money, or just to have a status"*.

In accordance with Participant 1's accounts, Participant 5 reported that: *"violence was a standard thing",* but she asserted: *"I never paid attention to it because violence was always frowned upon at home*".

Participant 6 narrowed her experience of school-based violence, stating: *"I experienced physical abuse and people who bully children".* She added: *"younger children would be pushed around and physically attacked and their money and food taken off them".*

Participant 7 provided insight into the theme surrounding the discourse of violence that will be elucidated in chapter six. She reported: *"Just the usual girl-on-girl fighting, punching* [and] *taking out a knife for the next person"* would frequent their school grounds and surroundings.

Participant 8 described the types of violence that she had been exposed to when attending school as *"gun-violence, fighting, and stabbing".* She explained that these fights were usually a result of quarrels about *"boyfriends and girlfriends".*

Participant 9 expressed that she experienced *"gang violence in school".*

In summary, the participants reported being exposed to school-based violence that involved acts of gangsterism and bullying by both male and female individuals. They added that the types of violence that they were exposed to were mostly physical, relating to physical force in order to intimidate or harm others. The responses also alluded to the influence of outsiders such as community members who encouraged the violence by bringing weapons to

the school and parental or familial responses that were either frowned upon or encouraged violent behaviour.

The following section will report on the types of violence that the participants were exposed to the surrounding community in which there schools were based.

5.3.1.2 Types of violence in the surrounding community of disadvantaged schools

Community interactions, social group dynamics and domestic relations were also identified as contributing factors of violence. Even though these experiences did not appear as common experiences among the majority of the participants, they were significant to the participants. The participants emphasised the importance and impact that these experiences of violence has had on their development as individuals. The following accounts attest to these experiences and reiterate that these participants were not only exposed to school-based violence, but domestic and communal violence as well.

Participant 1 reported: *"I have been exposed to family violence and violence in the spin environment* [car show] *because it's a family business".*

Participant 2 explained: *"I experienced violence at temple* [religious place of worship] *because adults would argue over status and power"*

Participant 3 emphasised the community's influence on school-based violence, stating: *"I live in a very violent community. Men and women are on drugs, children are being abused all the time, there's a lot of burglaries, rape, sexual violence, women abuse, child abuse, abortion, drug abuse, domestic violence, all of it".*

Participant 5 added to the aforementioned, as she stated: "I *came from an abusive background. When I was five years, my mother's boyfriend used to hit me"* and Participant 6 stated: *"I experienced physical abuse. My mother would hit me"*.

This sub-theme indicates that these participants consider their experiences of violence as salient aspects of their lives. Some of the participants reported being exposed to violence within their community, sub-cultural groups and homes. It also echoes that exposure to violence is a complex phenomenon that emits from various social and ecological levels. These levels, respectively, may be listed as the home, school, community and other sub-societies, as well as macro-, exo-, meso and micro-systems.

The following section will deviate from discussing the types of violence at surface level. It will explore the participants' perceptions of the nature of violence that they have been exposed to.

5.3.1.3 Nature of violence at disadvantaged schools

This sub-category will discuss the participants' views surrounding the characteristics of the violent acts that they were exposed to during their schooling careers. The discussion that follows highlights the characteristics and degree of violence that the participants experienced or observed whilst at school.

Participant 1 noted: *"fights between either two people or groups of people"*. By this she implied that violent acts that took place at her school would vary between two people and groups or gangs of people.

Participant 2 confirmed the abovementioned observation as she stated: "*gang fights where there would be guns and you would find weapons on the children"*.

Participant 3 added: "*there would be stabbing and fighting"* and reported that *"once a guy stabbed another one from his head down to his neck because of a girl"*.

Participant 4 stated that the acts of violence at school *"would result in a lot of innocent people getting hurt, and sometimes they would come out with knives and guns, so it was really bad"*.

Participant 5 noted that the degree of violence *"would depend on who was fighting. You would hear about cattish, small petty fights or if it was boys who were notorious for fighting, you would know that it would be intense and brutal.* She confirmed: *"girls fought a hectic lot"* and that she had *"heard of girls breaking bottles and the cops came to stop it,* ***but it was so normal at the time****"*.

Participant 6 described school-based violence as *"a person fighting with another person, hitting each other and like one blue eye or just like normal fighting or a broken arm or something.* However, Participant 6 noted that fights would escalate into what she referred to as *"Bad violence"* and described 'bad violence' as violence where *"their parents would come to the school and join in and a big fight would break out".* She added: *"they* [the learners, teachers and the principal] *would involve the police."*

Participant 7 described herself as unknowledgeable when asked about her experiences of violence. She noted: *"I was ignorant about the fighting",* but conversely recalled an incident *"where someone took out a knife for another person. It was two girls".*

Participant 8 described the escalation of violence similar to Participant 6's accounts, as she stated: *"there would be fights over something small, something that is not even so bad, but then they bring friends and then they all start hitting each other, packing each other on. Then the fight would get out of hand and they would stab each other".* She added that *"most of the time the cops or the ambulance had to be brought in, but if it was the big boys somebody definitely got hurt".*

Participant 9 reiterated: "*parents and people who weren't even in the school would get involved. Parents and siblings would often bring weapons for them to fight after school".*

These accounts indicate that school-based violence cannot be understood in isolation. To understand school-based violence, the community setting must be contextualised and the domestic settings of these participants must be thoroughly documented as well. This is encouraged because the reports indicate that friends, family members and other members of the community contributed to the escalation of school-based violence. A further factor that may influence the perceptions of violence and the understanding thereof is that of frequency.

The discussion below will document the participants' perceptions of the frequency of violence that occurred whilst they attended secondary school.

5.3.1.4 The frequency of school-based violence experienced by the participants

The participants provided varying accounts of the frequency of violence that occurred during high school.

Participant 1 indicated that the frequency of school fights were *"usually every week"*, whereas Participant 2 illustrated: *"there could have been three fights in one day or you could have one fight in three months".* However, when asked to provide an average, she noted: *"on average there were two fights a week".*

Participant 4 recalled: *"maybe four or five times in a week"*, followed by Participant 5 who recalled that fights would happen "*often"*. She added: *"on a week at average you would definitely have at least one fight".* Participant 6 agreed with this, stating that fights would occur "*five or six times a month".*

Participant 8 emphasised that fights would occur *"mostly on Friday's, in fact almost every Friday".* This account was similar to that of Participant 9 who added that fights would occur "*every Friday and Wednesday when school came out early".*

Although the accounts provided by the nine participants varied to some degree, it depicted that a fight would occur at least once a week at the schools of interest. Fridays and Wednesdays, as well as days on which the school day ended early appeared as the most common days for school-based violence to occur. In order to understand how this exposure to school-based violence impacted on the development of adolescent identities, the following findings will address the participants' perceptions of identity-development in relation to violent environments.

5.3.2 Does school-based violence contribute to how adolescent females develop their sense of identity?

In order to establish whether school-based violence contributes to how adolescent females develop their self-identity, participants were asked if they if they perceived this to be a reality. By this, the participants were asked if they thought that being exposed to violence contributed, in any way, to the person that they have accumulatively became. The following discussion will illuminate on the participants' response.

5.3.2.1 Perception of female adolescent development of identity in relation to violent environments.

The following discussion unfolds the findings surrounding whether or not the participants felt that being exposed to violence contributed to how they perceive themselves and other developing female adolescents.

Participant 1 interpreted the fights that involved females as a means of obtaining status and power and stated: "*the girls sometimes just wanted to show that they're tough. They're not going to walk away from a fight because then it's like they're defeated or have been taken advantage of. So then they act like "I'm tough! Nobody must mess with me!" Almost like a weak point that she's trying to cover up with physical strength, like this pseudo-strength that's actually like a weak thing".*

She also explained that adolescents go *"through a time that's a bit rough. They're finding their identity and they feel sometimes that the way they were brought up or the way they were treated at home is not like the way they would want to be treated.* Participant 1

similarly attributed feelings of unjust and misunderstood anger to a sense of 'r*ebelliousness'* stating that "*they feel like they're allowed to be angry because the world has been unfair to them, it's like anger is an excuse for their bad behaviour".*

Participant 2 explained her understanding of female-induced violence amongst adolescents as an escalation whereby *"arguments ended up in fist fights and fights over petty things. There were girls that just like didn't want to fight and then you get the other children that always looked for a fight, or to stand and watch someone get hurt.*

Participant 3 expressed: *"if you are around bad influence, you get tempted. I think it depends on the personality, if you are strong enough you won't be tempted into worrying about or having a status. Like peer pressure; once a girl reaches high school, there goes her whole reputation. Because she wants to fit in, she goes to drugs, starts dating the gangsters and becomes a gangster herself: pregnancy, drugs, then leaving school".*

Participant 4 supported the role of peer pressure in the development of violent females and stated: "*personal vendettas between a certain people in a group would start a fight and then the whole group will jump in and join the fight".*

Participant 5, perceived female-induced violence and aggressive female behaviour as a result of "*petty things and personal vendettas".* She added that adolescents would seek *"superiority over each other, like bullying".* She also expressed: *"their attitude resonated with anger and violence",* adding that *"violence seems to resonate from people who come from broken backgrounds, people that don't come from steady homes".*

Participant 6 confirmed: "*people would bully other people for lunch money at school and fighting was a way to become popular amongst the friends".*

Participant 7 reported that the victims of violence and the perpetrators were sometimes interchangeable. She said: "*the victims and the people that started the fight were along the same line. They weren't the bullies and then the little, innocent, helpless people. They were both just like this feisty, vicious, forward people who would just not think and just go forward and act.* She expressed: *"it was actually kind of annoying that one person would want to hurt another person when they could just sit down, find reason, talk about it. You can talk it over, there's no need for physical violence and you know injuring the next person's not going to solve anything".*

Participant 8, however, differentiated the victims from the aggressors stating that: *"the big boys would target the smaller ones, or the glamorous one's that called themselves "cheese boys" would just fight with all the small boys for nice looking girls, but girls usually do that with their own friends even so it's like a mixture of both".*

Participant 9 provided a list of reasons why she thought that violence impacted on the way adolescents behaved. She listed the main challenges that faced adolescents at schools as the following: "*status, reputation, popularity, and the prettiest girlfriend or cutest boyfriend"*.

As seen above, the participants perceived that adolescent development occurs in response to their environments. As such, the violent school environment that the participants were exposed to prompted elements of identity-development such as aggressive attitudes to conceal feelings of insecurity. This manifested as a means of attaining status, popularity and reputation, and in some cases money. The participants noted that violence generally stemmed from a desire to have a sense of power over other learners or to be included into social circles. Therefore, it highlighted that the presence of peer pressure and the ability to resist peer pressure was salient for them.

The following discussion will focus more narrowly on the perceived impact that being exposed to violence had on their personal development of identity.

5.3.2.2 Perceptions of identity-development in relation to violent environments.

This sub-question was aimed at understanding how these adolescent females perceive themselves and how they assess their personal development in violent environments. The following section will focus on the responses surrounding their personal development in relation to violence that they have experienced at school and in other social environments.

Participant 1 confirmed that being exposed to violence has affected her development as an individual. She mentioned: "*I think if you see it first hand and you see how easily it can get out of hand and what the repercussions are with regards to your reputation and people talk...like tomorrow people hear that there was a fight and this girl was so wild! So, it makes me think twice before getting angry and before I would let something escalate like that. I think if I wasn't exposed to it I might have been more prone to just absent minded going around fighting with people. I'm more likely to move away from violence. So I'm more of a*

rational person instead of a "that's the only way to sort it out"...Like be solution-based instead of problem-based".

Participant 2 explained how trying to avoid associating with violent friends resulted in her becoming the target of violence. She reported: *"My friends that I had in school always wanted to fight with others and argue with others and not concentrate on their work. I decided that I don't want to be like that and changed routes. But they saw it as though I betrayed them, like I didn't want to be their friend anymore and they would pick on me after that.*

Participant 3 shared the experience of Participant 2 and stated: "*I think it makes me want to be a better person, because no one wants that sort of lifestyle, but I think if everyone had to make a better decision for their own lives, society wouldn't have been this way.* ***Our*** *society specifically, wouldn't have been that way".* Participant 3 explained: *I did not want to go on like a barbarian, like how it used to be in school. You realise that you wanted to fit in with your friends or your age group and what's going on. But when you later realise and you finish school all of those things weren't worth it. It maybe gave you a bad name in school, or you could have maybe done better, but you didn't because you chose the wrong path".*

Participant 4 said that she felt as though she was not affected by the school fights. She added: *"I never really encouraged fights or stood nearby. I always like tried to keep my distance from these fights. So like I don't really think it impacted me because I'm not a violent person, I don't really like to fight".*

Participant 5 added that her motto with regards to violence at school was: *"just go home safely and avoid the fight".*

Participant 6 noted: *"it was not about being scared; it was about making peace. I did not want people to talk about me in the street".*

Participant 7 felt that being exposed to violence did influence her development *"a bit".* She stated: *"it made me think more of how to react and how the other person would feel if I just went up to them and just punched them. So when you react differently as well, it makes you less violent because you do not want to be like that".*

Participant 8 noted: *"you actually learn a lot from it. You learn how to control your temper. Sometimes you even get more violent in that way. Like in my case, we grew up with*

violence all over so it was like something you don't want to involve yourself with and the wrong company. So then you learn to stay away from certain people and to live a certain life. It shows that I'm brave".

Participant 9 differed from the above accounts and expressed: *"after seeing all of the violence, I'm kind of violent and get angry very quickly. It made me kind of a bad person but it made a part of me a bad person. The family background I grew up in, they don't fight and swear, so that part of me is good".* The latter expressed that Participant 9 felt divided between her performed identities at school and at home, indicating a lack of congruency between the two.

These accounts show that school-based violence can be an influential factor on individual identity development. The responses obtained from some of the participants depicted that being exposed to violence paradoxically encouraged adolescents to develop positive social skills. Conversely, the development of negative social skills and inadequate defence mechanisms could, in turn, reinforce violence, thus contributing to the continuous cycle of violence. The participants focused on the role of a social reputation as a representative of one's family and society, as well as the importance of rational thinking, reasoning and decision-making during adolescence. The discussion below will focus on the gender aspects of identity and identity development that are involved when violence is present.

5.3.3 What are the perceived gender roles and rules for females in violent contexts?

This question was aimed at understanding how school-based violence contributed to the identity formation of adolescent females; emphasising the role of gender and gender identity. As such, the following question was asked: *"If you think of your roles and feelings when these fights would break out and during these fights, do you think that you behaved the way your society (on the whole) expects girls to behave?"* therefore, the following discussion will be based on the perceived roles that the participants assumed during acts of violence at their schools.

5.3.3.1 Perceived roles during violent incidents

The roles that the participants assumed during fights at school are mentioned below:

Participant 1 indicated that she adopted an avoidant role during incidents of violence at school. She exclaimed: "*I had no role in these fights. I'd simply go away!"*

Whereas Participant 2 mentioned that she would *"just stand and watch or try to stop the fight".*

Participant 3 described her role as that of a bystander and noted: *"I used to be in the middle to see everything I was a bystander".* She added: *"my reaction to violence depended on the situation. If I had to be violent, then it would most probably take out the bad part of me, like my temper will be evolved in anger".*

Participant 4, similar to Participant 1, responded: "*I always tried to stay away by far as possible from the fights. I would feel scared, because when they pull out these guns and these knives you don't know where you are standing, because innocent people used to get hurt. It's not really a nice scene, sometimes I found it funny because of the way people carry on. To think human beings can really be so ridiculous, because they fight over very stupid things".*

This experience was supported by Participant 5 who noted: "*I did once try and overlook the fight and be there to see what happens and I in the process just got trampled on, so I learned my lesson".*

Participant 7 shared a similar experience as well and stated: *"I wouldn't get involved. I actually never stood there and watched I'd always walk away".*

Participant 6 noted that she often tried to intervene and said: "*I would stop them, like say "stop fighting" and inform the principal".*

However, Participant 8 explained in more detail how intervening during a fight could lead to the fight escalating instead of being resolved. She recalled: "*If it was my own friends, I'd try to stop the fight, but then stopping the fight makes it worse because then you get involved. Then they would say that you're choosing sides".* She added that *"with the boys we wouldn't usually get involved because even if the teachers got involved the teachers would get hurt. So with the boys I just stayed out of it. I would take it to the principal because our school had rules and if we did fight, we could get expelled so we didn't want all that happening".*

Participant 9 viewed her role as a bystander as follows*: "I would stand around and watch the fight or go home. I think it was partially my fault for not doing anything to stop it. It was like I was encouraging and influencing it".*

The sub-questions addressed in this section focused on the role of the participants during violent incidents at school. The responses indicated that females would respond to violence in individualist ways. They confirmed that their roles during fights were in accordance with the image that they were trying to portray at that time. They made references to various social structures, such as their homes, educational board and society at large, when explaining how their perceptions of gender roles were informed. Therefore, roles and behaviours that were enacted during violence are indicative of the identity development during the crucial period of adolescence.

The following section will expand on the roles and behaviours of females that are deemed socially acceptable and desirable.

5.3.3.2 Perceptions of society's expectation of gendered behaviour for females

The sub-questions addressed in the discussion below will explore the perceived social expectations that may have guided and some instances governed female behaviour during incidence of violence. The participants were asked how females were expected to act or behave in their schools. Subsequently, the following reports will aid in developing an understanding of how they perceived the socialised gender roles and rules for females within violent contexts.

Participant 1 explained that the social expectation is for females to be "*girl-like and more controlled".* She added: *"I think they'd expect us to you know how to sort it out and speak about it. Society almost portrays that the males are more authoritative and females are more emotional and they more caring for the family. In my family it's not really that. It's kind of equal".* Participant 1 further explained that: "*we're ladies; we should act more responsibly especially in a school environment because as a pupil, a scholar, you have to uphold your school's name.* She continued: *"as a lady, you carry yourself properly. You walk nicely, you have to dress a certain way. They were more strict about the girl's uniform than the boy's uniform, because girls had to represent the school image.*

Participant 1 said: *"if there was a fight or something, the first thing a teacher would ask is how you could do that because you're a girl, or say that "we're ladies! This is not how*

we behave!" If it was girls fighting then it was more of a big deal and teachers would say "How could you!" So we were expected to be more lady-like and more calm in situations, expected to be upstanding".

Participant 2 elaborated that *"those girls that only used to concentrate on their work were called the nerdy type of children and they were girlish. Then the girls that wanted to be like gangster were like more boyish. The teachers and my parents wanted us to grow up and do something with life, not take drugs or having children at the age of 16".* Participant 2 added: "*I wanted to better myself education-wise, socialise with the right company and with people that were not violent even though I became the target as the nerd".*

Participant 3 differentiated between the expectations of teachers and school peers. She noted: *"from the teacher's perspective, you had to have respect and dignity and realise that you were female. There was certain ways you needed to go on. I think the nerds were what the teachers expected. And then from the kids' point of view, you didn't care you just wanted to be seen and heard. I was doing the same thing they* [my friends] *were doing, in the sense that if they didn't go to class, you didn't go to class".*

Participant 4 clarified: "*in school, we were also expected to be lady-like; they never really like females getting involved in these fights. They took the boys to prisons to see what violence leads to. They didn't get the females involved though. They often do it to males rather, to get the males involved because they didn't want the females to be exposed to that.*

Participant 5 noted: "*the teachers' expectations were that you should present yourself as a lady. To me personally, you are your society. The older generation would speak about these stories like school fights in disgust, but if you heard it coming from someone in our generation, it was 'wow, did you see that cool fight'. Luckily for me, I was a confident person so if I made a decision on something, it was for myself and not with the influence of anything else".*

Participant 6 differentiated between society, on a whole, teachers and peers. She clarified: "*I think that society expects girls not to be rude in the streets. They shouldn't carry on like people who don't care for their body or themselv*es. *Okay amongst friends, they wanted us to fight, but teachers wanted us to be proper girls. They wanted us to carry ourselves through school and be proper".*

Participant 7 explained that she felt that society views her generation as "*over-board with over doing going out and drinking and smoking and just being wild"*. Participant 8 similarly added: "*girls these days are not like before. Girls used to know that they are girls and girls are not supposed to be doing this* [fighting]. *They are supposed to be in school learning, but these days they just do not care."*

Participant 9 noted that "*society always expects girls to be neat and civilized".* She added *that "boys and girls are not the same and we should not expect the same from them. Boys are expected to fight and girls are expected to walk away, but that is not what girls do. The way I was going on, I was not behaving the way society expected me to as a girl".*

This discussion of social expectations indicates that society still refers to social matters such as violence as a gender binary. Thus, the schooling systems continue to maintain traditional and patriarchal gender ideologies. It also indicated that there are many levels of social governing involved in the schooling environment, such as the expectations of peers, teachers, families, and societies.

The section below will explore the interactions of expectations from the various systems and the individual negotiations of these expectations in order to derive one's sense of identity.

5.3.4 How do young females negotiate the use of gender roles in order to create their identity?

Based on their understandings of themselves, their experiences of violence and their roles in society as females, these adolescent females were asked the following: *"As a female, were you expected to behave (act) differently at home than at school?"* The aim of this question was to ascertain how these young females negotiated the use of gender roles to formulate aspects of their self-identity.

5.3.4.1 Congruency or discrepancy between social values and norms and one's own behaviour

Here, the participants were asked whether they felt that they behaved differently in these different contexts. As such they were asked to expand on their behaviours at school and at home.

Participant 1 differentiated her perceptions of a younger society and adult society. According to Participant 1, "*the younger society is very comfortable with anger. So, they will*

easily say no it's okay that I did it, I was angry. It's a norm. But the adult society, would expect you to have more compassion. I mean, if you're thinking of violent thoughts towards somebody, you should also consider their family and the repercussions".

Participant 1 also emphasized the roles of girls within the home context by stating that: "*girls at home are almost taught more how to uphold their family name than boys. It's emphasised more at home so that's why it's emphasised more at schools. They teach you at home, not just for home, but so that you can go out into society and be what they expect of you".*

Participant 2 indicated having to negotiate her identity by adapting her attitude and behaviour in accordance with her social audience. She reported: *"my parents wanted me to focus on and benefit from my education and wanted to see me become someone. My friends also wanted that at first, but they became more into going out and running away and I decided not to. My parents wanted me to concentrate at school and said that when I turn eighteen, I could do certain things. When I changed friends, their parents were the same".*

Participant 3 described social expectations as the guidelines of life. She explained that an adolescent female should: *"be a lady and act with dignity and respect".* She added: *"you respect yourself for people to respect you".* However, she noted: "*I wasn't behaving like society expected me to, because I was naughty, I went out of control. But when you older, you realise that what the teachers said was right. But I think when you in school and you look around at someone that's even worse and you realise you know, that you need to change because you don't want to be like that. Sometimes in school because there were no parents, parental guidance, you would be naughty. But at home I had to behave, I didn't have a choice".*

Participant 4 relayed: "*in my home, girls must act like ladies. You don't go out there and show people you can be a hooligan. Whereas, at school every teenager wants to fit in and feel like they belong. You do things because you think your friends are going to think you're cool".*

Participant 5 stated: "*I don't come from a home where people are loud and rowdy. Besides that, I don't like action movies (giggle). I am not a violent person, I don't believe in physical violence and try to control my temper like I was brought up to. I stayed away from fights and I guessed I conformed to what society wanted me to do*".

Participant 6 spoke about the gender binary within the home. She stated: "*in my home, a girl has to sit in the house and clean. We can't go out late in the night like the boys. They can go out late at night, they don't have to clean or do work. My mother would hit me if I even tried that".* She added: *"My parents expected me to behave like a proper girl. At school you were your own self, but at home you're not your own self. At home someone is watching you, you have to behave".*

Participant 7 explained that the negotiation was rarely needed. She recalled: *"my friends and my parents are like the same. They just seem to expect the same things because I'm just being me and they are cool with it".*

Participant 8 clarified her home experiences, stating that: "*friends were bad influences, especially in school. They'll expect you to smoke, to drink, to bunk classes or to do things that they do like stand with the boys and stuff like that. They pressurise you into things, but if you clever enough you won't really end up in that situation. We knew our place, especially with our grandparents because they were strict. The girls knew their place at home so did the boys. The girls knew after school its homework, once you're done your homework you clean if you need to cook, you cook if you old enough to do so. They boys will do their homework and go play soccer. That's how it was, but the girls never did what the boys used to do. That's how it was".* She added: "*at home you're a different person because you know your parents are strict so there are rules and regulations. Now with school, the teachers aren't there all the time to see what you're doing so you lose control. Like your friend will tell you something you just go and do it. Now at home you can't do that because you know that at a certain time you need to be indoors, house needs to be cleaned, homework done. If it's not kept, you're getting kicked out or you're getting punishment or you're going to sit in the corner that's how it was".*

Participant 9 mentioned: "*in our house, we're not expected to fight and swear. We were expected to sit down and talk about it. At school, that never worked. At home I had to be this quiet person, more civilised and talk nicely, but at school I'd be screaming and shouting and getting angry. I'd fight and I'd just lash out and hit someone".*

The responses above indicate that social expectations do not always align with the desired behaviour of individuals. The participants indicated that rules and regulations facilitated that good behaviour that conformed to social expectations. However, the responses depicted the school as an unregulated environment that lacked control; therefore being unable

to contain the violent behaviour. These results also highlighted the broad differences of socially accepted behaviour across generations and across the different social groups. Therefore, the findings of this study support the multi-faceted approach to understand violence as a social phenomenon. The following discussion will conclude this chapter.

5.4 Concluding Comments

The thematic content analysis process allowed the researcher to extract an understanding of the shared experiences of contemporary trends of school-based violence. This process also assisted the researcher and readers by highlighting the central themes that emerged across the nine transcripts. These themes were in accordance with the proposed integrated socio-ecological model of individual development, as espoused by Bronfenbrenner (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1994a, 1994b, 2005). Thus, the findings and results of this study substantiate that social interactions within various environmental levels contributes to individual development, with emphasis placed on the formation of identity (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1994a, 1994b; Erikson, 1980; Lerner, 2006).

The deductive findings of this study were in accordance with the existing literature of youth experiences of violence. The findings from this study indicate that during adolescence, identity that is manifested through behaviour, does change in relation to social stimuli in various social settings. This is in accordance with the theoretical framework of this research study. Thus, the responses obtained during the interview process coincides with the research inquiry methods set out in chapter four, as well as with the theoretical framework proposed in chapter three. However, some unique findings emerged whilst analysing the results and findings. These underlying inductive themes, as well as the deduced themes will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Six – Discussion of Results



"All things are subject to interpretation. Whichever interpretation prevails at a given time is a function of power and not truth."
Friedrich Nietzsche

6.1 Introduction

Chapters one to four elaborated on the purpose of this research study, the background information upon which the hypothesis was derived and the paradigmatic and methodological actions that informed this research study. Chapter five illuminated the results and findings which emerged from the research process. The central aim of this chapter is to gain a better understanding of how violence in one's social settings is perceived and how this exposure to violence may impact on the way one perceives the world and self. This will be achieved through the explicated results and findings yielded in the research inquiry. The discussion in this chapter will focus on both the deductive and inductive themes that emerged from the findings.

The deductive themes will yield discussions surrounding the *Perceptual Experiences of Violence* and the *Perceptual Development of Violent/Aggressive or Non-aggressive Identities: Inter- and Intra-personal Elements*. The *Perceptual Experiences of Violence* will focus on the nature of violence as subjectively defined and experienced by the participants as related to their experiences of violence. The *Perceptual Development of Violent/Aggressive or Non-aggressive Identities: Inter- and Intra-personal elements* will deliberate on the aspects of perceived inter- and intra- personal factors that aids adolescent identity formation. These deductive themes will be discussed within the theoretical framework explained in chapter three. The discussion of each theme will be substantiated by relevant levels of the ecological and systemic influences as theorised by Bronfenbrenner (Addison, 1992; Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1994a, 1994b, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris 1998; Lewthwaite, 2011), the psychosocial impact as theorised by Erikson (Erikson, 1968, 1977, 1980; Lerner, 2006) and the use of performative gendered behaviour as theorized by Butler (Butler, 1988, 1999; Gergen & Gergen, 2011).

These themes have been integrated with the abovementioned theories where possible and will be further substantiated by the related literature, as well as the relevant results obtained from the data analysis. In order to clarify the deductive themes, a diagrammatic representation has been provided below. The following diagrammatic representation outlines the deductive themes that will be discussed in this chapter.

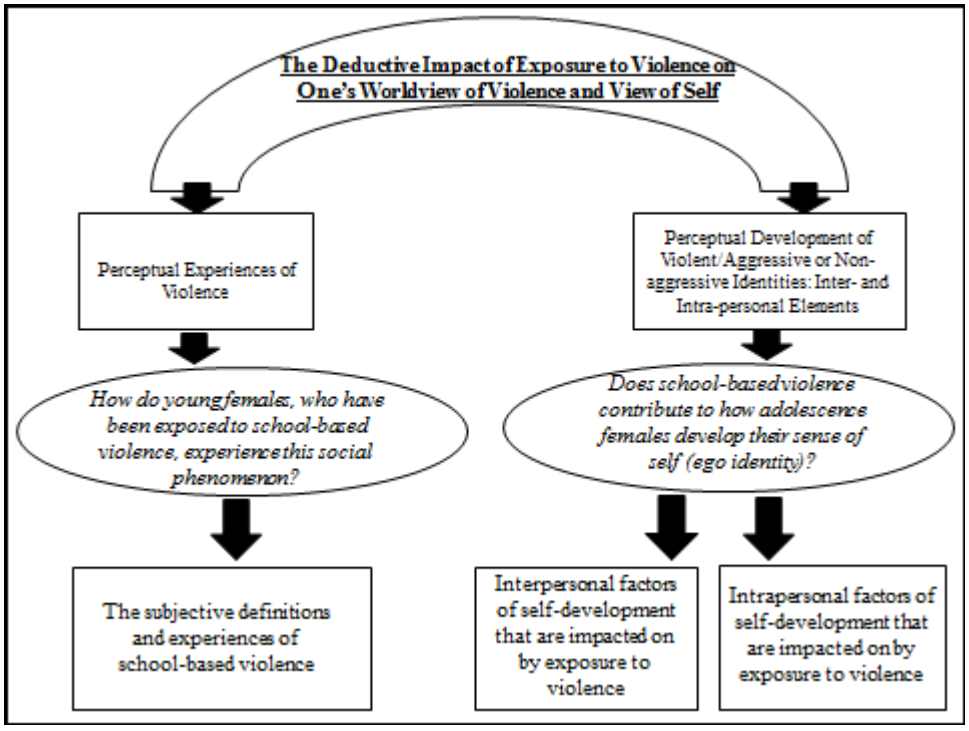


Diagram 6.1 Diagrammatic presentations of the emerging deductive themes

Following the discussions as guided by diagram 6.1, the two emerging inductive themes that are represented in diagram 6.2, will then be discussed:

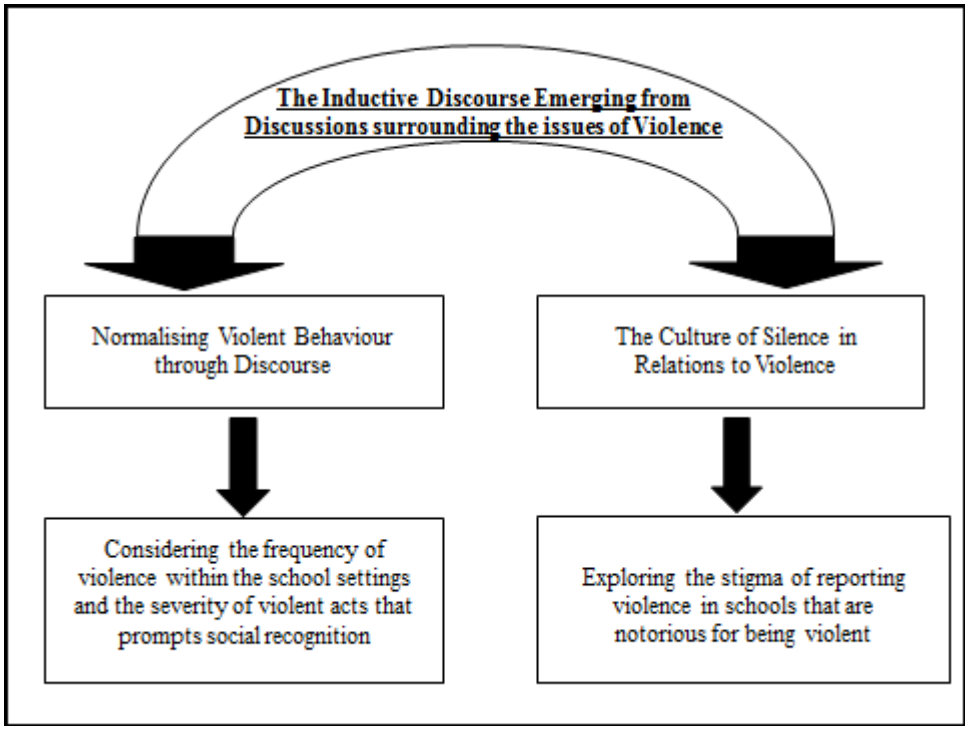


Diagram 6.2 Diagrammatic presentations of the emerging inductive themes

The themes involve the normative and desensitized discourse of violence amongst adolescents who have been exposed to violence. These themes also involve issues of stigmatisation and silence which appears to be contributing to the preservation of the cycle of violence. As a result, these themes express how adolescent females, who have been exposed to violence, perceived violence as exemplified in their discussions. This chapter will be concluded by returning to the research questions stated in chapter one, addressing the efficacy in which these questions have been answered.

The following discussion will explore the first theme of *Perceptual Experiences of Violence,* which will be discussed according to the three theoretical approaches and substantiated with relevant literature and research evidence.

6.2 Perceptual Experiences of Violence

The section that follows will provide insight into how the participants understand violence. It will also explore their subjective definitions and experiences of school-based violence from a gendered lens. To begin, the over-arching question which informed this research study inquires *how young females, who have been exposed to school-based violence, experienced this social phenomenon.* These questions were primarily based on the premise that gender informs one's behaviour and that gendered behaviour is imprinted through the process of socialisation (SACE, 2011). The theme of 'developing an understanding of violence' explores the socialised gender influences which inform how the participants defined and experienced violence during their secondary schooling.

The following section will explore the various ways in which school-based violence was subjectively defined and experienced by the participants of this study. This will be achieved by also exploring the ecological systems, social interactions and elements of social agency which influenced the perceptions and experiences of the participants. The section below begins with an exploration of how the participants developed their emic understandings of violence.

6.2.1 Developing an understanding of violence

This section establishes an understanding how school-based violence was experienced by the participants. Thus, the manner in which they make meaning of this social phenomenon needs to be understood and articulated. The participants presented their subjective definitions of violence according to their personal experiences. This was done against the backdrop of the context within which they were raised. Their background knowledge of violence appeared

to be therefore informed by their social experiences that happened and impacted them throughout their lifetime. These social experiences were referenced by all of the participants as happening through their interactions with their peers, teachers and parents. Participant 6 said: *"society expects girls not to be rude in the streets… friends wanted us to fight, but teachers wanted us to be proper"*. Participant 2 mentioned: *"teachers and parents wanted us to grow up and do something with life… I wanted to better my life education-wise, socialise with the right company and with people that were not violent"*. These findings support that micro-systemic social interactions, such as those with parents, teachers and peers, mediate and moderate the behaviour of individuals (Bronfenbrenner 1994b; Hamman & Hendricks, 2005; Lerner, 2006; Hartas, 2011; Thom & Coetzee, 2004; Tudge *et al*., 2009).

Collectively, the participants reported that their home experiences and their experiences in communal environments and sub-cultures influenced how they experienced and conceptualised violence. This amplified the role of society in developing future generations. Participants 5 emphasized the role of 'society', stating: *"you should present yourself as a lady… you are your society"* This implies that as social agents, one's behaviour is not only a representation of oneself, but also of the broader society in which one exists (Darling, 2007). Therefore, it highlighted that the participants' knowledge of violence is influenced by gendered expectations at various social and ecological levels. From an ecological perspective, these influences occur across many levels, such as the microsystem which involves the home, community, school and sub-cultures; the mesosystem which involves the interaction of these microsystems; the exosystem which involves indirect social interactions; and the macrosystem which focuses on social norms and attitudes (Lerner, 2006). As a result, these findings have shown that the perceptions that these adolescent females have formed about violence were based on their social interactions and ecological interconnections with interacting social systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Erikson, 1980; Hook *et al*., 2002; Lerner, 2006). Therefore, socialised ideologies, familial values, communal norms and the individuals' regular interactions with their peers also aid in their understanding of the world and themselves.

Moreover, the findings were in accordance with the psycho-social lifespan approach to human development, as well as the conceptualised chronosystem in Bronfenbrenner's model of ecological systems. The lifespan and chrono-systemic approach, both, concern the trends and patterns of environmental transitions regarding social phenomena such as violence

and gender relations (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Erikson, 1980; Hook *et al*., 2002; Lerner, 2006). Participants provided evidence to support their conceptualisation of violence in relation to gendered behaviour. The findings confirmed that the participants' conceptualisation was influences by their past experiences of violence, as well as by their interconnected social interactions. Therefore, it is through these social interactions that historical knowledge of violence is imparted to the developing generations. Participants referred to traditional social expectations for girls, as well as trans-generational articulations of their perceptions of violence. Participant 5 noted: "*The older generation would speak about these stories like school fights in disgust, but if you heard it coming from someone in our generation, it was 'wow, did you see that cool fight'.* Thus, the integrated theoretical framework allowed for a combined exploration of cumulative development of the self and one's knowledge from birth to the cross-sectional period of adolescence, including trans-generational influences of socialisation (Erikson, 1980; Zigler *et al*., 1982).

The section that follows will conceptualise the participants' perceptual definitions of violence. This will be achieved by documenting the constituents of school-based violence, as well as the current trends that emerged from the results of this research study.

6.2.2 Defining school-based violence

The participants of this research study initially reported experiencing school-based violence as *"gang violence at school"* (Participant 9). References to *"the usual girl-on-girl fighting"* (Participant 7), *"gangsterism and bullying"* (Participant 3), *"gun-violence, fighting and stabbing"* (Participant 8) and being *"pushed around and physically attacked"* (Participant 6) described the acts of school-based violence as perceived by the participants. This supports the traditional definition of violence which believes that an act of violence should involve imposing a force against another person in order to inflict physical harm (Henry, 2000). However, unlike traditional ideologies of gendered violence, these findings also indicated that these accounts of school-based violence were reported as indifferent to gender (Leach & Humphreys; 2007; SACE, 2011, 2012). Hence, the definitions of violence, as inferred by the participants, confirmed that at a micro-systemic ground level, violence within the school environment is perpetrated by both male and female learners (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). In addition to this confirmation, these results highlight the chrono-systemic transition surrounding the ideology of school-based violence and the role of gender therein has evolved (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

Therefore, this finding challenges traditional ideologies of school-based violence and supports that this contemporary shift be thoroughly analysed in order to be understood and addressed. The discussion below will begin this analysis, pointing to the various social and ecological levels that influence this change in gendered behaviour and inevitably, influences a change in how adolescents develop.

The abovementioned results designate that both male and female learners were exposed to and perpetrated acts of violence within the school environment. This claim counter-argues the findings of Boulton and Smith (1994) which followed traditional pursuit and focused on male-induced violence. Gentile and associates (2004) support this debate against the traditional ideologies of school-based violence. It does so by suggesting that the violence induced by females within the school setting closely resembles violence induced by males within the same school environments (Gentile *et al.,* 2004). This trend of female-induced violence is further substantiated by the increasing statistical patterns of incarcerated female perpetrators which show a proportionate increase of female perpetrators to males (Haffejee *et al.,* 2005). To support that female-induced violence within schools have become proportionately severe, denotations of *"girl-groups"* and *"boy gangs"* were made by the participants. These groups and gangs were characterised as notorious for violent and deviant behaviour, often escalating from petty arguments over romantic partners or territory which begin in the classroom, to gang fights involving family members, community members, and weaponry.

The comparison of male- and female-induced violence illuminates the role of peer interactions during adolescent development. Peer interactions are known as the dominating micro-systemic structure during adolescence and are active within the school environment (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The results reiterate that peer interactions within the modern schooling system are influential in both, the development of female and male learners (Addison, 1992; Bronfenbrenner, 2005). It shows that the micro-systemic ecological level that is concerned with the peer relations at school facilitates scaffolding of the individual through peer interactions (Thom & Coetzee, 2004; Taubenheim, 1979; Tudge *et al.,* 2009). These peer interactions become prime during adolescents since teenagers mirror their peers and confirm or disconfirm aspects of their own identities through this process (Erikson, 1980). Participant 3 noted: *"if you are around bad influences, you get tempted… if you are strong enough, you won't be tempted into worrying about or having a status".* Participant 2

supported the impact of peers on adolescent development. She explained: *"I wanted to better myself education-wise, socialise with the right company and with people that were not violent".* Thus, the participants expressed that school-based violence appeared equally influence both male and female learners, unlike the traditional assumptions that exposure to violence influenced violent behaviour among males only. This comparative finding shows that both male- and female-induced violence follows a pattern of escalation which is exacerbated by peer influences.

As discussed above, the results of this study did not indicate a preference of either male of female induced violence at school. This finding depicts female-induced violence, as well as male-induced violence, is a serious concern within disadvantaged schools in contemporary South Africa. Participant 6 exclaimed that 'bad violence' was indifferent to the gender of the perpetrators or victim, but rather resulted when *"their parents would come to the school and join in and a big fight would break out".* However, the comparative findings indicated that both male and female perpetrated violence at schools were notorious in its own right. Participant 1 commented on the teachers' responses to female-induced violence and stated: *"if it was girls fighting, then it was more of a big deal".* Conversely, Participant 6 emphasized: *"with the boys, we wouldn't usually get involved because even if the teachers got involved, the teachers would get hurt".* This implies that female-induced violence was criticised for its social stigma delineated by social expectations. These social expectations have been established from the macro-systemic ideologies and attitudes regarding both gender relations and violence. It is from this macro-systemic level that social norms and values are disseminated through the permeable inner levels, as purported by Bronfenbrenner (1994a, 1994b) and Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998). This supports gender studies that denote that differential gendered behaviour and gendered speech is socialised into children from birth and emphasized at school (SACE, 2011; SACE, 2012). The following diagram depicts the comparative patterns of both female-induced and male-induced school-based violence.

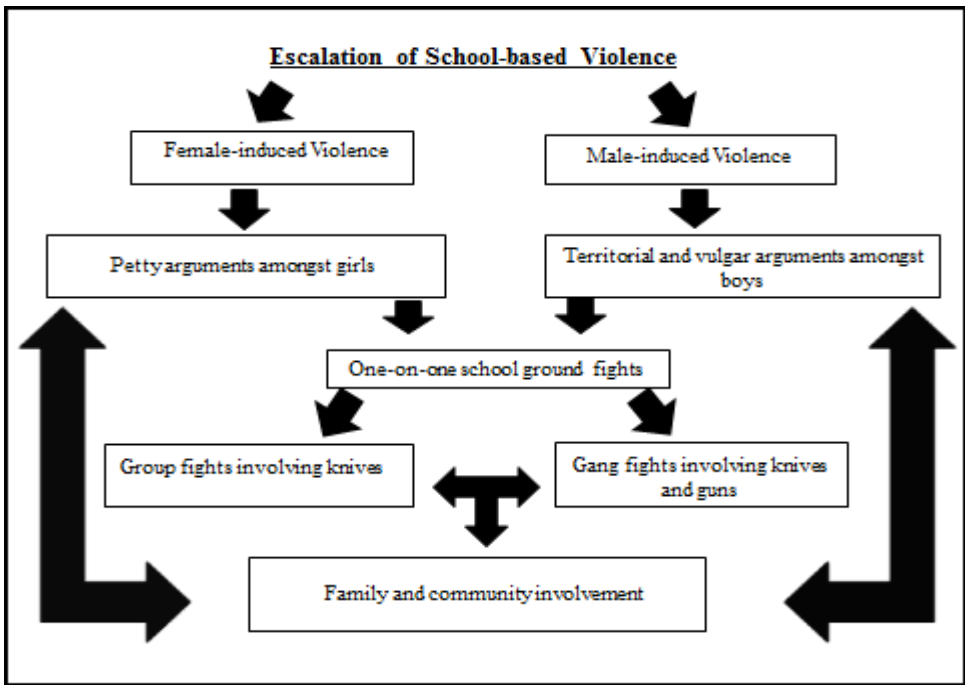


Diagram 6.3 Graphic representation of the perceptual escalation of violence

Diagram 6.3, as seen above, indicates that much of the behaviour considered as violence within these school environments were in some way encouraged and exacerbated by external social interactions as surmised by Erikson's psychosocial theory (Erikson, 1977). These social interactions appeared to be amongst micro-systemic structures such as peer groups and gangs at school, family members, or other members of the community who were not attending the school (Tudge *et al.*, 2009). This not only highlighted the interconnected units of the microsystem known as the mesosystem, but also the degree to which violent behaviour may negatively progress. This progression occurs as a response to social stimuli as earlier indicated by the integrated socio-ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Hook *et al.*, 2002; Lerner, 2006; Lewthwaite, 2011). Diagram 6.3 also illustrates the influence of domestic and community violence also appeared as dominant factors that contribute to school-based violence. This finding supports the conceptualisation of the cycle of violence and reported patterns of recurring violent responses by Pretorius & Botha (2009). Therefore, male-induced violence was criticised for escalating to severe physical harm and loss of control, whereas female-induced violence escalated to group fights and stabbing as well.

The subjective definitions and the emergent model of school-based violence set the foundation upon which the participants discussed their experiences of violence. This will be elaborated in the discussion that follows.

6.2.3 Experiences of violence

The initial subjective understandings of violence became more complex as their process of meaning-making evolved. Participants eventually expressed that violence, as a social construct, resulted from social interactions and models of social behaviour as seen in diagram 6.3. These social interactions and models occur as a combination of some or all social levels across the microsystem (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Participant 2 expressed how outsiders would get involved in school-based violence. She explained: *"boys from the school used to phone people from outside the school to bring weapons if they knew that they were going to fight after school"*. Similarly, Participant 3 added: *"I live in a very violent community… children are being abused all the time"* and Participant 5 supported this by disclosing: *"I came from an abusive background"*. As such, the subjective experiences of school-based violence coincide with the multi-faceted approach as espoused by Bronfenbrenner (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1994a, 1994b). Therefore, the results reiterate that understanding and defining violence differs as social elements such as peer interactions, community support and familial relations vary. These social elements differ from one society or sub-society to another. Therefore, the results support that violence is a complex social phenomenon.

The aforesaid finding supports that violence simultaneously impacts on multiple social and ecological levels and on the behaviour and the development of individuals who are exposed to it directly, indirectly or vicariously throughout their lifespan (Bronfenbrenner, 1994a, 1994b). As such, the participants reported that their experiences of and responses to school-based violence varied. Participants 2, 3, 6 and 9 confirmed taking on the role of the bystander when school fights would occur, whereas Participants 1, 4, 5 and 7 noted avoiding the violent incidents. Participant 8 reported: *"I would take it to the principal because our school had rules and if we did fight, we could get expelled"*. Therefore, as Burton (2008) states, schools should play the role of agents that facilitate secondary socialisation in order to regulate behaviours that are socially desirable and punish deviant behaviour such as acts of violence. This finding illuminated the importance of a multi-faceted intervention in order to begin addressing this scourge of school-based violence.

In conclusion, violence may be experienced in different ways, as the perceptions of violence varied according to the person's experiences and context. Therefore, these experiences are a reflection of the subjective experiences of school-based violence, as

reported by the research sample and do not imply that they are finite or that they may be generalised to all learner populations. The reported experiences of violence also indicated that each participant responded to incidents of violence in accordance with social responses from their functional social levels within the microsystem. The results indicated that intrapersonal elements were coupled with social responses in order to produce individual experiences and developmental affects. Therefore, understanding personal characteristics without socio-ecological conceptualisations, vice versa, would be viewed as partially effective, as initially stipulated in chapter three.

The next theme of identity development elaborates on the inter- and intra-personal elements that the participants reported as salient to their development of identity as adolescent females.

6.3 Perceptual Development of Violent/Aggressive or Non-aggressive Identities: Inter- and Intra-personal Elements

The second over-arching question enquired whether or not adolescents experienced violence within the school environment as an influential factor of identity construction. As such, the question posed to the participants was: "*Does school-based violence contribute to how adolescent females develop their sense of identity?"* The focus of this question involves the manner in which *school-based violence contributes to identity formation of adolescent females*. An explanation of "*how adolescent females negotiate the use of gender roles to formulate aspects of their identity".* Therefore, this study commits to the assumption that the subjective identities of the participants, which manifests through their individual behaviours, may *change in relation to various social settings.* In instances when such negotiation is reported, this secondary theme seeks to explore how this change takes place, focusing on the *degree of change* reported.

The discussion that follows will begin by expanding on the various social settings and interpersonal interactions that aid individual development.

6.3.1. Interpersonal factors of identity development - The role of interacting ecological levels in individual human development

The following section will discuss the role of socialisation as informed by the macro-systemic ideologies and attitudes. It will then explore the role of the various micro-systemic interactions and the interconnected exchanges the meso-systemic levels which are significant during the adolescence stage of development. It will elaborate on the stakeholders that play a

role in adolescent development; namely, peers and teachers within the school setting, family members within the home environment and role models within the community. The discussion will begin by evaluating the role of the macro-system and macro-systemic interactions.

As seen in the literature, macro-systemic structures accept social boldness, aggression, bullying and teasing or mockery as developmental elements of young masculine identities with regards to male adolescents (Bhana, 2005; Langa, 2008). Participant 1 confirmed this traditional approach to male adolescent development. She reported: *"society almost portrays that males are more authoritative and females are more emotional".* However, the constituents of masculinity such as authority, superiority and dominance have not only contributed to the uprising scourge of gender-based violence on a macro-systemic level, but also the retaliation of females in attempt to be empowered on a micro-systemic level (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Henry, 2000; Kim *et al.,* 2007; Langa, 2008; Lerner, 2006).

This micro-systemic shift in development may be understood as a 'subversion of gender roles'. This inverse reaction of gender roles may be explained as an active and performative attempt to reverse the values of society which maintain the inferiority of females in disadvantaged South African societies (Widom & Maxfield, 2001). Participant 1 expressed: *"the girls sometimes just wanted to show that they're tough. They're not going to walk away from a fight because then it's like they're defeated or have been taken advantage of".* Therefore, understanding female-induced violence, as a response to issues of gender inequality, is supported by research which describes women as vulnerable parties exposed to the violation of their human rights and barred against social and economic development (Usdin *et al.,* 2000). The social struggle surrounding gender remains a global struggle (Adinkrah, 2000; Bhana, 2005; Gergen & Gergen, 2011). Therefore, the macro-systemic ideologies regarding gender and violence further complicate and preserve gender inequality (Lewthwaite, 2011; Tudge *et al.,* 2009). The demographic information of the participants of this research study provided evidence of such discrimination, indicating that only three out of the nine participants had the privilege of pursuing tertiary education (Burton 2007; SACE, 2011, 2012). This relates directly to the presence of gender-inequality and gender violence that female adolescents are currently subjected to.

These developmental shifts, as discussed above, have resulted in the permeability of the traditional gender binary which differentiates masculinity as male traits and femininity as

female traits. These findings also support the salience of focusing on female-induced violence in order to mobilize gender-equality amongst adolescents, as initially argued by the researcher. Therefore, the results show that the interactions of female learners with male learners within the school environment, as well as the exposure of female learners to various types of violence have influenced the developmental shift that has resulted in an increasing prevalence of aggressive female identities (Erikson, 1980; Butler 1999; Gergen & Gergen, 2011; Lerner, 2006).

The exposure to violence may result from interacting with an isolated micro-system, such as the school or home setting, or from interacting within a meso-systemic combination of forms of violence (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Erikson, 1980; Lerner, 2006; Lewthwaite, 2011; SACE 2011, 2012). Burton and colleagues stress that although the schooling environment has a secondary role of dispersing and regulating socially desirable behaviours, primary socialisation in the home setting is essential (Burton, 2007; Burton & Leoschut, 2012). However, a concern raised by a participant was that of children who come from 'broken homes' who may perceive violent attitudes and violent behaviours as acceptable (Blissett *et al*., 2010; Hartas, 2011; Schwartz *et al.*, 2006; Strauss, 1979). Participant 5 disclosed: *"violence seems to resonate from people who came from broken backgrounds, that don't come from steady homes".* Therefore, this finding indicates that effective parental relationships have the ability to moderate violent behaviour (Schonert & Cantor, 1991). This finding emphasizes the importance of congruent meso-systemic functions. It explains that the socialisation that occurs in the home environment requires reinforcement from the secondary sites of socialisation. Bronfenbrenner's formulation of this ecological level supports this finding as it surmises that the quality of the relationship between the two microsystems, such as the home and school, strengthens the experiences within each (Darling, 2007; Tudge *et al*., 2009).

In contrast to this finding, the participants highlighted that lack of efficacy regarding secondary socialisation at school contributes to the current state of school-based violence (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Saarinen *et al.*, 1994). Participant 8 stated: *"at home, you're a different person because you know your parents are strict. So there are rules and regulations. Now with school, the teachers aren't there all the time to see what you're doing, so you lose control"*. Participant 3 added: *"sometimes in school because there were no parents and parental guidance, you would be naughty. But at home, I had to behave, I didn't have a choice".* This indicates that although parental influences are important to the

developmental processes, teacher relations and peer relations become dominant factors during the adolescence stage of development (Erikson, 1980; Lerner, 2006). This argument supports that adolescents adapt their expressions of identity through performative acts that are favourable to their audience (Butler, 1988; 1999; Gergen & Gergen, 2011). It is through these performances that gender embodiment is expressed, emphasizing the development and expression of performative gendered identity through social interaction.

To conclude, the participants of this study made reference to masculine identities in the development of female adolescents. They specified that elements of masculinity such as aggressive roles, attitudes and behaviours also apply to the female adolescents in their communities. Despite their individual attitudes toward school-based violence, their experiences were synonymous with various macro-systemic interactions and additional meso-systemic interconnections between dyadic interactions on a micro-systemic level (Bronfenbrenner, 1994a, 1994b; Erikson, 1977). Therefore, the results show that the development of the 'person in the centre', as referred to by Bronfenbrenner (1994a, 1994b), cannot be isolated from the various social and ecological levels upon which the individual interacts and exists, as supported by the performative aspects of their identities that the participants reported. In addition, acts of violence within the school environment was perceived as acceptable to some learners and unacceptable by participants who emphasized the role of individualism rather than conforming to the masses. Therefore, the degree and direction of the influence that parental, teacher and peer relations have on the development of an individual may vary between negative and positive effects, but the degree to which this influence function on the individual depends on intrapersonal aspects that will be discussed later in this chapter under section 6.3.2.

The following discussion will focus on the inner most systemic level, 'the person in the centre'. In doing so, it will explore some of the intrapersonal elements that the participants identified during their interviews.

6.3.2 Intrapersonal factors of individual development - The role of agency in individual human development

An elaboration on the participants' personal characteristics that were established throughout their adolescent stage of development will be the focus of this discussion. The role of agency, as well as the role of gender will be highlighted with reference to the participants' experiences of violence at school. Consequently, the focus will be on the shared experiences and perceptions of their identity development. The focal point of this discussion

is the influences of social skills, as well as the impact of social risk factors on the developmental process of identity formation.

6.3.2.1 The influence of social skills and social risk factors on identity formation

The participants shared a general experience of social risk factors that affected their individual development in addition to exposure to violence. Participant 1 described the female learners at her high school as 'rebels'. She expressed: *"they feel like they're allowed to be angry because the world has been unfair to them. It's like anger is an excuse for bad behaviour".* Participant 7 expressed her feelings of 'annoyance' toward her experiences of school-based violence. She exclaimed: *"there is no need for physical violence and you know injuring the next person is not going to solve anything", w*hereas Participant 3 disclosed: *"I live in a very violent community"* and Participant 8 supported this view by stating: *"we grew up with violence all over".* This finding was supported by Paat (2010), stating that vulnerable communities are undistinguishable from children who are at risk. Therefore, this suggests that being exposed to violence, amongst other risk factors beyond the discussion of this report, influences the availability of resources which would otherwise aid learners in affectively managing conflict.

These experienced risk factors, as described by the findings, appeared as a lack of resources in both avenues of social skills, and socio-factors. The latter was described as ecological challenges: poor living conditions, a lack of positive role models in their communities and adversity regarding their socio-economic statuses (Saarinen *et al.*, 1994). Participant 6 supported this finding and noted: *"people would bully other people for lunch money at school".* However, protective factors such as psychological resilience and creativity in utilizing one's available resources could possibly counteract the impact on the development of identity during adolescence (Rosario *et al.*, 2003). Participant 3 confirmed this finding. She stated: *"if you're around bad influences, you get tempted. I think it depends on the personality. If you're strong enough, you won't be tempted".* Participant 7 emphasized: *"they could just sit down, find reason and* [and] *talk about it".* Consequently, the findings specified that positive coping mechanism were able to lessen the negative impact of being exposed to violence during adolescents.

On the contrary, the reports also indicated that being vulnerable to adversity and having inadequate social support, contributes to the negative impact of exposure to violence on the development of one's identity. This finding is supported by Rosario and colleagues

(2003) who identified coping strategies or a lack of effective coping mechanisms as factors of vulnerability that puts today's youth at risk. Participant 3 noted: *"once a girl reaches high school, there goes her whole reputation. Because she wants to fit in, she goes to drugs, starts dating the gangsters and becomes a gangster herself: pregnancy, drugs, then leaving school".* Participant 3 described this as 'peer pressure', which Participant 4 explained in terms of school fights (Haffejee *et al*., 2005; Roasrio *et al*., 2003). Participant 4 stated: *"personal vendettas between certain people in a group would start a fights and then the whole group will jump in and join the fight".* Therefore, these participants' responses highlight that the desire to belong and feel a sense of belonging may result in teenagers becoming susceptible to peer pressure.

The findings show that identity-development has a dual response to the presence of violent environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1994b; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Darling, 2007; Tudge *et al.,* 2009). As a result, the differentiation between effective and ineffective coping mechanisms emerged as the process of individual reasoning, also known as the executive and mature human functioning of cognitive reasoning. These processes are known as the vices of Erikson's (1980) theorised stage of adolescence which primarily focus on the progression of individuation. It also identified the importance of the role of moderators or buffers such as peers and parents during the stage of adolescence, as discussed above, in section 6.3.1.

For the purpose of focusing on the intrapersonal factors involved in the identity development of adolescents, the following section will elaborate on the individual processes of reasoning highlighted in the above discussion.

6.3.2.2 The influence of cognitive reasoning on identity formation

Identity formation, or individuation, largely involves the individual's ability to develop world views based on his or her past experiences (Erikson, 1980). Subsequently, Erikson's theory focused on the views that individuals have about themselves and those whom they interact with frequently (Erikson, 1980; Hamman & Hendricks, 2005; Taubenheim, 1979). The findings depicted that the reasoning processes that the participants' behaviours were founded on were closely associated with the way in which they viewed violence based on their past experiences (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Erikson, 1980; Lerner, 2006). Participant 9 noted: *"the family background that I grew up in, they don't fight and*

swear, so that part of me is good", inferring that her responses to violence were guided by her family values (Schonert & Cantor, 1991).

Participant 8 added: *"you actually learn a lot from it* [being exposed to violence]. You learn how to control your temper… *you learn to stay away from certain people and to live a certain life. It shows that I am brave"*, denoting that her experiences of violence encouraged her against violent behaviour. As a result, this finding supports that adolescents' ability to reason and develop their own ideologies, as seen with their understanding of violence, relates to the dominant social dyads and influential environment with which they interact with regularly (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Erikson, 1980; Lerner, 2006). This thus confirms the efficacy of the integrated socio-ecological approach in understanding adolescent development and current challenges that appear to be hindering social development.

Furthermore, the findings showed that this process of reasoning which occurs between the input of social stimulation and the outcomes of violent behaviour is regulated by the cognitive decision to act in either an aggressive or non-aggressive manner. The participants noted that their responses to violent incidents were based on their inner emotional experiences. Participants 1, 4 and 7 respectively noted: *"I'd simply go away"*; *"I always tried to stay away… I would feel scared"*; *"I wouldn't get involved. I actually never stood there and watched I'd always walk away"*. Thus, the participants who felt unsafe would act in a manner that would secure their safety by moving to a safe environment as they were taught throughout their childhood (Hamman & Hendricks, 2005; Taubenheim, 1979).

Participants who felt that observing fights were entertaining or participating in fights were liberating, would then engage in the fights without any apparent reasoning processes directing their behaviour. Participant 8 recalled: *"stopping the fight makes it worse because then you get involved. Then they would say that you're choosing sides".* Participant 9 reflected: *"I think it was partially my fault for not doing anything to stop it. It was like I was encouraging and influencing it".* Participant 3 added: *"I used to be in the middle to see everything… if I had to be violent, then it would most probably take out the bad part of me, like my temper will be evolved in anger".* Therefore, the results indicate that the cognitive decision to participate in violent acts is also derived from one's emotive responses. However, these emotive responses are of an impulsive and irrational nature. Consequently, the development of poor interpersonal skills such as ineffective emotional regulation serves to

preserve the cycle of violence (Blissett *et al.*, 2010; Hartas, 2011; Strauss, 1979; Paat, 2010; Patchin *et al.*, 2006).

In conclusion, the overall findings of this research study supported the integrated theoretical approach. This approach surmises that although the development of an individual is largely influenced by their social interactions with others and the interconnected social levels of the ecological systems model, the individuals play a role as social agents through their actions. This role of social agency states that the individual, also known as, 'the person in the centre' reciprocally shapes the societies that they live in. Therefore, social agency also influences the social structures and institutions that govern socially accepted behaviour (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Erikson, 1980). This chapter highlighted that individual reasoning processes and rational thinking forms some effective coping techniques which encourage non-aggressive behaviour. On the other hand, impulsive reactions to violence and irrational actions aid in the development of aggressive identities. Thus, this study showed that violent societies contribute to the development of violent generations (Hamman & Hendricks, 2005). Similarly, violent members of society continue to preserve and maintain the cycle of violence that can currently be seen in South African societies overall.

The following discussion argues that violent members of society are not solely accountable for this social problem as seen above. Focusing on the manner in which violence was discussed by the participants during the interviews, the sections that follow will debate the inductive themes of *Normalising Violent Behaviour through Discourse* and *The Culture of Silence in Relation to Violence.*

6.4 Normalising Violent Behaviour through Discourse

The inductive themes which spontaneously emerged from this research study will be explored below. The desensitized manner in which the participants engaged with the topic of violence through language was compelling. It indicated an inherited high tolerance of the high frequency of violence that they were regularly exposed to. The tolerant attitude toward violence appeared to distract the participants from the severity of violence that occurs around them. For this reason this discussion will focus on areas of the semi-structured interviews that illuminated the participants' attitudes toward school-based violence.

Overall, the researcher identified that the results of this research study were delivered in a generalised tone of disregard. Although many of the participants expressed concern toward the prevalence of violence at their school, this was met by reports that violence was a

normative experience due to the frequency at which it occurred. Participant 5 reported: *"violence was a standard thing".* This was substantiated by Participant 1, who engaged in a monologue, stating: *"It's okay that I did it* [acted violently], *I was angry. It's a norm"*. In addition to these accounts Participants 1 and 5 accentuated their attitudes toward their experiences of female-induced violence. They stated respectively, *"just the usual girl-on-girl fighting, punching and taking out a knife for the next person"; "girls fought a hectic lot. I heard of girls breaking bottles* [to stab each other] *and the cops came to stop it, but it was so normal at that time".* Therefore, it was apparent that the participants of this study perceived the female-induced violence that they were exposed to as normal. Ng-Mak, Salzinger, Feldman and Stueve (2002) and Schwartz, Hage, Bush and Burns (2006) argue that normalising violence on a personal and psychological level also propagates violence in the very process of adapting to it.

In accordance with the abovementioned argument, the findings added that specific days of the week on which a violent confrontation was eminent were identified. Participant 1 noted: *"usually every week"*, whereas Participant 2 provided an estimate of the average frequency of school fights. She noted: *"on average there were two fights a week".* Participant 4 recalled: *"maybe four or five times in a week"*. Participant 5 added: *"on a week at average you would definitely have at least one fight".* The participants also noted that the most common days for fights would be days when the school would be dismissed early, acknowledging that the sporadic occurrences throughout the week was usually expected as well. This finding is in accordance with the claim that ineffective rule implementation and regulation at school level allow the learners to feel as though they do not have to conform to socially desirable behaviour when there are no teachers around to monitor their behaviour. This not only emphasized the explorative role embraced by adolescents in an attempt to discover themselves, but also the flexibility of their actions in response to their social audiences (Lerner, 2006; Butler, 1988; 1999; Gergen & Gergen, 2011).

Furthermore, the participants alluded to violence at school as an extracurricular activity that occurred at least once or twice a week, with Wednesdays and Fridays seeming having the highest reported incidents. Participant 8 emphasised that fights would occur *"mostly on Friday's, in fact almost every Friday".* This account was similar to that of Participant 9 who added that fights would occur "*every Friday and Wednesday when school came out early".* This occurrence is supported by research conducted by Ng-Mak and

colleagues (2002, p.92) which explains that not only do the "cognitions that normalize violence mitigate affective effects of exposure", but this process of normalisation and increased tolerance of violence increases the risk of violent behaviour.

Moreover, the results showed that the participants associated their previous secondary schools with a notorious reputation of violence. This indicated that the experiences of school-based violence experiences by the participants were not just of a recent nature, but of a historical one. Participant 1 noted: *"it* [her previous high school] *was known for the children's violent behaviour"*. This indicated that prior to attending these schools, the participants were already aware of the schools' statuses and as they graduated from these schools, their perceptions remained unchanged. Ng-Mak and colleagues (2002, p.93) supports that youngsters exposed to chronic violence in the inner city become overwhelmed by these experiences of violence and eventual adapt to it "albeit in ways that are ultimately maladaptive". Thus, this finding shows that the participants were exposed to long-term school-based violence and have adopted an accepting attitude toward these acts of violence, indirectly facilitating its continuation.

This acceptance and tolerance toward violent behaviour is substantiated by the etiological foundation of violence. Participant 3 reported: *"I live in a very violent community. Men and women are on drugs, children are being abused all the time, there's a lot of burglaries, rape, sexual violence, women abuse, child abuse, abortion, drug abuse, domestic violence, all of it"*. Therefore, the violent behaviour in disadvantaged South African communities suggests that a predisposition to past exposure and experiences of violence in terms of crime, physical violence and sexual violence creates vulnerability toward these occurrences (Cooper *et al.*, 2004; Usdin *et al*., 2000). The comorbid relationship between exposure to violence and the psychological responses known as Post-traumatic Stress Disorder indicate that females present more frequently with psychological distress of being exposed to violence and for longer periods. As such, females are deemed more responsive and influenced by their exposure to violence than males (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; American Psychiatric Association, 2000; Sadock, & Sadock, (2007). The responsive and influential factors contribute to the learned violent behaviours as discussed previously and aid in the continuation of violent behaviour that is seen in past generations and passed down to the newer generations.

Therefore, this section concludes by reiterating that the perceptions of violence in the twenty-first century are influenced by trans-generational and specific social perceptions of the social phenomenon. Trans-generational influences pertain to knowledge that is passed down by older generations, whereas social perceptions refer to the current trends in society. Hence, the manner and attitude in which violence was engaged with during the interviews alluded to a culture of acceptance and silence regarding this social problem. Subsequently, the discussion below will elaborate on the development of a culture of silence that aids in the preservation of the cycle of violence in South Africa and South African schools.

6.5 The Culture of Silence in Relation to Violence

The rationale of this study reports that a lack of interest in understanding female-induced violence has motivated the researcher to undertake this study. This lack of interest by media and academia, alike, has created a gap of knowledge which this study addresses. In doing so, the findings of this research indicated that the participants of this research study related to violence in general in a manner which mirrors that of the macro-systemic work of media and academia (Lerner, 2006). Accordingly, the discussion below will outline a culture of silence with regards to reporting and acknowledging violence as a key factor of human development. The discussion will then address this issue as it unfolded and became evident during the process of data collection. In doing so, a critical stance will be taken to support the emergence of this culture of silence and the role that it assumes when addressing violence in South Africa. This section will conclude that simultaneously, an action toward breaking this silence is needed across all the ecological levels in order for social interventions to be effective.

The introduction referred to a culture of silence that emerged during the semi-structured interviews conducted with the participants. Although this theme emerged with regards to the unique experiences of silencing violence, each experience showed that this culture of silence does not serve to challenge and address the problem. Participant 9 reiterated: *"I think it was partially my fault for not doing anything to stop it. It was like I was encouraging and influencing it".* Participant 8 noted: *"we wouldn't usually get involved because even if the teachers got involved, the teachers would get hurt".* Therefore, a tolerance for violence has been developed amongst learners, school bodies, parents and communities (Gracia, 2004). The results upon which this discussion is based, indicates the various ways in which the participants engaged in this culture of silence. These involve

adopting an avoidant approach, undermining their role in the cycle of violence or accepting violence as a social norm. Adopting an avoidant approach to school-based violence will be discussed first.

This approach was guided by the participants' disinterest in engaging with violence and resulted in participants distancing themselves and their involvement from any types of violence. Participant 1 indicated: *"I had no role in these fights. I'd simply go away".* Participant 5 added that her motto with regards to violence at school was: *"just go home safely and avoid the fight".* Furthermore, some of the participants reported fearing becoming victims of violence and feeling unsafe and insecure by these acts of violence. Participant 4 indicated: *"innocent people used to get hurt"*. Rodriguez, Quiroga and Bauer (1996) indicate that women who were exposed to domestic violence would refrain from disclosing their experiences due to further threats of violence from their perpetrator. Feelings of shame, embarrassment and in some cases guilt were coupled with adherence to gendered roles as well as concerns of police involvement (Rodriguez, Quiroga, & Bauer, 1996). Therefore, the avoidant approach resulted from fears of victimisation during incidence of violence.

The second sub-category of maintaining violence through silence emerged as the passive-aggressive "bystander" involvement. Although the participants, who engaged in these practices may not have been directly involved in these acts of violence, their presence and cheering seemed to endorse and encourage it. Participant 2 reported: *"I would just stand and watch or try to stop the fight".* Participant 3 noted: *"I used to be in the middle to see everything. I was the bystander".* Participant 9 added: *"I would stand around and watch the fight or go home".* This confirms that peer-pressure and interactions at micro-systemic levels, such as peer level, contribute to the continuation of violent behaviour among adolescents (Schad *et al.*, 2008). These participants reported observing school fights as though it was a means of entertainment and felt that it was not necessarily their responsibility to intervene, report or prevent such fights as they were not the ones fighting.

Some participants added that intervening in the fights would sometimes escalate the violence, resulting in them becoming the targets of violence. This escalation would then result in reciprocally violent actions in order for the participants to defend them. They reported that defending oneself usually meant that physical actions of violence were needed. Participant 8 stated: "*I'd try to stop the fight, but then stopping the fight makes it worse because then you get involved. Then they would say that you're choosing sides".*

Consequently, this sub-category reiterates that learners who were not directly involved in fights would feel a sense of accountability for indirectly engaging in acts of violence, partially because they were afraid of the consequences thereafter (Rodriguez, Quiroga, & Bauer, 1996). However, they seemed unable to acknowledge that by not intervening and by observing these fights; they may be indirectly contributing to the cycle of violence. Therefore, observing and cheering on fights, instead of challenging it in a constructive manner, may send out the message that it is acceptable to engage in school-based violence because there will be no repercussions (Henry, 2000). This supports Henry's (2000) definition of violence that explained that violence is acknowledged through social recognition and social responses such as punishment. Therefore, the lack of recognition and persecutory responses aids in the normative approach to accepting violence in society. This category will be discussed next.

Accepting violence as a social norm, as seen above in section 6.4, is the third approach from which the culture of silence emerged from the findings. These findings echoed that society's lack of action against violence is culminated by their disinterested attitudes. Therefore, the lack of acknowledgement has become a serious concern in the twenty-first century. Research has proven that violence, especially school-based violence, has become a serious concern worldwide (Bowen & Bowen, 1999; Burton, 2007; Burton 2008; Burton, & Leoschut, 2012; Cameron & Frazer, 1987; Henry, 2000; Leach, 2003; Leach & Humphreys, 2007; Patchin *et al.*, 2006; Rosario *et al.*, 2003). However, the results of this study indicated that acknowledgement of violence and the actions against it by learners, parents, teachers and school governing systems remain ineffective.

In addition to this, only Participant 8 sighted to official protocol that needed to be followed when reporting incidents of school-based violence. She said: "*I would take it to the principal because our school had rules and if we did fight, we could get expelled so we didn't want all that happening".* Participant 6 also added: *"I would inform the principal".* These claims were counteracted when Participant 8 reported that teachers would also adopt the avoidant approach and in some cases, parents and community members would directly encourage and engage in these acts of violence. This is supported by the theoretical approach of this study which emphasizes that an individual's involvement with people and social environments not only influences their identity-development in general, but also aids to regulate their behaviour through social responses (Erikson, 1980; Henry, 2000).

As a result, most of the participants reported not intervening at all during school fights and adopting the avoidant approach in order to avoid becoming a target of violence themselves. In conclusion, the above-mentioned inductive themes explained how normalising violence and adopting a culture of silence toward acts of violence serve to indirectly encourage and support such behaviour amongst both male and female learners.

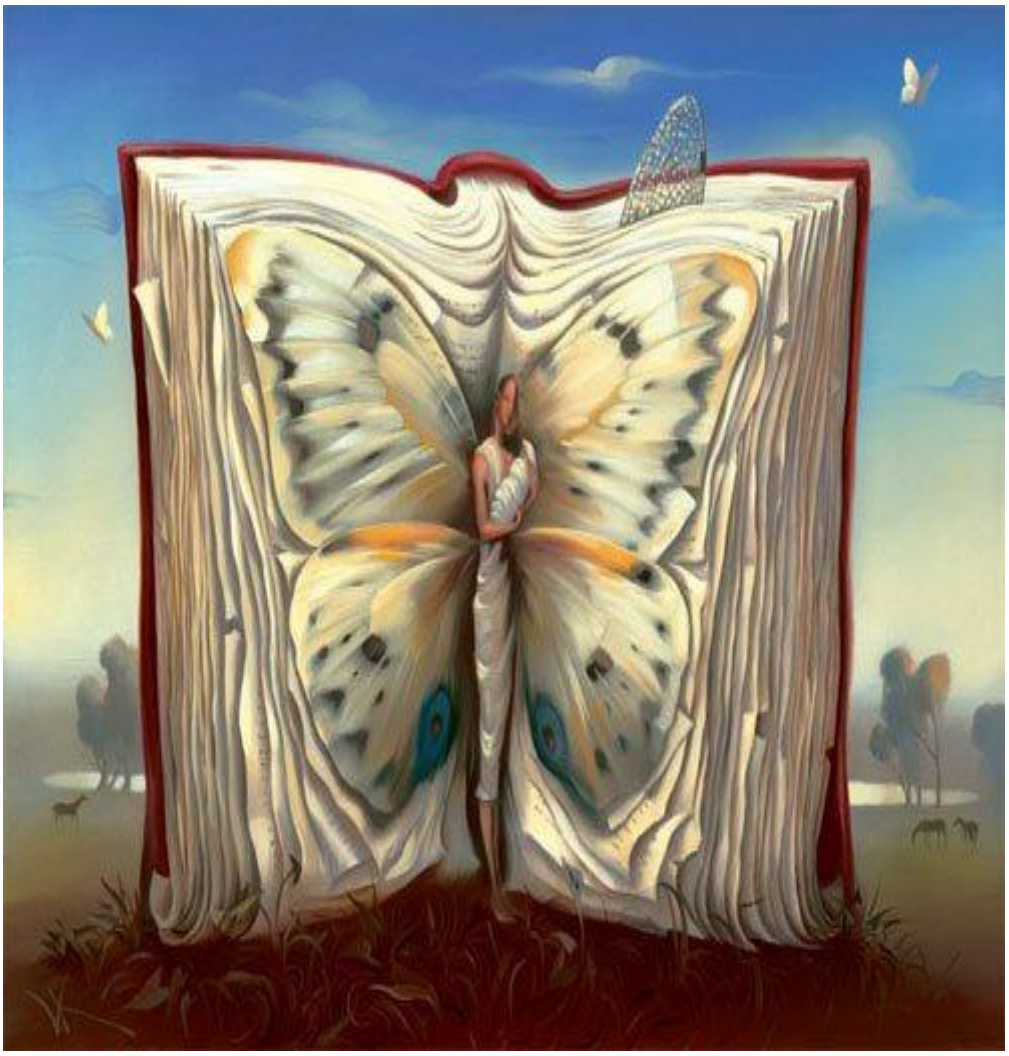
6.6 Concluding Comments

The results of this study confirmed that violence is a complex and multifaceted social phenomenon that impacts equally on the development of both female and male adolescents. This research study illuminated that violence may be experienced in different ways by different individuals despite one's gender. Therefore, experiences of violence are informed by an individual's worldview and view of self as a gendered body. Subsequently, social responses to gender ideologies and additional intrapersonal elements, such as emotional awareness, cognitive development and one's coping strategies, also play important roles during the lifespan of human development (Lerner, 2006). The discussions elaborated on the flexibility of gender identity during adolescence. This indicated that the performative gendered acts which depicted one's desired identity was permeable to one's social environment and the interactions with the present audience.

In addition, the findings of this research study highlighted a culture of acceptance and tolerance to violence which stems from the socialisation of violence as an increasingly normative social occurrence. As a result, this chapter highlighted the need for the discourse surrounding violence to be challenged in order to challenge the social responses to violence. Moreover, this chapter reiterated that the culture of silence encourages the preservation of the cycle of violence in South Africa and South African schools in which younger generations are supposed to be socialised into responsible adults. Therefore, the discussion of the results that emerged from this research study emphasizes the importance of understanding the distinctive subjective experiences of violence from a South African perspective. This was done in order to understand the ideographic impact that exposure to violence had on the process of identity-development with regards to female adolescents.

The following chapter will conclude this research report by discussing the future recommendations and implications of this study based on the research process and findings of this research study. Thereafter, a reflection on the research strengths and limitations will be presented, and a summative conclusion of the study will be provided.

Chapter Seven – Recommendations, Future Implications, Research Limitations and Conclusion



"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."
— Mahatma Gandhi

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will conclude this research report. Firstly, the recommendations that emerged from the discussions in chapter six will be presented. This will be followed by an exploration of the limitations of this research study. Hereafter, a reflection of the strengths will follow. Subsequently, this chapter will conclude by presenting a summary of the research outcomes.

7.2 Recommendations

The aim of the following recommendations is twofold. Firstly, it aims to strengthen and illuminate the current understandings of female-induced violence within the school setting. It is suggested that through this contemporary understanding, stake-holders will be encouraged to generally engage more insightfully. Therefore, their interactions with adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds within South Africa require a mindful approach. Secondly, it aims to inform social interventions directed at addressing the impact of school-based violence on adolescent development, especially the development of individual identities. The discussion below will explain how the findings of this research propagate insightful interactions with and understandings of adolescent learners.

Stakeholders concerned with the development of school-going adolescents, as listed during the research study, are educational policy-makers, educators, school counsellors, counselling and educational psychologists and parents. Therefore, the researcher argues that the traditional models of psychological development are only partially sufficient in understanding modern trends of human development and social behaviour within the South African context. Therefore, this recommendation publicizes that deviant behaviour in schools, such as violence, needs to be understood from a broader perspective such as the integrated socio-ecological perspective proposed in this research study (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Hook *et al.,* 2002; Lerner, 2006; Lewthwaite, 2011). This perspective encourages stakeholders to incorporate the development of interpersonal and social skills in their interventions. Interpersonal and social skills such as emotional regulation, effective communication, and conflict resolution will allow adolescent learners to better deal with the issues of aggression and violence that they are faced with in their daily lives.

As such, a multifaceted conceptualisation must be retained when interacting with adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds. In order to overcome this challenge, this research study has shown that an integration of established theories contributes to a better

suited understanding of adolescent development within populations of disadvantaged South Africans. Thus, the findings suggest that continuous research be conducted within the integrated socio-ecological theoretical frameworks, to maintain a recent understanding of the transformation of social phenomena such as violence.

The second recommendation concerns the implementation of the above mentioned knowledge in order to address issues of school-based violence. This reiterates that disadvantaged communities in South Africa are faced with unique circumstances. Therefore, understanding and addressing human development within these unique circumstances requires distinctive social interventions. Implementing interventions that allow for both the psychosocial and ecological factors to be explored is admittedly a complex task. However, this research study has demonstrated that violence is a complex social phenomenon that requires a systematic approach. Therefore, this research advises that educational policies be revised to define violent behaviour and confront such behaviour through recognition and rapid response. This method supports the integrated socio-ecological approach, as well as Henry's (2000) perspective of violence. This method should then be disseminated throughout schools in the form of interactive programs, integrated life orientation courses and a direct 'name and shame' approach to combating violence and making schools the safe environment that Burton and colleagues purport it to be (Burton, 2007, 2008; Burton & Leoschut, 2012; SACE 2011, 2012).

The emphasis on a systemic intervention is commanded by the escalating trends of school-based violence. These trends, as represented in diagram 6.3 allows for the prediction that both male- and female-induced violence will continue to escalate in the presence of ineffective primary and secondary socialisation. This is substantiated by the continuous desensitisation of violence and the growing culture of silence toward violence. Therefore, it is eminent that school-based violence be confronted by the school governing bodies that should be tasked with disseminating their programs into the community, as well as into the familial structures of learners. These programs should address defining and understanding violence, developing effective social skills such as effective communication and conflict management skills, as well as intrapersonal skills such as self-awareness, emotion regulation and positive defence mechanisms that facilitate well-being despite adversity.

The following section will explore areas of limitation which arose throughout this research process.

7.3 Research Limitations

As reflected on in chapter four under section 4.7, there were some limitations of this study that arose throughout the process. These limitations will be addressed systematically, as it pertains to specific areas of this research. The discussion of the challenges faced by the researcher during the research process will adhere to the following structure, namely: challenges regarding the existing knowledge of contemporary school-based violence; challenges pertaining to the proposed integrated theoretical framework; and the methodological limitations that stemmed from the approach adopted by the researcher.

Firstly, this study contributed to a new body of knowledge regarding the presence of female-induced violence in disadvantaged South African schools. Hence, it relied on existing research of school-based violence that considers male learners as the perpetrators of school-based violence. As a result, it was able to establish trends of female-induced violence which requires additional research to further contribute to this body of knowledge. In order to validate these trends surrounding female-induced violence, the findings of this research study will benefit from external validation through replication of the study. This will allow for elements of confirming or disconfirming data to contribute to the findings of this study, strengthening it through peer and collegial review.

Secondly, the integrated theoretical framework proposed by the researcher would also benefit from peer and collegial review as it will aid in the evaluation, validation and efficacy of the framework within the South African context (Morse *et al.*, 2002). Since the integrated model proposed in this study may be viewed as novel, the efficacy of this framework would be maximised by a multifaceted exploration which this study was unable to achieve due to time constraints. This coincides with the third avenue of research limitations regarding the methodological approach adopted by the researcher. This will be explained in the discussion below.

Thirdly, concerns surrounding the aspect of triangulation that was highlighted during the research process must be highlighted as a limitation to this study. As previously mentioned in chapter four, section 4.7, triangulation involves cross-referencing which strengthens the conformability of the research findings (Denzin, 2009, 1978). Although this study successfully achieved this through cross-referencing with existing literature, it would have benefitted from additional triangulation. Therefore, replications of this research inquiry

will benefit from adopting mixed methods of research involving a multifaceted view in order to achieve cross-referencing (Jick, 1979).

Despite the limitations that arose during the research process, the researcher adequately addressed these areas within the scope of the research project. This supports the importance of continuous reflection and evaluation of the research process and research outcomes. The discussion below will conclude this research report by providing a summative overview of the research outcomes.

7.4 Concluding Comments

The introductory chapter of this research report provided an outline of undertaken research study. A discussion, contributing to a better understanding of violence as a social phenomenon, indicated that female-induced school-based violence has been negated by society. This finding that emerged from the existing literature warranted a multi-faceted approach which allowed the researcher to address this gap through field work.

The review of related literature reiterated that violent behaviour in South Africa predisposes South African youth to the effects of violence. Crime, physical violence and sexual violence were listed as experiences of violence that created vulnerability toward future exposure thereof. This study focused on the influences of peers, family, school bodies and community members as socialising agents. This approach surmised that the causes of behavioural problems, such as violence, are multi-faceted and directly related to socio-ecological interactions and interconnections. Therefore, parents, community members, peer groups and school bodies play an integral role in creating an understanding of behaviour that is socially acceptable and desirable.

The integrated socio-ecological framework provided a theoretical foundation upon which adolescent identity formation was understood. This framework allowed for an understanding of the cumulative development of individuals through social relationships. It also expanded on the various interconnected social spheres, showing that exposure to violence has a reciprocal consequence on the individual development, as well as on the shaping of society at large. Focusing on the gender roles and performative gender identity of female adolescents, violent communities were viewed as a reflection of the exposure to violence on individuals, showing that female-induced violence were prevalent in both community and school environments. Therefore, the current state of gender identities that

manifested as violent attitudes and behaviour among adolescent females were seen as a result of violent interactions on one or more ecological levels.

The research inquiry implemented the abovementioned theoretical framework following qualitative guidelines of research. A research sample of nine adolescent females participated in semi-structured interviews with the research. The researcher then collected the data by means of audio-recording and analysed the data by implementing the thematic content analysis guidelines suggested by Hsieh and Shannon (2005). A discussion surrounding the ethical considerations was provided, indicating that the researcher employed standardised techniques to ensure participant anonymity and safety throughout the research process. In addition, a reflection of the research strengths and limitations, as well as the researcher's personal experiences was declared.

The findings of this study emerged from a deductive approach based on the existing literature of youth experiences of violence. These findings indicated that during adolescence, identity is flexible and can be seen as performative responses to one's social audiences. The results of this study confirmed that violence is a complex and multifaceted social phenomenon that impacts equally on the development of both female and male adolescents. This research study illuminated that violence may be experienced in different ways by different individuals despite one's gender. In addition, experiences of violence are informed by an individual's worldview and view of self as a gendered body. The results also indicated that relevant social responses and intrapersonal elements also play important roles during the lifespan of human development (Lerner, 2006). Therefore, the discussions of this research study elaborated on the flexibility of gender identity during adolescence, indicating that performative gendered acts are responsive to one's social environment and the interactions with one's audience.

In conclusion, this research study established that violence, as experienced by adolescent females, is defined and understood through an emic lens. This emphasises that social phenomena such as violence may be experienced uniquely by individuals that have been exposed to violence through different social interactions on different social levels. This study also highlighted that violence, as experienced in disadvantaged South African schools, have escalated in its severity. This pattern of escalation has been confirmed internationally, has been revealed for both male and female learners, confirming the presence and prevalence of both male-induced and female-induced violence. Furthermore, this study highlighted a

concern toward the social responses to violence. It indicated that a historical inheritance of desensitization toward violence has developed a culture of silence that maintains the cycle of violence and the evolution thereof. Emphasizing the unique circumstances experienced by the participants of this study, this research encouraged the integration of a socio-ecological model. This model should be implemented when addressing adolescent development with the South African context. In addition, this research report suggested that a multifaceted approach to social intervention be taken in order to confront the scourge of violence in South African schools.

If this research were to be reworked, a mixed method approach, as well as an external coder would be used to ensure saturation through triangulation. This would allow the research to strengthen the argument which claims that socially accepted or silenced violence in one's social environments, cultivates an internalised sense of violence. This internalisation of aggression, as extensively discussed in this study, supports the claims that exposure to violence influences the development of aggressive identities among female adolescents in disadvantaged communities in South African.

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Appendices

Appendix A -	Ethical Clearance Certificate
Appendix B -	Amended Semi-structured Interview Schedule
Appendix C -	Participant Information Sheet (Pilot Study)
Appendix D -	Participant Information Sheet
Appendix E -	Informed Consent Forms

Appendix A - Ethical Clearance Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: MACC/13/007 IH**
PROJECT TITLE:	Experiences of school-based violence as a contributing factor to identity formation: Perceptions of South African Adolescent Females from a Disadvantaged Community
INVESTIGATORS	Packery Jogini
DEPARTMENT	Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	08/04/13
DECISION OF COMMITTEE*	Approved

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE: 11 April 2013

CHAIRPERSON _____
(Professor Andrew Thatcher)

cc Supervisor:

Dr. D Alexander
Psychology

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)

To be completed in duplicate and **one copy** returned to the Secretary, Room 100015, 10th floor, Senate House, University.

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure, as approved, I/we undertake to submit a revised protocol to the Committee.

This ethical clearance will expire on 31 December 2015

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix B - Amended Semi-structured Interview Schedule

Department of Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559. Email: Jogini.Packery@students.wits.ac.za

Name: _____ Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____

1. *How do young females, who have been exposed to school-based violence, experience this social phenomenon?*

Tell me about any form of violence that you observed or experienced at the high-school that you attended?

- What was the nature of the fight/ why would the people at your old school fight?
- How bad were the fights?
- Were the fights gang related and were weapons used?
- How often would there be a fight?
- Who were the common perpetrators? Who were the victims?

2. *Does school-based violence contribute to how adolescent females develop their sense of identity?*

Do you think that being exposed to violence contributed, in any way, to the person you are today?

- How do you perceive adolescent identity-development when violence is present?
- How do you feel about your own development in relation to being exposed to violence?

3. *What are the perceived gender roles and rules for females in violent contexts?*

If you think of your roles and feelings when these fights would break out and during these fights, do you think that you behaved the way your society (on the whole) expects girls to behave?

- What was your role during these fights? Bystander, peacemaker, gang member, etc.
- What would you do at the time of these fights?
- How did you feel in that moment when fights would break out?
- During fights, what did the girls usually do?
- What behaviours were considered girl-like and boyish in your school?
- How do the behaviours of males and females differ in your family setting?
- What are the gender roles and feelings would you say agreed or disagreed with societies expectations?

4. *How do young females negotiate the use of gender roles in order to create their identity?*

As a female, were you expected to behave (act) differently at home than at school?

- If yes, how did you behave differently in these different contexts?
- Was it easy adjusting your behaviour?
- If no, tell me more about your behaviour at school and at home

Researcher's Comments (Reflexive notes)

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Appendix C – Participant Information Sheet (Pilot Study)

Department of Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559. Email: Jogini.Packery@students.wits.ac.za

08 April 2013

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET- Pilot Study

Dear Participant,

Hello, my name is Jogini Packery. I am currently doing my Master's degree in Psychology at the University of Witwatersrand. As a part of my degree, I am required to do a research study and submit a research report. To meet this requirement, I would like to research **the contribution of violence in schools to the identity formation of young females**. Identity formation refers to how adolescents develop their 'sense of self'.

I would like to invite you to participate in the pilot study required for this research. The pilot study will be conducted to make certain that the questions on the interview schedule does in fact answer the questions that this research proposes to answer regarding exposure to violence in schools as a contributing factor to identity formation among young adolescent females.

Participation in the study will require you to complete an individual interview with myself, which should take approximately an hour. The interview will be conducted at a time and place convenient to you. During the interview, you will be asked about violence at your attended high school, as well as the gender roles during and after these violent events that might have contributed to the person that you are. With your consent, the interview will be audio-recorded. This recording will be used to ensure that your experiences are accurately captured and recorded. All recordings will be stored in a locked cupboard at the university, to which only my supervisor and I will have access to. The recordings and transcripts will be destroyed upon the completion of the research, approximately five (5) years after the research has been conducted.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary; therefore, you will in no way be advantaged or disadvantaged by choosing to participate or not participate in this study. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty should, you feel that you do not want to continue in this study. All responses are confidential; hence only I will know the identity of

participants and at no time will your identity be revealed in the research report. Direct quotes, however, will be sanitized and included in the report. Given this, no individual feedback will be provided. However you may get feedback on the group trends found in this study. A page summary sheet will be made available, upon request. This will be available approximately a year after the date of interview. You may request the summary sheets by contacting me via email address provided in the letterhead.

The results of this study will be included in a research report which will be submitted to my supervisor, the Faculty of Humanity and external supervisors at the University of Witwatersrand. The report will also be submitted and used for publication, psycho-education seminars and conference presentations.

Should you experience any emotional discomfort resulting from the interview, you will be referred to the Emthojeni Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand for counselling. The number of the Centre is (011) 717-4513. You may also contact LifeLine Crisis Call Centre (Ekurhuleni) at 0114224242. Should you have any queries or require any assistance regarding the interview or study, please feel free to contact me via the details provided.

Thank you for reading this. I look forward to your participation.

Kind Regards,

Ms. J. Packery

PSIN 0310543

Jogini.p@gmail.com

Dr. Daleen Alexander

PS

(Supervising Counselling Psychologist)

_____ _____

Appendix D – Participant Information Sheet

Department of Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559. Email: Jogini.Packery@students.wits.ac.za

08 April 2013

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Participant,

Hello, my name is Jogini Packery. I am currently doing my Master's degree in Psychology at the University of Witwatersrand. As a part of my degree, I am required to do a research study and submit a research report. To meet this requirement, I would like to research **the contribution of violence in schools to the identity formation of young females**. Identity formation refers to how adolescents develop their 'sense of self'.

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Your participation in this study is completely voluntary; therefore, you will in no way be advantaged or disadvantaged by choosing to participate or not participate in this study. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty should, you feel that you do not want to continue in this study. All responses are confidential; hence only I will know the identity of participants and at no time will your identity be revealed in the research report. Direct quotes, however, will be sanitized and included in the report. Given this, no individual feedback will be provided. However you may get feedback on the group trends found in this study. A page summary

sheet will be made available, upon request. This will be available approximately a year after the date of interview. You may request the summary sheets by contacting me via email address provided in the letterhead.

The results of this study will be included in a research report which will be submitted to my supervisor, the Faculty of Humanity and external supervisors at the University of Witwatersrand. The report will also be submitted and used for publication, psycho-education seminars and conference presentations.

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Thank you for reading this. I look forward to your participation.

Kind Regards,

Ms. J. Packery

PSIN 0310543

Jogini.p@gmail.com

_____

Dr. Daleen Alexander

PS

(Supervising Counselling Psychologist)

_____

Appendix E – Informed Consent Forms

INFORMED CONSENT TO BE INTERVIEWED

I, _____, have read the information provided about this study and confirm that I understand what is expected of me as a volunteer participant. I agree to participate in the study and am aware that I have the right not to answer any questions that I do not feel comfortable answering. I acknowledge that, at any time of the study, I maintain the right to withdraw my participation or any information provided by me during the interview without any penalties. I understand that my identity will be kept confidential, my own words may be used, but in no way will it be linked back to me. I consent for my experiences to be included in the research report which will be presented at various academic levels.

I hereby consent to participate in the study and give my permission to be interviewed.

Signature _____ Date _____

Contact Details _____

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INFORMED CONSENT TO BE AUDIO-RECORDED

I, _____, have read the information explaining this study and confirm that I understand what is expected of me as a volunteer participant. I understand that all necessary measure will be taken to ensure restricted access to my interview materials (audio-recording and transcript) allowing access only to the researcher and her supervisor in order to keep my identity confidential. I confirm that I am in no way forced to consent to being recorded and understand that the recordings will be destroyed upon the completion of the study.

Permission granted to record (Please circle your answer)

YES NO

Signature _____ Date _____