

**NATURE AND EXTENT OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN THE GAUTENG
PROVINCE**

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Abstract

Incidents of school violence are frequently reported in the South African media. Due to these media reports, school violence is increasingly perceived as a major problem in South Africa. It is hard to evaluate media statements because studies are dispersed and statistics are fragmented. The media reports can lead to wrong or misplaced interventions or programmes to reduce school violence. This research combined the dispersed studies of school violence in order to evaluate, amongst other things, if the popular view is correct or not. This study found that school violence accounts for less than 0.01% of deaths of among children aged 18 years and less in the Gauteng province per year. This figure is lower compared to deaths, which is 1%, of children of the same age in the developed countries. From the research findings recommendations were made to reduce school violence in Gauteng schools.

Declaration

I declare that this report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Methodology

The fragmented nature of data on violence in South African schools is cause for concern. Media reports of high levels of violence, which in the schools have important effects, cannot be evaluated because no reliable basis of comparison exists. There is no shortage of interventions to reduce school violence, but it is not clear what facts these interventions are based on.

The Department of Education, (2009) has responded to claims of high incidences of school violence in South Africa by entering into a variety of partnerships in order to provide intervention programmes at schools. These include interventions such as support to school management, exploring humanitarian law, implementation of a youth development curriculum as part of the life orientation learning area, training workshops on the Hlayiseka Early Warning System, support and development of school codes of conduct, youth camps and extra-mural activities in partnership with Red Cross, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Super-Sport (DBE, 2009). However, although the Department is acting, it is not clear on what factual basis these interventions are based.

School violence is increasingly perceived as a major problem in South Africa as a result media reports. Therefore these reports can lead to wrong or misplaced interventions or programmes.

The child's unpleasant experiences at school may play a part in problem behaviour and learning difficulties. The sensitive personality of a child is more vulnerable and hence, more likely to become irreparably warped than that of a mature adult (Astor and Benbenishty, 2008). Despite inborn differences in temperamental stability and intellectual potential, the child's development is helped or hindered by the opportunity afforded by his/her home and school to make appropriate choices and to cope with resolvable conflicts (Zulu, Urbani, van der Merwe and van der Walt, 2004).

It is easy to blame a researcher with regard to data inconsistency. However, the fragmented data on school violence make it difficult, but not impossible to provide an account of school violence. In 2001, a study of school violence was conducted in Gauteng. This study might have a reliable overview but was never made public. This means that we need to rely on other fragmented statistics.

Statistics can be confusing and complex for ordinary citizen. Therefore in this study statistics have been made uncomplicated and accessible. Secondary data used in this study was disaggregated to Gauteng province. This makes information easily understandable. In some instances data was presented as a national figure and was not made publicly accessible. The researcher has to calculate the percentage of school going age of provinces to estimate the prevalence of school violence particularly in Gauteng schools. Gauteng province has been chosen because most of the media reports indicates that it is one provinces most affected by school violence amongst Western Cape and KwaZulu Natal.

This research combined the dispersed studies of school violence into one set of data in order to ascertain, amongst other things, if the popular view is correct or not. Specifically, the study integrated dispersed data on school violence to assess the extent of school violence in the Gauteng province. Data was acquired from seven different sources, and then analysed and compared so as to identify the pattern and extent of school violence. The evidence from this study may assist in making intervention programmes more focus-driven.

1.1 Background to the study

The Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) contains various rights that are applicable to safe learning environment in schools. These include the right to human dignity, the right to freedom and security of the person and the right to privacy. The South African

Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) provides the legislative framework for ensuring that constitutional rights of children are enforced in schools. These include, for example, prohibiting the use of corporal punishment. Internationally, the Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates, amongst other things, that every child has the right to learn in a safe environment (UNICEF, 1989). Schools play a crucial role in the socialisation of a child. It is therefore critical that schools offer a safe environment in which learning and growth can take place (Eliasov and Frank, 2000). Safe schools are important for learning and teaching to take place effectively (World Health Organisation (WHO), 2002). The prevalence of school violence deters meaningful learning and teaching in schools. It has been suggested that violence is a major public health hazard around the world (Nwankwo, LaShore, Jackson and van Rooyen, 2002).

A study on firearm-related injuries among the youth revealed that the incidence of firearm injuries and mortality rates tripled in the period from 1992 to 1996 for persons younger than 19 years of age in South Africa (Eliasov and Frank, 2000). In another study entitled, "Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)," it was found that 23% of learners in South Africa feel unsafe in schools (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy and Foy, 2006). This study also stressed that feeling safe in school and enabling success in learning are inextricably linked. Thus, school environment should be conducive for effective teaching and learning. Parents send their children to school in the hope of securing quality education and as places where learners can be educated and become responsible adults.

Debarbieux (2001) points out that school violence in South Africa cannot be pinned down to a single cause. Instead, violence in schools is a result of many complex issues, amongst others, family situations, socioeconomic conditions, and teaching methods. Exposure to violence in the home, school or community can leave emotional scars and place young people at risk of sometimes becoming involved in acts of violence in the future. Threats of violence and

personal experiences with violence at school negatively affect learners and the educational process (Nwankwo, et al., 2002).

According to Mullis, et al. (2006), for teaching and learning to be enjoyable, the learning environment must be free from threat and gang activities. School violence has turned schools into battle grounds (Mullis, et al., 2006). A safe and secure school environment is a key aspect of a positive learning environment. From Mullis, et al. (2006), it was established that a positive association exists between school safety and average reading achievement. Learners at a high level of the school safety index had average achievements of 512, compared to 494 for learners at the medium level and 487 at the low level (Mullis, et al., 2006, p.275). In this assessment, South Africa achieved a reading score of 369, which is far below international averages of 529. Whether this is due to school safety or poor quality education was not tested.

Schools, homes and religious institutions are central institutions crucial to the development of a child. According to the WHO (1996) health is defined as:

“... not only as absence of disease or infirmity, but as a state of complete physical, mental and social well being. Therefore living in an environment filled with violence or threat of violence hinders a state of well being and therefore negatively affects the health of children”

This research aims to identify the nature and extent of violence by focusing on the age and gender of victims, type of assault and most common time of the day school violence occurs. This will help the Department of Education and other stakeholders in developing interventions in addressing violence in schools. Data on violence exists, but it is not easily accessible, for example, from the South

African Police Services (SAPS), Department of Basic Education¹ (DBE) and Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP). Furthermore, it consists of reports of individual cases.

This study compares data across different datasets. The research produces an accessible and usable set of figures that may provide basis for evidence-based policy formulation. The comparison of data across diverse data sources will give an idea on the extent and characteristics of school violence in the Gauteng province.

1.2 Problem statement

School violence and disruption is a major concern for parents, learners, educators, political leaders and other members in the Gauteng community. Information and awareness helps to provide the public with evidence regarding the extent of violence in schools. However, the available data was fragmented and even contradictory.

Incidents of school violence are frequently reported in the South African media. Due to these media reports, school violence is increasingly perceived as a major problem in South Africa. It is hard to evaluate media statements because studies are dispersed. This view can lead to wrong or misplaced interventions or programmes.

1.3 Purpose statement

The purpose of this research is to gain some insight into better understanding school violence in the Gauteng province. This is done through analysis of secondary data on school violence in the Gauteng province. This includes

¹ National Department of Education (DOE) has split into Department of Basic Education (DBE) and Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). This study will refer to DBE as the department that deals with schools.

establishing the most common forms of school violence reported. This research documents the incidence and type of school violence in Gauteng.

Extracting relevant data from different sources and combining it provided useful information on the school violence in the Gauteng Province. Data has been acquired from the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP), Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (YRBS), South African Police Service (SAPS), Department of Basic Education (DBE), National Injury Mortality Surveillance System (NIMSS), Medical Research Council (MRC), and the Department of Correctional Services.

1.4 Research questions

The research investigates the nature and extent of school violence, as reported across seven sources. The study sets to answer the following questions:

Main Question:

- What is the extent of reported violence in Gauteng schools?

Secondary questions:

- What are the types of school violence?
- When and where is school violence committed?

1.5 Research methodology

In order to understand the scope of school violence, it is necessary to understand the meaning of a 'child,' so as to give context to school violence.

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, “a *child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier*” (UNESCO, 1990:2).

Knowing and understanding the definition of a ‘child,’ helps in analysing the data by using the appropriate age of school-going children. This broadens the examination of violence beyond what happens only on school premises, but differentiating it from violence in the country at large.

For the purpose of this research, secondary data is used and focuses on children 19 years old and younger. The advantage of using readily available data is that data may be available on a much larger scale. This can contribute to credibility of findings (Haley, 2008). Methodologically, studies on school violence usually take a confirmatory or hypothesis verification approach. That is, school violence is assumed to exist and survey questions elicit responses that confirm its existence (Mayer and Leone, 1999).

Secondary data is that which has already been collected by someone else for a different purpose (Haley, 2008). The secondary research approach was used, for example, by Durkheim, in a research study on suicide. He took the official suicide statistics of different countries recorded by coroners or their equivalent and analysed them to see if he could identify variables that would mean that some people are more likely to commit suicide than others. He found that Catholics were less likely to commit suicide than Protestants. In this way, he took data that had been collected for quite a different purpose and used it in his own study. However, he had to do a lot of comparisons and statistical correlations himself in order to analyse the data (Haralambos, 1995).

Neuman (2006) argues that existing statistics may not fit neatly into a deductive model of research design. Therefore, researchers should creatively reorganize

the existing information into the variables for a research question after first assessing what data is available.

This research study used secondary data from Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP), Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (YRBS), South African police Service (SAPS), Department of Basic education (DBE), National Injury Mortality Surveillance System (NIMSS), Medical Research Council (MRC), and Department of Correctional Services.

In 2008, the CJCP undertook a national study on school violence. For the purpose of this study, school violence datasets from the CJCP database were acquired to interrogate it further and focusing on school violence prevalence only in the Gauteng Province. Frequency tables were generated from the CJCP using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Tables extracted from the CJCP database focused on the actual prevalence of various forms of school violence taking place at schools. These included threats, assault and robbery. In addition, analysis of the perception of principals and teachers regarding school safety was examined. The reliability of information could not be ascertained as the survey was based on perceptions of the respondents.

The South African Police Service's data was sourced from annual statistical releases produced by the department. The latest data used was for the period 2008/2009. The available data on homicide and violence against children aged 0 to 18 years old could not be disaggregated by province. Therefore, an estimate¹ was used to determine the extent of violence against children in Gauteng. The results of using averages were consistent with other findings from other sources used.

¹ Gauteng figures were calculated by grouping school-going children by province. Gauteng Province accounts for 18% of the total children. Therefore, the Gauteng estimate was determined by calculating 18% of the national total.

The National Injury Mortality Surveillance System tracks patterns of death by profiling deaths from mortuaries. The 2007 data from NIMSS was used to determine the death of children aged 7 to 18 years, with special attention paid to death of children due to homicide and violence.

The Medical Research Council 2005 data was used due to unavailability of latest disaggregated data on nature and cause of death of children 7 to 18 years old.

The data from the Department of Basic Education was sourced from the Education Management Information System (EMIS). The information on violence and homicide is captured by the Annual School Survey (ASS). The databases were analysed separately to obtain information on the reason for deaths of both teachers and learners in the previous reporting period at schools. The main respondent to these questions is the school principal. The reliability of information could not be ascertained as the DBE's Annual School Survey instrument is self-reporting. However, the trends of cause of deaths over the years show consistency.

Data from the Department of Correctional Services was used to determine the number of children less than 18 years old in conflict with the law. The available data on children sentenced or awaiting trial was as of June 2009.

1.5.1 Addendum

Data that is not readily available in the public domain has been acquired and used in this study. This was done by sending formal request for data to organisations such as Statistics South Africa for South African Death Registration Data, MRC and CJCP. Some of data acquired is not published and made public. Data requested was for children aged 7 to 18 years old in Gauteng province that have died as a result of violence and homicide.

Throughout the study, the findings are reported as numbers whenever possible. In some cases, numbers were unavailable to the researcher and percentages are used. The results of each survey used in the study were compared to check the main reasons for deaths in schools, and to explore whether those reasons are similar across the databases. A summary table was generated on the causes of mortality of children aged 19 years old and younger. In addition, a summary of findings on school violence in Gauteng was produced across the following categories: age, gender, time, place, perpetrator, victim, weapon and nature of assault.

1.6 Data collection strategies

The analysis was restricted to children aged 7 to 18 years old, because it is the official school-going age according to the South African Schools Act (SASA), 1996 (Act 84 of 1996). The Act stipulates that a 'learner,' refers to, "any person receiving education or obliged to receive education in terms of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996)." For the purposes of this study both the Convention on the Rights of a Child and SASA Act has been used to include children who are 19 years old. This is due to the nature of secondary data that included the 19 years old attending schools that are affected by school violence.

1.7 Data analysis

The data acquired from the different sources were combined and grouped. Descriptive statistics were generated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Microsoft Access and Microsoft Excel.

1.8 Significance of the study

One of the important functions of examining school violence in different data sources is to allow cross-survey comparisons. Such comparative data could be

used to gain a perspective on how extreme the school safety situation is in a country and in which areas the situation is less severe than others (Astor and Benbenishty, 2008). This study provides information about school violence from different data sources that will help to inform the Department of Basic Education and other partner Departments to come up with better intervention strategies and to have a starting point in addressing the problem of school violence.

The findings drawn from this study may assist the Department of Basic Education in the design of safety strategies in schools, and development of curriculum to reduce school-related violence. There is a study that was conducted in 2001 by the Department of Basic Education, but results were not made public. Inaccessible data needs to be made available to the public. In addition, this study helps to make school violence data available to the Department of Basic Education in order for it to make evidence-based decision-making.

1.9 Limitations of the study

This study is based on official statistics only and thus, unreported violence is not included. The official statistics may not give a true reflection of school violence. The South African Human Rights Commission report on school-based violence suggests that violence in schools is seriously under-reported (SAHRC, 2008).

The challenge associated with using secondary data is that one is limited to the data at hand. The space for bringing a totally new perspective is limited, since the researcher has no control over how the data was collected. For this reason, there may be biases in the data that one is not aware of and the elicited answers may not exactly fit one's research questions.

With regard to the information obtained from the SAPS and the Department of Correctional Service, only national data was acquired and averages were

calculated to determine the approximate figures of learners in the Gauteng Province.

Lack of proper systems in the Department of Education to record and track school violence makes it difficult to generate accurate figures regarding the extent and nature of school violence. This could result in the underestimation or overestimation of violence in schools.

The continuing argument about whether violence that occurs outside of school premises is regarded as school violence makes it complex to explore the extent of this phenomenon. However, incidents of school violence are occurring after and before school hours and outside school premises. In some instances, the root cause of the problem may be territorial battles from school. In addition, school violence may be the result of neighborhood disputes spilling into school. This makes it difficult to ascertain the exact incidents of school violence.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Violence is a worldwide problem, and governments are concerned about the surge of school violence (Debarbieux, 2001). School violence affects both the perpetrators and the victims in one way or another (Simpson, 2001). The consequence of school violence has a far-reaching impact on the development of a child who witness or has been victimised by school violence.

A learning environment has to be safe and devoid of fear, of all hazardous elements that might harm or impede education (Mullis, et al., 2006). The issue of safety and security in schools has generated a lot of interest from different sections of society and is presently of concern in South Africa (Steyn and Naicker, 2007). This chapter reviews literature pertaining to school violence.

2.2 Definition of school violence

From the literature, it seems as though there is no universally accepted definition of school violence. What constitutes violence may differ according to cultural and ethical belief systems within and between countries. Furthermore, violence against children is not limited to sexual or physical violence, despite the fact that these are the two forms that receive the most attention and occupy much of the literature. Burton (2005) suggests that violence can also take the form of threats of violence, emotional abuse or neglect. An analysis of the Convention on the Rights of the Child reveals five categories of violence, which are, physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and negligent treatment, emotional abuse and exploitation (UNESCO, 1990).

It is important to define the meaning of school violence as a starting point for this study. Some definitions of school violence were broad and some focused on

certain aspects of learner behaviour. Batsche and Knoff (1994) mentioned that school violence was traditionally defined in terms of acts of assault, theft, and vandalism. Astor and Meyer (2001) defined school violence as intentional and negligent behaviours causing physical and psychological harm and/or property damage. Dear (1995:5) agrees with Astor and Meyer and defines school violence as a, “public health and safety condition that often results from individual, social, economic, political and institutional disregard for basic human needs. Violence includes physical and non-physical harm which causes damage, pain, injury or fear. Violence disrupts the school environment and results in the debilitation of personal development which may lead to hopelessness and helplessness”.

Govender and Dlamini (2010:66) define school violence as, “an expression of physical or non physical force against any school member or even damage to school property (vandalism).”

According to Mullis, et al. (2006:275) in their study entitled, “Progress in International reading Literacy Study (PIRLS),” safety in schools is based on learners’ level of agreement with the statement, “I feel safe when I am at school,” and learners reports of incidents of bullying, stealing, and injury to the student or someone in the student’s class. Therefore, school violence may mean experiencing a feeling of being unsafe, even though nothing has happened to you. Meanwhile, Reddy, James, et al. (2008) describe violence as an aggressive behaviour that may be physically, sexually or emotionally abusive. Violent behaviour may occur between individuals or within groups and often groups against individuals. The victims and perpetrators alike may be young people, and the consequences of youth violence can be devastating. This is being one of the extreme definitions of school violence.

A study of the literature found definitions which included all forms of violence perpetrated against learners either on school premises, on their way to school or after school. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, a definition of school

violence by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been adopted. The CDC (2008:1) defines school violence as:

“a subset of youth violence, a broader public health problem. Youth violence refers to harmful behaviours that may start early and continue into young adulthood. It includes bullying, slapping, punching, weapon use, and rape. Victims can suffer serious injury, significant social and emotional damage, or even death.”

2.2.1 Summary

There are issues around the definition of school violence. Some definitions clearly exclude other intentional and harmful behaviours such as verbal abuse, social exclusion, and nasty rumour-spreading. An emphasis on threats, as well as actual violence can justify the inclusion of measures such as feelings of insecurity. This study does not focus on feeling unsafe, but mainly on physical violence and homicides of school-going children.

However, the definitions shared common features, such as the harmful and damaging nature of violence, or at least warnings of such intended harm or damage.

The most crucial issue is probably that limiting violence to physical acts makes it more restricted in focus and easier to measure. Physical acts of violence are easier to monitor than verbal or relational violence. It makes violence different from aggression. The issues around definitions of school violence make assessing this phenomenon difficult.

2.3 Prevalence of school violence in developed world

School violence is a global phenomenon. The United States of America (USA), France and Scotland are some of the countries where school violence has proved to be a challenge (Maeroff, 2001). Further, Kachur (1998) found that 81% of school deaths in America were homicides and the rest, suicides or accidents. Kachur (1998) indicated that in the United States of America, the average incidence of school violence amounted to about one death per million students in 1998. This means that a child who spends 13 years in an average public school has one chance in approximately 107, 000 of a violent death in school, on school property or while commuting to school (Kachur, 1998).

The CDC (2001), in their study of school-related killings from 1992 to 1999, found a steadily falling trend of school violence in the USA. The CDC (2001) epidemiologists concluded that school shootings are highest after calendar breaks, during the stressful start of semesters when learners are adjusting to new teachers, classrooms, topics, and classmates.

Furthermore, the study found that in 1999, less than 1% of homicides and suicides happened at school. A school-related killing was defined as happening on campus, at an off-campus function, or on the way to and from school. February led the months of school violence in the USA, with one school shooting every four days. September followed with one every six days, while December and June proved to be the quietest months.

A subsequent study by the CDC (2008) found that approximately 38% of public schools reported at least one incident of violence to police during 2005 to 2006 in the USA. In 2005, 24% of learners reported gangs at their schools. Learners in urban schools were more likely to report gang activity than suburban and rural learners. From 2003 to 2004, 10% of teachers in city schools reported that they

were threatened with injury by learners, compared with 6% of teachers in suburban schools, and 5% in rural schools.

2.3.1 Learners risk behaviours

In 2005, learners in grades 9 to 12 in the USA reported the following risk behaviours:

6.5% of learners carried a weapon on school property in the 30 days preceding the survey. These included a gun, knife, or club. The survey found that 7.9% of learners were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property in the 12 months preceding the survey. Further, 13.6% of learners were involved in a physical fight on school property in the 12 months preceding the survey. Meanwhile, 8.4% of learners attempted suicide once or on numerous occasions in the 12 months preceding the survey, and 25.4% of learners were offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property in the 12 months preceding the survey (CDC, 2008).

2.3.2 Violent deaths

According to the CDC (2008), violent deaths at American schools accounted for less than 1% of the homicides and suicides among children aged 5 to 18. During the past seven years, 116 learners were killed in 109 separate incidents. Rates of school-associated student homicides decreased between 1992 and 2006. However, they have remained relatively stable in recent years. Rates were significantly higher for males, learners in secondary schools, and learners in central cities. Most school-associated violent deaths occur during transition times, meaning times before and after the school day, and during lunch. Violent deaths are more likely to occur at the start of each semester. Nearly 50% of homicide perpetrators gave some type of warning signal, including making a threat or leaving a note, prior to the event.

The CDC report (2008) claims that school-associated violent deaths are only part of the problem. A number of learners seek medical care for non-fatal, violence-related injuries. Some of these injuries are relatively minor and include cuts, bruises, and broken bones. Other injuries, like gunshot wounds and head traumas, are more serious and can lead to permanent disability. Not all injuries are visible. Depression, anxiety, and many other psychological problems, including fear, can result from school violence. In 2005, 6% of high school learners participating in a nationwide survey reported that they did not go to school on one or more of the previous 30 days because they feared for their safety. Student fears about safety increased between 1993 and 2005, but have not changed significantly since 2005. Another study found that as many as 160,000 learners go home early on any given day because they are afraid of being bullied (CDC, 2008).

According to Snyder and Sickmund (2006), in a study of indicators of school crime and safety in the USA, fatal victimisation shows that youth aged from 5 to 19 were victims of 22 school-associated violent deaths from July 2001 through June 2002. In 2003, learners aged between 12 and 18 were victims of about 1.9 million non-fatal crimes at school. Further, about 1.2 million thefts and 740 000 violent crimes, including simple assault and serious violent crime has taken place in American schools. Of the 740 000 violent crimes in schools, 150 000 were serious violent crimes, such as rape, sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault. In simple terms, these figures represent victimisation rates of 45 thefts and 28 violent crimes, including six serious violent crimes, per 1, 000 learners at school in 2003.

In Britain, a study undertaken by Market and Opinion Research International (MORI) found that from 2003 to 2004 there was an increase in crimes perpetrated against young people. Further, the study found that the peak age for committing school violence in Britain is 14. Young people in British schools are

likely to be the victims of threats (33%), physical attacks (23%), and having something other than a mobile phone stolen from them (19%). In light of the above, it is evident that learners are feeling vulnerable at schools.

Twenty five percent of young people in Britain's mainstream schools have carried a penknife to school, and 21% have carried guns. In addition to these figures, 30% of young people have carried a flick knife, 20% an air gun and 16% a kitchen knife. It is important to note that these young people, who carry such weapons, might be under an adult influence (MORI, 2004).

Table 1: Types of weapons and percentage of learners who carry weapons to schools in Britain:

Type of weapons	Percentage
Penknife	25%
Guns	21%
Flick knife	30%
Kitchen knife	16%

Adopted from MORI Youth Survey 2004¹

2.3.3 School violence prevalence by gender

The general trend is that more boys are involved in school violence than girls (Batsche and Knoff, 1994). Kachur, Stennies, et al. (1996) found that 83% of the school victims, and 96% of the offenders were male in the USA. They concluded that there is reason to believe that boys between the ages of 12 and 14 have been involved in violent crimes in the United States.

According to the Human Rights Watch (2001), lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender learners in the United States and elsewhere, were frequently targeted for harassment by their peers. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth were nearly three times as likely as their peers to have been involved in at least one

¹ The Market and Opinion Research International (MORI) conducts annual Youth Surveys on behalf of the Youth Justice Board in Britain.

physical fight in school, three times as likely to have been threatened or injured with a weapon at school, and nearly four times as likely to skip school because they felt unsafe.

In addition to these challenges, many learners in the United States also faced hostile school administrations. Learners were denied the right to form clubs known as gay-straight alliances. Several states had legislation or programs in place to address harassment and violence of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

2.4 Prevalence of school violence in South Africa

School violence has become an immense problem in South Africa. Burton (2005) claimed that in the period between September 2004 and September 2005, 42% of South African children and youth between the ages of 12 and 22 years were victims of crime or violence. These crimes include assault, sexual assault/rape, theft, robbery, housebreaking and car hijacking. However this figure (42%) should be read carefully as methods for collecting data and interpretation differs. School violence includes gender-based violence, sexual abuse, bullying and gang-related violence. Violence in school is chiefly regarded as a male phenomenon, but according to reports in the public media, girls are increasingly engaging in school violence (Burton, 2005). ChildLine (2007) estimates that one out of three girls and one boy in five, under the age of sixteen, has been sexually abused in school.

The Youth Risk Behaviour Survey¹, undertaken in South Africa by Reddy, James, et al., (2008), found that in South Africa, 9% of learners have carried a weapon, such as a gun, knife, panga or kierrie on school property. The survey

¹ The 2nd South African National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey 2008 was undertaken by The Medical Research Council. This nationally representative survey, conducted among 10,270 secondary school learners in grades 8 to grade 11, reports on the prevalence of behaviours that place them at risk of disease and ill health.

was conducted among secondary school learners in grades 8 through to grade 11, on the prevalence of behaviours that place them at risk of disease and ill health. There was a significant variation in the prevalence of learners who had carried a weapon at school by gender nationally. More male (12.0%) than female (6.2%) learners had carried a weapon on school property.

In the Gauteng province, 8.7% of children carried weapons on school property. 11.6% of male learners in the Gauteng Province carried a weapon on school property, while only 5.8% were females.

Table 2: National percentage of high school learners who engaged in violence-related behaviours on school property by gender

		National	
	Gender	Number	Percentage
Carried a weapon at school	Male	4, 943	12.0
	Female	5,143	6.2
	Total	10, 086	9.0
Threatened/injured by someone with a weapon at school	Male	4,945	18.4
	Female	5,139	13.0
	Total	10, 084	15.7
Threatened/injured by someone else with a weapon at school	Male	4,932	13.3
	Female	5,142	8.8
	Total	10, 083	11.0
Felt unsafe on way to and from school	Male	4,941	22.3
	Female	5,142	23.6
	Total	10, 083	22.9
Felt unsafe at school	Male	4,932	27.9
	Female	5,139	26.2
	Total	10,071	27.0

Source: MRC, 2nd South African National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey, 2008

By comparison, more British learners carry weapons to school compared to the United States and South Africa. In 2005, 7% of learners in the United States indicated that they carried weapons to school, while in 2004, 25% of learners in Britain confirmed that they carried knives or weapons to school. Within the South African context, 9% of learners agreed that they carry weapons to school. Although the years of comparison are not the same, available figures give an indication of the incidence of carrying weapons to school in these three countries.

2.5 The contributing factors to school violence from international literature

2.5.1 Media coverage

Maeroff (2001) writes that schools and the media are intertwined in such a way that it is difficult to think about school violence without taking note of its connection to the media. Media Tenor (2009) has analysed coverage of schools, pupils and teachers and found that violence at schools accounts for more than a quarter of all news stories. The focus was on schools in international television news coverage. However, even in the domestic context, crime and violence accounts for more than 10% of the news from schools.

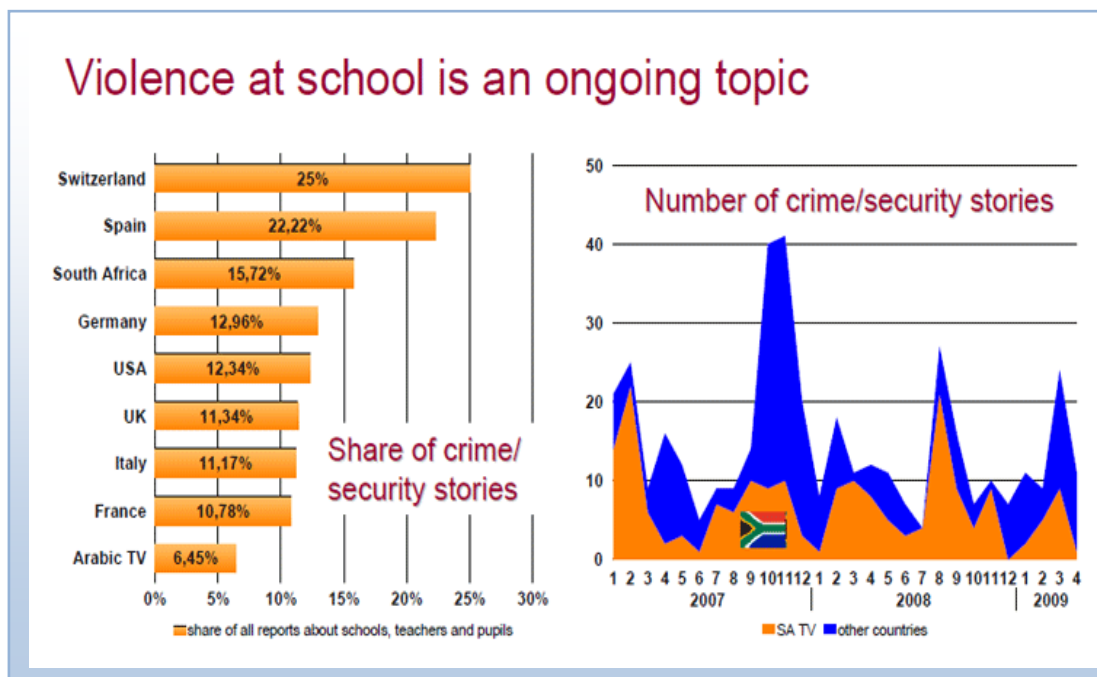
According to Engelbrecht (2008), the role of the mass media cannot be underestimated in promoting violence and, to a certain extent, condoning it. Children are constantly exposed to violent material and this desensitises them. Media Tenor (2009) asserts that reports about school violence are especially alarming, as education issues do not get major attention in television news. Media Tenor (2009) has found that only 0.8% of all the stories of television news in the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, South Africa and on Arabic satellite television deals with education.

Furthermore, Maeroff (2001) claims that most education reporting is negative. He points out that negative coverage of schools in foreign news, especially from developing countries, undermines the support for foreign aid, as the people in the

industrialised nations get the impression that their money is wasted on inefficient education programs.

In attempts to keep viewers, television news portrays school violence without considering the effects it will have on children (Media Tenor, 2009).

Figure 1: Findings of Media Tenor on news coverage from broadcasting corporations across the World, 2007-2009;



Source: Media Tenor International, 2009

Figure 1, as above, depicts Switzerland and Spain as having the highest coverage of school violence, followed by South Africa in the third position. Generally, school violence is internationally given more airtime than other topics.

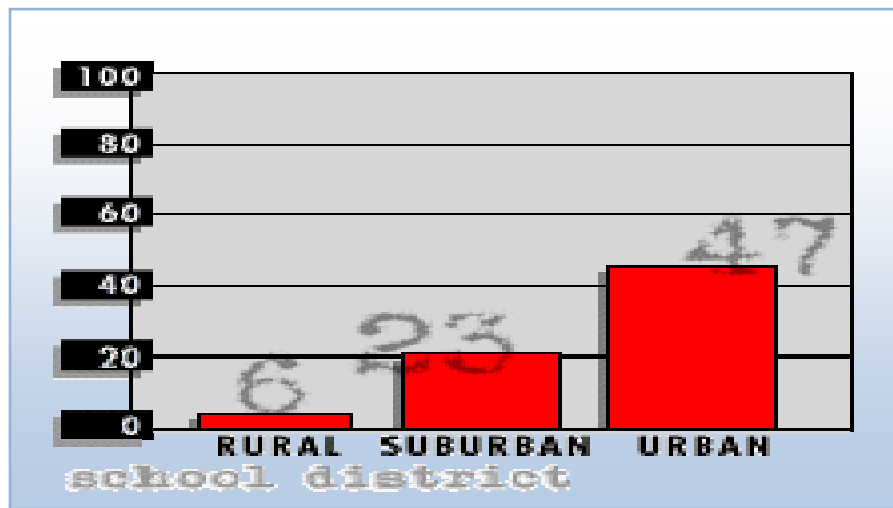
In the United States, people get exposed to remarkable violence, for example by the age of 18, a child will be exposed to 200,000 graphic violent acts on TV. People become desensitised to violent acts, not realising the true effects of a bullet passing through a human body (Perry, Kusel and Perry, 1988). Perry et al

(1988) concluded that when death and violence surrounds someone, the value of human life can decrease and the horror of violent death can become a norm in a society, while pervasive violence is desensitised.

2.5.2 Geographic location

Figure 2 below shows that in the USA, urban areas have higher percentages of school violence at 47%, than suburban and rural at 23% and 6% respectively.

Figure 2: Number of homicides in American Schools:



Adopted from Kachur SP et al, 1996: "School-Associated Violent Deaths in the United States, 1992 to 1994"

Kachur, et al., (1996) found that the homicide rate was nine times higher in urban schools than in rural ones.

A very different pattern emerges in Malawi. According to Burton (2005), children of all ages living in rural areas are more likely to be victimised than those living in urban areas. Location is particularly significant in the case of bullying and unwanted touching of the genitals and breasts. From a study undertaken in Malawi on school violence, between 82% and 87% of all reported victimisation happened in rural areas. The study concluded that the relationship between

location and levels of victimisation is strongest for incidents of unwanted sexual touching (Burton, 2005).

2.5.3 School violence while travelling to school

Burton (2005) asserted that in Malawi, almost one quarter (23.8%) of school children in Malawi are scared of walking to school. For many children, travelling to school exposes scholars to sexual and physical violence. This impact on children's sense of well-being and their physical and emotional safety, and it is also likely to impact on their psychological states and attitudes towards school attendance. Together with other factors, such as poverty and lack of school fees, it may negatively affect their schooling experience.

Burton claimed that 23% of the children interviewed explicitly said that they were scared to travel to school. Therefore, they are forced to travel in a group rather than travel to school alone. Learners also indicated that they are afraid of being attacked while going to schools (Burton, 2005).

Burton (2005) indicated that in Zambia, research has shown that violence while travelling to school results in children staying in often insecure, unsafe structures close to school during the week. This may further expose the child to potential violence and abuse from strangers who have easy access to such abodes. Similar findings have been made in recent studies conducted by, among others, the Human Rights Watch and Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET) in Southern Africa (Burton, 2005).

2.5.4 Truancy

In Britain, 45% of young people in public schools, who have committed an offence, indicated that they played truant from school (MORI, 2004). The Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2005) in Britain reported that 62% of

10 to 16 year olds who have committed criminal or anti-social behaviour have also truanted. According to MORI (2004), truancy has increased amongst mainstream pupils in Britain; 26% of young people indicated that they played truant for at least one day.

Truancy refers to learners' unexcused absences from school without permission from school management (DfES, 2005). Concerns about truancy typically focus on these unexcused absences in schools. School absence, as well as missed classes and tardy arrivals, can negatively affect learners.

Learners who bunk school are tempted to engage in violent behaviour as suggested by a study conducted in Britain (MORI, 2004). Learner absenteeism or truancy creates a serious problem for children's education, as well as their future and life opportunities.

2.5.5 Poverty

Matthews, Griggs and Caine (1999) claimed that poverty is a key risk factor that seems to be associated with, or even underlie, some of those factors, such as higher chances of victimisation, problems of low self-esteem among poor male youth, race, broken homes and dysfunctional families, dysfunctional schools, and drug abuse. According to Burnett (1998), poverty is not so much the problem as the fact that poverty brings with it a host of associated risk factors. Such factors include poor nutrition, increased familial stress, higher risk of domestic abuse, and lack of access to learning resources.

2.5.6 Large school size

In 1994, researchers in England and in the Scandinavian countries investigated the relationship between rate of school violence and school size, class size, ethnic mix and socioeconomic levels. They concluded that there is no positive

relationship between the relative frequency or levels of school violence and the size of the school or size of the class (Batsche and Knoff, 1994).

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) in the United Kingdom called for a cap on class sizes, following claims that some pupils are being taught in classes with at least 34 students. Large class sizes often leave children feeling lost and stressed. The ATL postulated that there was a direct link between school size and behaviour (Paton, 2009).

According to a union survey, half of teachers in schools, with more than 500 pupils, believed size had a direct impact on bullying and 43% said that it led to more fights between children (Paton, 2009). In a school with a large number of learners, it is much more difficult for all learners to be known by all members of staff. Larger schools make it easier for certain learners to be somewhat 'anonymous.' Behaviour is then likely to be worse around people who do not know who they are, and hence difficult to bring them to account for this behaviour. The concern with large schools is that children can get 'lost' in them. The teachers do not even know each other. All of this makes discipline almost impossible to control (Paton, 2009).

Slate and Jones (1998) indicate that in the USA, disciplinary problems were discovered in a study of schools undergoing consolidation. However, there were fewer disciplinary problems in rural schools that had an average size of 443 learners when compared to urban and suburban schools that had an average size of 1200 learners. As these rural schools increased in size through consolidation, discipline problems increased correspondingly. Slate and Jones (1998) concluded that the increase in behaviour problems in larger schools was sufficient to nullify any benefits that might accrue from having larger schools.

According to Harrison (2003), a nationwide survey in the USA also confirms that smaller schools have less crime and violence. Schools with less than 900

learners have many fewer incidents of school crime, and especially violent crimes, as compared to larger schools. Schools with more than 900 learners have higher rates of student crime, school violence, and disruptive behaviour so severe that police must be called in at some stage to bring about order.

There is consensus amongst researchers such as Slate and Jones, (1998), Batsche and Knoff (1994), Harrison (2003), and Paton (2009) that large school size and bigger classes provide opportunity for school violence to go undetected.

2.5.7 Alcohol and drug abuse

According to Perry et al (1988), alcohol has the effect of causing some people to become violent. Much of impulsive violence takes place under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. This is a particular problem with first-time or inexperienced drinkers, with little experience measuring the effects of alcohol. Youth often drink too much, too often, and in the wrong places (Perry et al, 1988). In some cases, school learners go to schools drunk or under the influence of drugs, making it very difficult for teachers to work with them in the school framework.

The MORI (2004) survey found that only a minority of young people in mainstream schools have experimented with drugs. Only 15% of pupils have tried cannabis and 43% have also consumed alcohol, although it might have been on one occasion only.

2.5.8 Summary

Internationally, factors that contribute to school violence include exposure to violence through the media and substantial coverage of school violence on television. Further, poverty, truancy/absenteeism, large school size and classes,

as well as alcohol abuse are all factors that contribute to school violence. Their role in contributing to school violence may either be direct or indirect.

In terms of location, there was contradicting views where learners in urban schools experienced more school violence than in rural areas in the USA. In Malawi, it emerged that more rural learners experienced school violence than learners in urban areas.

2.6 Causes of school violence in South Africa

According to research conducted by Vally (1999), it has been established that among the causes of violence in schools were factors such as absenteeism, lack of respect for teachers, overcrowded classrooms, gambling, jealousy of others' belongings, racism, gangsterism, substance abuse, and children who are victims of violence at home.

2.6.1 Exposure to violence

The incidence of violence, such as physical attacks and theft, are further aggravated by the children's exposure, other than personal victimisation, to violence within their homes, school and community environments (Burton, 2006). Extensive research by Astor and Benbenishty (2008) shows that exposure to violence and crime at a young age, including acts of personal victimisation, will significantly increase the likelihood of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour at a later stage in the life of the victim. Children who are exposed to such incidents within their communities and homes are also at a greater risk of victimisation themselves (Burton, 2006).

2.6.2 Community factors

Christie (2001) indicated that some townships schools in South Africa operated in the midst of violent gangs, warfare, criminality and substance abuse by the surrounding communities. Some of the community factors that influence learners to engage in school violence include poverty, neighbourhoods with a high crime rate, unemployment, socioeconomic conditions with reference to a lack of decision-making power between sexes and races, illiteracy, violence, a lack of community involvement, as well as the gap between the poor and the rich (Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), 1998). Certain community factors contribute to school violence and include factors such as child prostitution, substance abuse, lack of parental involvement in pupils' lives, HIV, AIDS, as well as conflicting norms and morals (Booysens, 2003).

2.6.3 Loose family ties

Broken homes and dysfunctional families are two of the most commonly identified social factors in turning youth to school violence (Matthews, Griggs and Caine, 1999). Lack of family integration is a high risk factor for a child to engage in violent acts at school (Booysens, 2003). In addition, fragile family ties, a neighbourhood where poverty is rife and unemployment high, is more likely to produce a child who is high-risk in engaging in school violence (Booysens, 2003). An economically stressed family, incidence of physical and sexual abuse, poor parental monitoring and support, loveless parents, a lack of supervision, alcoholic or drug-addicted parents, negative relationships with parents, and harsh and erratic parenting are high risk factors that lead children to school violence (Matthews, Griggs and Caine, 1999)

According to a study undertaken by the CSIR, broken homes and dysfunctional families in South Africa were two of the most important factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency. In the course of this study, interviews were conducted with

the amagents¹. Dysfunctional families and psychological legacy permanently scarred these youngsters. The enduring affects of the dysfunctional family are poignantly described by the amagents. For example:

“Glen, a seventeen year-old serving a two-year sentence in Johannesburg prison says that: I had a terrible family background. My father died when I was nine and I hated school. I got criminally minded from a very early stage when I was living with my stepfather. I used to suffer a lot” (CSIR, 1998).

An analysis of information on children at conflict with the law from the Department of Correctional Services confirms the findings from the CSIR study (CSIR, 1998).

Anger, hate and lack of concern for others are probable reactions to being unloved and rejected. In certain instances, violence, vandalism and delinquency are an outward expression of these feeling of rejection (Zulu, Urbani, van der Merwe, and van der Walt, 2004).

Without a connection to others, people care less about their wellbeing. Perry, et al (1988) postulates that when people share common bonds of belief and value with others, they are less likely to be aggressive or violent to others in their environment or community. However, when individuals become isolated, marginalised, and without some connection to those around them, violence increases (Perry et al, 1988).

¹ *The so-called amagents are male youth, who are involved in a range of criminal activities in South Africa, especially in the townships.*

2.1.1 Poverty

From a study commissioned by the CSIR (1998), it was found that, after poor home conditions, poverty is mentioned as the next most important influence on the amagents' or juveniles' decision to be involved with crime. Again, their voices concur with much of the literature, such as Zulu, et al, (2004), that establishes a strong correlation between poor living conditions, low family income and anti-social behaviour.

According to Burnett (1998), school-related violence is structurally interwoven with the very fabric of the social hierarchy of the school set-up. Poverty in itself provided the breeding ground for violence at home and in the school. Children were caught up in a vicious circle of pro- and reactive violence, and socialised to accept violence as an instrument of empowerment.

Children, who come from households that are experiencing unemployment and ongoing crisis in education, use these as a reason to drop out of school. The very same children are easy prey for gangs to recruit as members. They are eventually used to distribute drugs, such as mandrax at schools (Matthews, Griggs and Caine, 1999).

Simpson (2001) stated that young people who cannot fit into the new system of democracy become frustrated, and look for an alternative sense of belonging and social cohesion within criminal youth gangs. By looking at the other side of the coin, school violence teaches us a hard lesson. This hard lesson includes rebuilding the social fabric that was ravaged by the apartheid era (Simpson, 2001). Matthews, Griggs and Caine (1999) concluded that the highest levels of school violence in South Africa are found in schools with the highest unemployment and poverty levels.

2.1.2 Substance abuse

According to Booysens (2003), South Africa seems to be on the path of producing a nation of drunks because children are abusing alcohol at an early age. Alcohol abuse by children poses a high risk of committing criminal activities at school and in the community in order to maintain the habit.

A study conducted among secondary-school adolescent students aged 15-19 years old, by Madu and Matla (2003), indicate the prevalence rate of 19.8% for illicit drug use, 10.6% for cigarette smoking and 39.1% for alcohol consumption among the participants. Drug use, cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption are all more associated with males than with females. The majority of the drug users and cigarette smokers indicated that they do so when they are bored and not studying. Learners who were interviewed indicated that they sometimes start fights when they are under the influence of drugs. This violence tends to find its way to school.

2.1.3 Easy access to guns

A CSIR study (1998) established that, while violence has been an unbroken thread in the lives of the “amagents,” or gangsters in the township, the nature of the violence has shifted dramatically in the 1990s. There has been a massive influx in the circulation of guns in South African townships. This has not only altered the power of the “amagents,” or gangsters, but has also made the consequences of their behaviour far more serious than before. There appears to be several means by which a gun can be secured. For example, one of the interviewees stated as follows:

“It is easy to find guns in the township. You can find them from disarming a policeman, buy it or find it during a robbery or hijacking.” (CSIR, 1998).

In the study conducted by Zulu, Urbani, van der Merwe and van der Walt (2004) they found that, in all the schools, learners reported that they were bringing weapons to schools, which included guns. Lethal weapons are readily available in our society (Zulu et al, 2004). Handguns, rifles, and automatic weapons are all easily purchased, whether legally or illegally. The youth can easily acquire guns. When someone is angry, drunk or hateful, the gun allows him or her to act in lethal ways. What may have been a fistfight becomes a murder. The availability of guns increases the probability of lethal violence (Perry et al, 1988).

2.1.1 The influence of media on school violence

Simpson (2001) emphasised the role of media as a cause of school violence in South Africa. Through media coverage of violent behaviours, young people are negatively influenced. They join gangs because these gangs have now become their role models. Thus, youth gangs begin intruding into schools of vulnerable communities. This include using schools as markets for drugs, alcohol, weapons and young girls are sometimes abducted and raped at school. According to Media Tenor (2009), the influence of violence shown on television, and the easy access to violent videos, contributes significantly to involvement in violent behaviours at schools. Govender and Dlamini (2010) suggested that focusing on the issue of violence alone, blinds us from addressing the phenomenon in its entirety, since all efforts focus on the effects of school violence. This leads to temporary solutions instead of dealing with the root cause of the problem.

Schooling in the new South Africa, besides its professional, strictly educational function of transmitting crucial knowledge and skills, is often derailed by media and other conservative forces because of vested interests (Alexander, 2010).

According to Media Tenor (2009), South African TV news is most strongly concerned with violence at schools. South African broadcasting focuses on

negative issues. Almost 60% of the news stories from SABC and ETV news paint a critical, or at least unfavourable, picture of schools, pupils and teachers. Stories that focus on school violence account for more than 15% of the reports.

2.1.2 Hateful ideologies and racism

The system of apartheid engineered race, class, gender and ethnic categories to serve and reinforce the racial capitalist system. What happens outside the school gates tends to have an impact on the gains made in schools. Vally (1999) claims that the Gauteng province is beset by racialised gangs, gambling, bullying and pupils who are not scared to use weapons on one another. In the view of the researcher, this finding of Vally's must be taken seriously. If something is not done, there is likelihood that more children are still to be killed in South Africa as a result of school violence.

Contrary to the generally held belief that gangsterism was a problem only in the Western Cape, it was found that children in Gauteng schools, particularly males, are joining gangs. The gangs are generally structured around racial lines, so racial attacks do emerge as a problem and schools have to erect fences to prevent these gangs from entering school premises (Christie, 2001).

All too often, violence is linked to hate. Hateful beliefs such as racism, anti-Semitism and misogyny allow whole groups to be dehumanised. The more any group is misunderstood, the more the unknown can fuel fear and misunderstanding. In high schools, this can happen when cliques form — jocks, preps, geeks. Fear and misunderstanding can lead to hateful words and violent behaviours (Perry et al, 1988).

2.1.3 The effects of apartheid

It would be an oversight to omit the influence of apartheid on school violence. One of the well-known incidents is the Soweto uprising in 1976 that started at schools, such as Orlando High. Simpson (2001) postulates that during the apartheid period schools, particularly in townships, were places of violent political struggle. Even in the era of democracy, schools in townships are still havens of criminal activities. However, this is not to say that school violence is only happening in townships. Since schooling systems during apartheid were oppressive, many young people established an alternative subculture. The culture includes rites of passage. Acquiring status was often based on proving themselves by direct involvement in violent activities. If a young person was involved in violent acts, it was regarded as noble by peers. The heroes were young people who carried guns and fought (Simpson, 2001).

Burnett (1998) added that the ideology and structures of apartheid created a context of impoverishment and structural violence to which children were exposed. The school was one of the social institutions where children were subjected to structural, psychological, and physical violence on a daily basis. Violent behavior or discipline was justified as being just and an effective teaching practice by authoritarian parents and teachers. The manifestations of poverty included emotional erosion, a negative self-concept, and reactive violence.

2.1.4 Education system

Some factors related to education which creates school violence include: lack of education, poor academic performance, failing, truancy, problems at school, poor schooling, inconsistent discipline, inadequate or no school facilities, lack of role models, poor learner/educator relationship and lack of parental involvement (Booysens, 2003). The education system itself can be a causal factor in school violence. This can be manifested through high staff turnover and classes of

poorly performing learners (Debarbieux, 2001). Further, Badini (2001) claimed that all the seeds of violence are in the system; discrimination, corporal punishment, humiliation and sexist clichés are included in textbooks.

According to Badini (2001), learning in foreign languages causes children to hate attending schools. Therefore, introducing vernacular languages at school and using them to teach various subjects, may help to create an interesting education system. The classic school is not the final word. Critically taking into account, at every level of schooling, a child's traditional and family education can help to establish a non-violent school system (Badini, 2001).

2.1.5 The influence of over aged learners

A study by Reddy, et al (2008) concluded that most of school violence is committed by learners as well as learners being the victims. However, there is some uncertainty about the age range most at risk and some researchers argue that adolescence itself is a risk (Matthews, Griggs, and Caine, 1999).

According to Booyens (2003), there is high risk of repeat offenders when children enter the juvenile justice system. There is a tendency for children in conflict with the law to become inducted in criminal behaviour. If a child is arrested for petty crimes, it gives him/her the opportunity to come into contact with hardcore youth, making rehabilitation even more difficult. Apart from over aged youth, peer group pressure can play a part in influencing learners to engage in violence at schools (Booyens, 2003).

Abramovay and Rua (2002) emphasise peer pressure as one of the exogenous factors that lead to school violence. Even though age cannot be isolated from other causes of school violence, in instances where learners tend to be older than others, the opportunities for delinquency may creep in, in the form of bullying or threatening younger learners. Astor, Benbenishty, et al., (2002) suggested that

age and gender are other variables in examining school violence. In their study, they found that younger children are more often victimised than older children.

Neser (2002) claims that ages between 12 and 18 years old have been recognised as peak ages for children to commit crime or anti-social activities. Neser (2002) further suggested that more young people in the age group are “out of control,” and caught up in activities and behaviour patterns damaging both to themselves and to their communities. Institutions of mainstream society are losing control over the problem. Although Neser (2002) claimed that more youth commit the majority of school-related violence, there is some uncertainty about the age of victims of school violence (Matthews, et al., 1999).

2.1.6 Frustration of teachers

Cosgrove (2000) claimed that teaching is stressful. The most common sources of stress for teachers are poorly motivated pupils, ill discipline and poor working conditions. Morrell (2001) postulates that teachers are confused and overworked due to lack of discipline in schools and thus resort to corporal punishment although it is banned. Discipline continues to be considered a major problem by teachers and learners alike.

Many teachers are currently experiencing disillusion, demoralisation, deprofessionalisation and exhaustion brought on by widespread stress (Morrell, 2001). This statement was corroborated by Steyn (2002), who indicated that many educators have been demoralised by the uncertainty and distress of rationalisation and redeployment. On average, at least 900 000 children in the past decade have had their education disrupted by teachers leaving the profession (Morrell, 2001). Further, teachers under stress who remain in the classroom cannot give their best to the children in their care. When a head teacher is stressed, the strain is felt by the entire school, and consequently the school community suffers (Steyn, 2002).

In addition vandalism, crimes of trespass, carrying and using weapons, drug dealing, rape and sexual abuse have created insecurity (Steyn, 2002).

2.1.7 Complacency in reporting school violence

The Medical Research Council's National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (YRBS) in South Africa found that when learners were asked about their reaction to a physical fight at school, the most prevalent responses were walking away (28.2%) and calling for help from the teacher (27.7%). The least prevalent responses were encouraging the fight and recording the fight with a cellular telephone. The other response options were to stand and watch the fight (19.2%) and to try to separate the fight (10.0%), while 11.4% of the learners reported that there had been no physical fights at school. Significantly more male (31.3%) than female (25.2%) learners reported walking away from a physical fight at school (Reddy, et al, 2008).

Reddy, et al's (2008) finding are supported by Zulu, et al. (2004), whose own research discovered that there was complacency amongst teachers, who do not bother to report incidents of violence because it would take too much paperwork, and they did not feel they had any support from the authorities.

School violence such as theft, assault, possession of firearms and drugs are criminal activities, whether they occur outside or inside school premises. Unfortunately, many schools avoided involving the police in these cases, preferring to rely on their own, internal disciplinary procedures or even turning a blind eye on such occurrences. School management cites too much paperwork to be done if they report an incident, and further indicated that few times they tried to discipline learners, they were reprimanded by school authorities when parents complained (Prinsloo, 2005).

2.1.8 Abuse by teachers

Burton (2005) claimed that exploitative sex between learners and teachers is thought to be a growing problem in many African countries, and is an issue of growing concern to educationalists and policy-makers, although, at present, incidents go largely unreported and the true scale of such abuse is unknown. Teachers occupy a position of trust and authority over the children in their care, and such behaviour constitutes a betrayal of this trust that can have the same enduring negative consequences for children as any other form of violence or abuse. Also of concern is that incidents in schools are unlikely to be isolated occurrences and such exploitation is unlikely to be restricted to the school environment. It has been argued that schools, as a miniature of society, reflect the traditions and values inherent in the society as a whole (Burton, 2005).

2.1.9 School violence by locality

It is not only on the way to school that learners fear for their safety. Whereas schools should be places of safety for children, where learning can be achieved in a secure environment, schools have all too often become yet another place where learners are physically, emotionally or sexually victimised. This experience usually manifests its impact in poor academic performance, in volatile, weak or nonexistent social interaction with peers and adults, and in a range of other psychological problems. Incidents of school violence may lead to fear and avoidance of certain areas of school grounds (Burton, 2005).

Steyn and Naicker (2007) claim that the most common place in the school premises where learners feel unsafe are toilets or bathrooms, certain school buildings, classrooms, the staffroom and the hostels. A bathroom is such an important everyday facility and yet one feared by many pupils. In some instances, learners and educators are often terrified to attend school because

when they are at school, they are scared to go to the bathroom alone or move around on the school grounds. Some of them are fearful that they may be killed or seriously injured by other learners and/or educators who come to school armed; others again fear that they may be raped (Steyn and Naicker, 2007).

According to Burton (2005), children living in rural areas are more likely to be victimised than those living in urban areas. Location is particularly significant in the case of bullying and unwanted touching of the genitals and breasts. From a study undertaken in Malawi on school violence, between 82% and 87% of all reported victimisation happened in rural areas.

2.2 Conclusion

According to literature reviewed in this section, researchers such as Debarbieux (2001), Abramovay and Rua (2002), Kachur, et al, Reddy, et al., (2008) and Burrton (2005) revealed that the prevalence of school violence happens in both developed and developing countries. Substance abuse, alcohol and gangs are the major contributors to school violence. As the environment keeps on changing, some factors are emerging as the main factors behind school violence. These include over aged learners, poor upbringing.

In South Africa, the nature and cause of school violence ranges from poverty, easy access to guns, uninteresting education system, and poor communities to high unemployment levels. Disintegration of families and communities is another contributing factor of school violence that emerged from the literature review. The current context of high levels of unemployment and poverty in South Africa also creates both the opportunity and incentive for youth involvement in crime and violence.

Out-of-school and out-of work youth find themselves without structured activities to absorb their energies, give them direction or a sense of self-worth. Such youth

spend more time on the streets, where they come into contact with youth gangs and are tempted to compensate for their lack of earnings by resorting to crime. In fact, rapid change in the age structure of a population through a youth bulge, with few skills, training opportunities in the education system can become a recipe for young people's involvement in school-related violence.

The rest of the world shares the common problem of school violence in their education system. The cause of violence in schools is multifaceted. Therefore, there is no factor that can be singled out as the fundamental cause of school violence.

Chapter 3: Findings of school violence in Gauteng schools

The findings are dominated by tables generated from the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention database, and information extracted from the Medical Research Council's Youth Risk Behaviour Survey analysis. The Medical Research Council data is the only data source that disaggregates violence against children who are less than 18 years old by seasons, time and external causes of death.

The South African Police Services data was not disaggregated by age at the provincial level. Therefore, the study used a proportion of children aged 7 to 18 years in 2008 to calculate the Gauteng estimates of the number of children murdered due to violence.

3.1 Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP)

This section outlines information generated from the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention data. The CJCP undertook a national survey on school violence in 2008. The CJCP presented the findings in the form of national statistics. The researcher was able to access the raw data from CJCP, as well as their questionnaires, metadata and re-analyse this data to produce findings for Gauteng province only.

Some of the answers contained in the raw data had not been included in the CJCP materials reported and are listed here by the researcher for the first time. Answers relating to time and place of violence assault were not reported by CJCP and appear in table 3.

3.1.1 Violence against a learner

a) Assault

In common law, an assault is the act of intentionally and voluntarily causing the reasonable apprehension of an immediate harmful or offensive contact (WHO, 2002). Since assault requires intent, it is considered an intentional act, as opposed to as an act of negligence. Table 3 below illustrates that at least 4.4% and 3.2% of primary and secondary learners respectively, indicated that they experienced assault at school premises in the past twelve months.

b) Fights

Fights are the most common modalities of school violence. Fights occur in the form of fist fights, beating, kicking, slapping or inflicting pain on another. Learners fight about playing games, grades or relationships with the opposite sex. They also fight because of teasing each other, calling each other names, such as, 'fat,' or 'ugly.' Another modality of rivalry among learners occurs in violent confrontations that involve learners from other schools and neighbourhoods. These confrontations involve non-school persons that invade school space. However, physical fights are a problem even if they occur outside the school environment, given that they involve learners. Table 3 below indicates that 12.1% of secondary school learners in Gauteng, who were ever beaten, slapped, punched or kicked at school.

When comparing the prevalence of threats against secondary school learners, fights are considerably lower than threats. This may suggest that most of the threats in schools do not necessarily result in fights. However, the data alerts us that violence has become natural and common in schools.

c) Forced to do something

Sexual harassment is another form of violence in schools especially against female learners. Although the question was not framed clearly regarding the sexual harassment, a follow-up question was raised regarding a person who forced a learner to do something against her will. The follow-up question wanted to know whether a person, forcing a learner to do something against his/her will, was due to the gender of a learner. Table 3 below illustrates the percentage of learners that were forced to do anything against their will. In total, 4.4% secondary learners and 0.2% primary school learners indicated that they were forced to do something against their will. Most of the incidents where learners were forced to do something against their will, took place in their classrooms at 2.7% of secondary learners and 0.2 % for primary learners. Open grounds, corridors, sport areas and principals' offices were also mentioned as some of the places where learners were forced to do something against their will.

d) Threats

Table 3 below shows that 21.5% of secondary school learners, and 6.9% primary school learners in Gauteng schools were threatened with violence in 2008. It is disheartening to find that even the primary school learners are being threatened with violence, as one would assume that in secondary school, learners' threats are more common.

Table 3: Percentage of primary and secondary learners that experienced violence at school by types of violence and location

		Primary Learners	Secondary Learners
Types of violence	Threats	6.9	21.5
	Fights		12.1
	Forced to do something against will	0.2	4.4
	Assault	0.2	4.4
Location	Classrooms	0.2	2.7
	Playing fields / sports areas		0.3
	Corridors		0.6
	Other open grounds		0.6
	Principals office		0.2

Source: Centre for Justice and crime Prevention, 2008

3.1.2 School principals and teachers perceptions of school violence

a) Principals' perceptions on school violence

The analysis of questionnaires completed by school principals and teachers affirms the testimonies of the learners. Table 4 below illustrates that 60% of primary school principals acknowledged that there are areas in school that are perceived unsafe. Meanwhile, 46.2% of principals in secondary schools indicated that there are areas in their schools that are unsafe for learners in their school. Amongst the areas identified as unsafe are classrooms, open areas, sports areas and toilets.

Table 4: Principals perception on school violence

		Primary Principals	Secondary Principals
Unsafe areas in schools	Principals' perceptions about unsafe areas in their schools	60.0	46.2
	Classrooms		15.4
	Other open areas	30.0	23.1
	Outside gates	30.0	7.7
	Toilets		7.7
	Old buildings/abandoned/under construction		7.7
Most common times that are unsafe for learners at schools	After school	60.0	53.8
	During breaks	10.0	7.7
	Lunch	10.0	

Source: Centre for Justice and crime Prevention, 2008

Table 4 also shows that most of the perceived violence committed against learners took place after school for both primary and secondary learners at 60% and 53.8%, respectively. Break and lunch periods are also times of the day whereby learners experience violence at school according to the school principals.

b) Teachers' perceptions on school violence

Table 5 below shows the perceptions of teachers regarding the times at which learners are less safe. The most common times for violence committed against learners include the period after school at 55.0% and 53.8% for primary and secondary learners respectively. Teachers also indicated that learners are also unsafe before school hours, as well as during classes and school breaks.

Teachers were asked about their views regarding the nature and extent of school violence in schools they were teaching at in Gauteng. Further, table 5 shows that 55% of primary teachers indicated that there are areas in school that are unsafe for learners, while 61.5% of their counterparts in secondary schools affirmed that some areas in the school premises are unsafe for learners. This table also illustrates that school toilets have emerged as a common place that is unsafe for learners at 23.1% and 20.0% according to secondary and primary teachers. Amongst other areas, classrooms, sports fields, open areas, back areas, outside gates have also been mentioned as unsafe for learners.

Table 5: Areas at the school perceived as being particularly unsafe for learners

		Primary teachers	Secondary teachers
Unsafe areas in schools	Teachers' perceptions about unsafe areas in their schools	55.0	61.5
	Toilets	20.0	23.1
	Classrooms	5.0	7.7
	Sports or playing fields	20.0	3.8
	Other open areas	5.0	23.1
	Behind buildings/classrooms/toilets/back areas/Outside gates	5.0	3.8
Most common times that are unsafe for learners at schools	After school	55.0	53.8
	Before school		7.7
	During classes	10.0	11.5
	During breaks	10.0	3.8

Source: Centre for Justice and crime Prevention, 2008

3.2 The South African Youth Risk Behaviour Survey, 2008

This section presents findings from the second South African National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey 2008, which was undertaken by the South African Medical Research Council. The analysis focused on the prevalence of school violence on school property in Gauteng schools. The survey was administered from grade 8

to grade 11 learners from randomly selected classes in schools nationally. This section presents findings from the Gauteng province.

Information was acquired from a study undertaken by Medical Research Council; Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (YRBS) in 2008 that was published in 2010. YRBS collected data from 10 270 grades 8-11 learners from two randomly selected classes, within 192 randomly selected schools country-wide, by survey administrators. For the purposes of this study, the researcher extracted data relating to Gauteng and to school violence.

a) Carried a weapon on school property

The Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (2010) found that, in the Gauteng province, 8.7% of learners carried weapons on school property. Significantly more male, (11.6%) than female (5.8%) learners had carried a weapon on school property in the past month, as reflected in table 6.

b) Was threatened/injured by someone with a weapon at school

In the Gauteng province, 13.9% of learners had been threatened or injured by someone with a weapon such as a gun, knife, panga or kierrie on school property during the six months preceding the survey. Significantly more male (16.1%) than female (11.7%) learners had been threatened or injured by someone with a weapon at school. There was a significant variation in the prevalence of learners who were threatened or injured by someone with a weapon at school by gender, with more male learners than females threatened in Gauteng schools.

c) Threatened/injured someone else with a weapon at school

The prevalence of learners who had threatened or injured someone else with a weapon at school such as a gun, knife, panga or kierrie on school property during the six months preceding the survey in the Gauteng Province was 8.5%. Significantly more male learners (10.7%) than female learners (6.4%) had threatened or injured someone with a weapon at school.

d) Felt unsafe on the way to and from school

In the Gauteng province, 19.1% of learners had felt unsafe on the way to and from school during the past month. There was a significant variation by gender, with more female learners (22.5%) feeling unsafe on the way to school than males (15.7%).

e) Felt unsafe at school

Approximately 23% of learners in the Gauteng province had felt unsafe at school during the past month, with no significant variation by gender. Both females (23.8%) and males (21.9%) had a significantly higher prevalence of feeling unsafe at school in Gauteng.

f) Engaged in a physical fight at school

In the Gauteng province, 22.1% had engaged in a physical fight such as punching or hitting another pupil on school property during the six months preceding the survey. Significantly more male (26.3%) than female (17.8%) had engaged in a physical fight at school during the past six months.

g) Watched a physical fight at school

In the Gauteng province, 60.7% of learners had watched a physical fight at school in the six months preceding the survey, with no significant difference between male and female learners. 61.5% of females and 59.9% of male learners watched a physical fight at school in Gauteng.

Table 6: Percentage of high school learners who engaged in violence related behaviours on school property by gender and Province

Gauteng Province			
	Gender	Number	Percentage
Carried a weapon at school	Male	447	11.6
	Female	492	5.8
	Total	939	8.7
Was threatened/injured by someone with a weapon at school	Male	450	16.1
	Female	492	11.7
	Total	942	13.9
Threatened/injured by someone else with a weapon at school	Male	446	10.7
	Female	491	6.4
	Total	937	5.7
Felt unsafe on way to and from school	Male	448	15.7
	Female	493	22.5
	Total	941	19.1
Felt unsafe at school	Male	449	21.9
	Female	494	23.8
	Total	943	22.9
Engaged in a physical fight at school	Male	451	26.3
	Female	493	17.8
	Total	944	22.1
Watched a physical fight at school	Male	449	59.9
	Female	491	61.5
	Total	940	60.7

Source: The South African Youth Risk Behaviour Survey, 2008. South African Medical Research Council, 2010

3.3 Findings from Department of Basic Education database

In this section, the National Department of Basic Education (DBE) Annual School Survey (ASS) data was used to generate tables from 2004 to 2008. The tables extracted from ASS data focused on the causes of deaths amongst learners and teachers.

The Department of Basic Education collects data annually through the Annual School Survey. The data collected is mainly the enrolment of learners in public and independent schools across the country. However other data variables are also collected. This includes information on the number of learners and educators who died. Further reasons of death are asked from schools.

The ASS is a self administered survey that is completed by school management team that is principal or delegated staff member in a school. However the completed survey has to be signed off by the principal after verifying the information. Not all data collected in the ASS is reported.

Information on levels and causes of learner mortality is not accessible to public and was made available to the researcher for this study. Although the survey does not specify the place where learner or educator has happened, the information is worth reporting on. The researcher generated tables from DBE database using Microsoft Access. The ASS questionnaire was used to guide the generation of relevant tables from the DBE database.

a) Mortality of learners due to violence and homicide

Table 7 depicts the number of learners who died by cause of death. Violence and homicide accounted for over 80 deaths per year from 2004 to 2008, except for

2005 where 77 learner deaths were recorded. In 2006, a total of 190 learners died due to violence and homicide in Gauteng schools.

Table 7: Causes of mortality of learners in Gauteng, 2004-2008

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Violence and homicide	88	77	190	95	82

Source: DBE, Annual School Survey (2004) (2005) (2006) (2007) (2008)

3.4 National Injury Mortality Surveillance System (NIMSS)

Table 8 below shows the number of 7 to 18 year old children who died due to violence in the Johannesburg and Pretoria Metropolitan areas in Gauteng. According to the National Injury Mortality Surveillance System (NIMSS), in 2001 there were approximately 80 children aged between 7 and 18 who died due to violence in Johannesburg and Pretoria. From 2002, the number of violent deaths of children decreased from 71 to 47 in 2005. In 2006, the number of violent death started to show an upward trend as 65 violent deaths were recorded. In 2007, 125 children aged between 7 and 18 died violently in Gauteng while Johannesburg and Pretoria accounted for 79 deaths of the overall total. Table 9 below shows the number of violent deaths of children aged from 7 to 18 decreased from 2001 to 2005 and then increased from 2005 to 2007 to about the same levels as 2001, at almost 80 number of children aged between 7 and 18 who died due to violence.

**Table 8: Number of 7-18 year olds who died due to violence in Gauteng,
Johannesburg and Pretoria**

Year	Johannesburg	Pretoria	Total for Johannesburg and Pretoria	Gauteng Total in 2007
2001 ¹	56	24	80	
2002	48	23	71	
2003	45	15	60	
2004	44	18	62	
2005	39	8	47	
2006	47	18	65	
2007	52	27	79	125

Source: UNISA, National Injury Mortality Surveillance System² (NIMSS), 2007

3.5 A profile of fatal injuries in Johannesburg 2005, Gauteng Province - The Medical Research Council

Table 9 below shows the profile of deaths in the Johannesburg Metropolitan area in 2005. The leading cause of death in the Johannesburg Metropolitan is violence/homicide at 34%. Amongst the children aged between 0 and 14, violence accounted for 34%, while children in the age group 15-24, violence accounted for 37% deaths. Firearms accounted for 33% of deaths amongst the 0 to 14 age group and 64% amongst the 15 - 24 age groups in 2005.

¹ **Please note:** NIMSS data for 2001 to 2006 is only for Johannesburg and Pretoria, but 2007 has Johannesburg, Pretoria and the rest of Gauteng Province.

Table 9: A profile of fatal injuries in Johannesburg Metropolitan Area, Gauteng Province

Overall manner of death	The leading manner of death was violence/homicide (33.95%)
Manner of death by age	The leading manner(s) of death amongst the: 0-14 age group was non-transport (33.8%) 15-24 age groups was violence (38.6%)
External cause of death by age	0-14 age group was firearms (33.3%) 15-24 age groups were firearms (63.6%)

Source: Medical Research Council (MRC), 2005

3.4.1 Mortality of educators

The table 10 below shows that in addition to teacher attrition in the education system is the problem of teacher mortality. In 2006, 304 teachers lost their lives due to violence and homicide in South Africa. Twenty of these were teachers in Gauteng schools. More than five teachers died due to violence and homicide per year between 2004 and 2008 in Gauteng.

Table 10: Mortality of educators due to violence and homicide by Province, 2004-2008

	Violence and homicide				
Province	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Eastern cape	12	7	10	9	8
Free State	6	60		3	4
Gauteng	5	15	20	9	7
KwaZulu Natal	30	19	35	22	16
Limpopo	6	0	71	0	7
Mpumalanga	9	2	3	8	2
Northern cape	0	0	2	1	0

North West	2	1	3	2	5
Western Cape	13	20	160	4	
National	83	124	304	58	49

Source: DBE, Annual School Survey, (2004) (2005) (2006) (2007) (2008)

3.4.2 Victims: Reported violent crimes against children - South African Police Services

Data from South African Police Service was only available as a national figure. The data contained all types of crimes committed in the country. The researcher had to disaggregate this data for children aged 7 to 18 years old murdered in 2005 to 2008. The researcher disaggregated the national figure of children died from violence and homicide of Gauteng province. This included calculating percentage of population of children aged 7 to 18 years old in Gauteng province. Further the percentage of the population of school going age of Gauteng province was used to calculate the number of children in Gauteng province killed as a result of violence and homicide from national figure acquired from SAPS. This calculation was chosen as better estimate of children aged 7 to 18 years in Gauteng that are victims of violence and homicide than using averages.

According to the South African Police Services, violence committed against children who are less than 18 years old, includes murder, attempted murder, indecent assault, rape, assault, gross bodily harm and common assault.

Table 11 below shows crime committed against children under 18 from the 2006/07 to the 2008/09 reporting period. Although crime against children seems to be on the decline, over 48 000 crimes were committed against children in the 2008/09 period countrywide. This reflects the vulnerability of children to crime. This may therefore also have an impact on the safety of children on their way to and from school, and may also negatively impact their performance at school. Even though the trend is downwards, the mere fact that violent cases against

children are still above 48 000 as of 2008/09 reporting period, clearly demonstrates the seriousness of violence against children who are supposed to be in school.

Table 11: Crime against children under the age of 18 years

Crime Category	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Murder	972	1015	843
Attempted murder	889	852	782
All sexual offences	25428	22124	20141
Common Assault	16871	16091	14544
Assault – Gross bodily harm	13947	13625	12422
Total	58107	53707	48732

Source: South African Police Service Annual Report, 2008/09

3.6 Perpetrators

a) Department of Correctional Services

Table 12 below summarises the total number of reported offences by children younger than 18 years of age, as of June 2009, according to records at the Department of Correctional Services. As many as 908 children, under the age of 18, are sentenced due to different types of crimes. Meanwhile 689 children were still not sentenced at the time of this study. Overall, a total of 1597 children aged 18 and less were in South African correctional centres due to various offences, ranging from aggressive behaviours to use of narcotics.

Table 12: Children under 18 year old in prison and awaiting trial

Crime Categories	Unsentenced	Sentenced	Total
Aggressive	329	390	719
Sexual	135	153	288
Economical	198	317	515
Narcotics	6	9	15
Other	21	39	60
Total	689	908	1597

Source: Department of Correctional Service, Inmates per Crime Category as on the last day of 2009/06, <http://www.dcs.gov.za/WebStatistics/>

3.7 Conclusion

There is a lack of consistent data on school violence in the Gauteng province. This makes it difficult to compare data gathered from all five sources. This gives the impression that there is a lack of will from the Department of Basic Education in making school violence public. Since some raw data could not be accessed, therefore proper comparisons across the data sources does not show consistent pattern. In the absence of figures, even the media reports cannot be contested. Further, the absence of figures poses challenges to the Department of Education in mitigating the extent and nature of school violence in the Gauteng province.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Discussion

This chapter analyses and discusses study findings. The first section of this chapter focuses on the analysis of findings from secondary data and literature review. The second section will focus on the discussion of findings.

4.1 Analysis

The tables below summarise the mortality of school-going age children due to violence and homicide in Gauteng province, across four sources of data in both numbers and percentages.

Table 13: Number of children under 18 years old who were murdered in Gauteng province, 2005-2007

	Total population of children aged 7-18 year old in Gauteng	Education Information Management System (EMIS)	National Injury Mortality Surveillance System (NIMSS)	Statistics South Africa (StatsSA)	South African Police Service (SAPS)¹
2005	1668983	77	47	34	136
2006	1635898	190	65	34	132
2007	1775971	95	125	43	126

Table 14: Percentage of children under 18 years old who were murdered in Gauteng province, 2005-2007

	Education Information Management System (EMIS)	National Injury Mortality Surveillance System (NIMSS)	Statistics South Africa (StatsSA)	South African Police Service (SAPS)
2005	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01

¹ Please Note: Data from the South Africa Police Services was reflected in national figures. The following method was used to calculate Gauteng estimate: Children aged 7 to 18 years old in South Africa, Gauteng had 14%, 13% and 15% of the children aged 7-18 years old in 2005, 2006 and 2007 respectively. Therefore (14% of 972 is 136), (13% of 1052 is 132) and (1% of 843 is 126).

2006	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01
2007	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01

Table below summarises assault data from three sources giving percentages only.

Table 15: Percentage of children less than 18 years old who were assaulted, 2008

	South Africa Police service ¹	CJCP	Youth Risk Behaviour Survey
2008	17.0	7.6	13.9

a) Number of children under 18 years old who were killed violently

The data from the SAPS is consistent across all the years. The SAPS data shows that over 130 children aged 18 years old have been killed between 2005 and 2006, but declined to 126 in 2007.

NIMSS data shows the increase in the number of children killed from 47 in 2005 to 125 in 2007.

SAPS and NIMSS data shows similar pattern. They both show that 126 and 127 children were killed in 2007.

The EMIS data shows that over 80 children aged 18 and younger have been killed in 2005 and 2007. However there is huge increase in the number of children killed violently in 2006 at 190. This is cause for concern of the reliability of data from EMIS.

¹ Please Note: Data from the South Africa Police Services was in national figures. The following method was used to calculate Gauteng estimate: of the total children aged 7 to 18 years old in South Africa, Gauteng had 18% of the children aged 7-18 years old. Therefore, 18% of, (18% of 972 is 175), (18% of 1052 is 183) and (18% of 843 is 152).

The death registration data from StatsSA shows that less than 50 children aged 18 years and younger have been killed violently in Gauteng between 2005 and 2007. This will not be included in the analysis as the figure is so very different from the other numbers available.

a) Assault

The pattern that emerges from the data from the SAPS, CJCP and YRBS shows that children aged 18 years old and younger have been assaulted in the Gauteng Province in 2008. The SAPS and YRBS data show fairly similar figures for assault on children in 2008: 17% and 13.9%. The CJCP figure of 7.6% is much lower.

b) Percentage of child mortality

Data from NIMSS, EMIS and SAPS show that less than 0.01% of children 18 years and younger lost their lives due to violence between 2005 and 2007.

c) Death of learners

Across the seven data sources used in the study, the MRC, NIMSS, SAPS, and EMIS, deaths of learners in Gauteng from 2004 to 2007 remain well above 80 learners per year. The Annual School Survey does not indicate the place where the death happened. De wet (2007) claims that less than one learner in two million suffers a school-related violent death in South Africa, this is compared to 125 (from NIMSS) number of children killed in 2007. Data on learner mortality is dispersed and contradict each other. The other challenge is the disaggregating data on learner violence and homicide by province. The fragmented data leads to many interpretations of the extent of school violence and sends confusing messages to the public and policy makers.

d) Age

Although Zulu, et al. (2004) and media commentators suggested that over aged learners are a problem, no research has been done on this factor in any of the seven sources. However, all schooling-going children between the ages of 7 and 18 are vulnerable to school violence in Gauteng schools.

e) Gender

Significantly more male learners experience violence in schools than female learners (De Wet, 2007). The Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (2008) found that 21.9% of female learners feel unsafe at school compared to 23.8% of male learners. The literature did not explicitly show school violence by gender in Gauteng. However, it was made evident that most female learners feel unsafe in schools. The most common type of violence female learners experience is sexual violence or forced to do something against their will. School violence experienced by male learners includes threats, fist fights and assault.

f) Common type of school violence

The most common types of school violence as reflected in the findings and data are threats, fist fights, stealing, assaults, robbery and sexual violence. Bullying also emerged as the common type of violence that happens in schools (Batsche and Knoff, 1994). However, the extent of bullying could not be established as the study did not focus on this type of school violence.

g) Prevalence of school violence: most common time and place

International literature, such as Kachur et al. (1996), indicated that most school-associated violent deaths occur during transition times. These are times before and after the school day and during lunch.

This was also confirmed by analysis of the CJCP (2008) data in South Africa, which shows that learners experience school violence when travelling to school, when on the school premises and on their way back home. This was also confirmed in the study by Burton (2005) where it was shown that learners are forced to walk in groups to avoid attacks on their way to school in Malawi.

Some incidents happen in the classrooms, on open grounds, toilets, corridors and school sports fields (CJCP, 2008). It is quite clear that considerable incidents of violence against learners happens within the school premises themselves, undermining a sense of security that children might feel in their school environment.

Meanwhile, internationally violent deaths at schools are more likely to occur at the start of each semester. The CDC (2008) study found that February led the months of violent deaths in the United States, with one school shooting every four days. This cannot be established in South Africa because of data limitations.

h) Location

It has also emerged from literature review that most of school violence in the United States happens more in urban areas than in rural areas (Kachur, 1998). This difference could not be pointed out in the South African context due to data limitations. Christie (2001) reported that urban areas, especially in township schools, are more prone to school violence than rural areas. The most common types of school violence in urban areas are gang-related violence spilling into schools (Christie, 2001).

Furthermore, Steyn and Naicker (2007) have confirmed that learners experience school violence both in and outside school premises. The prevalence of violence at school seems to become accepted because of non-reporting of incidents of violence to school authorities by victims. Physical violence is a common phenomenon in the schools.

i) School violence and media

Researchers such as Alexander, (2010), Media Tenor (2009) and Simpson (2001) found that exposure to violence, either through media or television, plays a role in influencing school violence. However, Engelbrecht (2008) argued that there is no strong evidence that explicitly links the role of television, exposure to violence and its impact on school violence.

j) School violence management at school level

A large portion of a child's life is spent at school and the school has the potential to positively mould the life of learners and provide a miniature of a healthy society, yet schools have contributed to the perpetuation of violence in some ways. These include lack of fencing, lack of reporting and recording school violence to higher authority (Christie, 2001).

The CJCP (2008) data indicated that there is no proper system for reporting school violence in the education system. Therefore, the extent of school violence in schools from the Department of Education could not be ascertained. Therefore, the data sources used for this study may not be reflecting the accurate extent of violence in Gauteng schools.

The study also established that absenteeism is a factor that can contribute to school violence. It has been found that absenteeism in Britain (MORI, 2004) correlates with risks of getting involved in school violence amongst the children

aged 7 to 18 years old. In Britain, 45% of young people in public schools who have committed an offence indicated that they played truant from school (MORI, 2004).

k) Summary

Statistics across the data sources used in the study are inconsistent. This may be due to the methods used in the collection of data. However, these findings indicate that school-going children in the Gauteng province experience violence. Assault, as high as 17% from SAPS, is the most common type of violence against children aged 18 years old and younger in the Gauteng province.

l) Conclusion

The CJCP data has provided useful information on the nature and extent of school violence in Gauteng schools, as reported by learners, teachers and principals. It has emerged that Gauteng schools are experiencing different types of violence. Further examination of data shows that school violence in Gauteng is a complex phenomenon and needs multiple approaches to deal with it in its entirety.

Literature review found that school violence is a common phenomenon all over the world but the context and the circumstances in which it occurs, its nature and society's attitude towards it varies greatly from one setting to another. Burton (2006) asserted that children attending educational institutions have experienced some sort of violence at schools. Some incidents involve being beaten, teased or otherwise bullied by fellow scholars, being ill-treated by teaching staff, or having to submit to violent corporal punishment. Other incidents included being chased or threatened by people known or unknown to learners. In other instances, some learners were forced to do things against their will.

4.2 Discussion

Contrary to the popular view of the media that school violence in Gauteng is way out of control, the findings from this study have found that there are only pockets of school violence in Gauteng. Of all the sources used for the study, it has emerged that over 80 children younger than 18 years old are murdered annually.

Further, this study found that school violence accounts for less than 0.01% of deaths of children less than 18 years old in the Gauteng province per year. In developed countries such as United States, violent deaths at American schools accounted for close to 1% of the homicides and suicides among children between the ages of 5 to 18 (CDC, 2008). This high figure is due to the inclusion of suicide.

Throughout the literature review and data analysis, it has come to light that there is a lack of proper systems for reporting school violence in the education system, particularly in Gauteng. Therefore, the starting point in dealing with school violence in Gauteng is to develop appropriate system for reporting school violence.

The percentage is far less than media's cry over the school violence in the Gauteng Province. Without undermining the lives lost due to violence, it is important to indicate that the root causes of school violence in Gauteng is identified to mitigate violent death of school-going aged children. The biased nature of reporting on school violence in the media tends to mislead the public.

Media plays an important role in lobbying for policy direction for many governments. The consequence of obtaining false information regarding school violence has a potential to lead the government and Department of Basic Education to channel limited resources towards school security rather than

learning and teaching materials. Currently, there is serious lack of learning and teaching support materials in some of schools.

Due to the lack of evidence regarding the school violence, it is typical that, due to public outcry through media, the Department of Basic Education may invest limited resources to security rather than supply the much needed textbooks and stationery to schools. For example, a school can buy metal detectors instead of paying for electricity for learners to use computer laboratories. An average price of a metal detector kit is R600. Therefore, R600 multiply by 27 000 public schools is R16 million. This money could instead be used to buy books, stationery and other support equipment for learning and teaching.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Secondary data initially gathered for other purposes was analysed to examine the pattern of prevalence of school violence in Gauteng province.

Homicide data was the easiest to compare. The SAPS figures were the most stable across the three years ranging between 126 to 136. While differing substantially across the three years, the National Inquiry Mortality Surveillance System data produced a similar figure to the SAPS for 2007: NIMSS 125 and SAPS 126. The EMIS system, while also varying greatly across the three years produced a figure of 95 in 2007.

We would expect a difference between SAPS/NIMSS data on the one hand and EMIS on the other. The SAPS/NIMSS figures include all child mortality for 2007. The EMIS figures relate only to mortality of learners and rely on self reporting. The Statistics South Africa figure is so far from other figures, it is impossible to include in the analysis without knowing the reasons for this discrepancy.

The SAPS, NIMSS and EMIS figures for child mortality, expressed as a percentage of children 7 to 18 years old in Gauteng province, is 0.001. This may be compared with the US figure of 1% in 2008 (CDC, 2008). The South African figure is clearly within the range of international figures.

Effects on school performance

Zulu, et al, (2004) indicated that the impact of school violence on academic performance is not wholly understood, the effects of skipping school, avoiding school, avoiding school-related activities, and fearing for one's safety would be detrimental to academic progress. The presence of school violence creates a

climate of fear and intimidation for learners who are victims of school violence. Effective schooling cannot occur under conditions of intimidation and fear (Zulu, et al, 2004).

Some schools are not child friendly. Some are situated far from homes, exposing children to danger when they walk to and from school.

Lack of data on school violence

Data on school violence in developing countries and other African countries would not allow the wide comparison of school violence with South Africa. The available evidence indicates that developed countries such as the United States and Britain also experience school violence as compared to South Africa. Further, the dearth of data on school violence has made it difficult to compare the Gauteng province with other subdivisions of other countries.

Media outcry

The prevalence of school violence in Gauteng schools is noticeable from the literature and data provided in this study. However, the extent of it is not as it is portrayed by the public outcry and media commentators. The general belief here is that school violence is out of control in schools.

Types of school violence

Threats and assault are the most common types of school violence in Gauteng schools, followed by fist fights.

5.2 Recommendations

Currently, there is a lack of co-ordination between various stakeholders in dealing with school violence in Gauteng schools. Research about school violence and prevention activities for the various types of violence in schools have often been developed in isolation from one another. If this fragmentation can be overcome, the scope and effectiveness of interventions is likely to be enhanced. School safety interventions occur in isolation, at a local or regional level. The sharing of information between organisations, regarding the interventions being set in motion, occurs on a very limited basis, if at all. Therefore, it is important for stakeholders to come together in order to tackle problems of school violence collectively. This will help to channel resources to fight crime in schools and to manage school violence. This will also help avoid duplicating crime-fighting initiatives in schools.

It has been established that school violence happens inside and outside of school premises. Therefore, the involvement of civil society is often necessary to deal with school violence outside of school hours and school premises, since schools are, in fact, imbedded within a larger community. The surrounding community has an influence on the schooling environment. As a result, broader efforts to change the physical and social environment of communities can also benefit schools. Strategies to change the broader community environment include increasing community participation in the management of schools, providing more formal and informal supervision for youth through after-school programs and recreational opportunities, reducing youth access to alcohol and drugs, and improving financial, housing, and employment opportunities in impoverished areas.

Lack of proper mechanisms for reporting violence in schools is a barrier to tackling the problem in its entirety. Non-reporting of school violence by learners, teachers and principals may lead to denial regarding the existence of the

problem in Gauteng schools. Therefore, development of a reporting system of school violence is long overdue.

Internationally, absenteeism or truancy has been found to be one of the reasons for getting involved in school violence. The education system should be able to retain school-going aged learners and the curriculum should include activities that could transform children's interest in education.

It is recommended that the department and all stakeholders be proactive in dealing with school violence. School violence is often predictable and preventable, and a sudden change of attitude, isolation, and substance abuse, are some of the risk factors for learners getting involved in school violence. Certain factors such as bunking school and using drugs appear to be strongly predictive of school violence, even if direct causality is sometimes difficult to establish. Identifying and measuring these factors can provide timely warning to decision-makers that action is required. There is a tendency for authorities to act only after school violence has occurred or has been reported in the media. But investing in prevention may be more cost-effective and have large and long lasting benefits.

School violence has many faces, of which each type necessitates unique ways in dealing with it. This includes violence that cannot be seen physically, but that is psychological. An example of such is bullying. Therefore, detailed research on the effective initiatives used by countries that have experienced school violence is required. Learning strategies employed by other countries in dealing with school violence can also lead to a significant contribution in addressing school violence in Gauteng schools and South Africa at large. Understanding the context of school violence is fundamental in designing interventions that are aimed at addressing this phenomenon.

Although the Department of Basic Education has responded to the claims of high prevalence of school violence, an all important missing intervention is the development of a national school safety policy. A policy on school safety therefore needs to be developed to provide guidelines for managing and reporting school violence in schools.

There are pockets of school violence that are likely to precede full-blown prevalence, and it is therefore essential to tackle the problem earlier rather than when it has reached an advanced stage.

Finally, in order to put reduce school violence, a well-established state with the means to compensate for inequalities is needed. This needs to be a state that tries to restore diversity in neighbourhoods and schools, one that does not give up on the notion of justice for all children.

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