

**Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South African
schools: A model for countering the violence against teachers**

by

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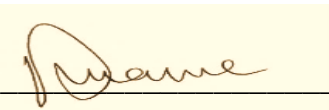
DECLARATION

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I declare that “**Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools: A model for countering the violence against teachers.**” is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated or acknowledged by means of complete references. I also declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted parameters for originality. I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



SIGNATURE

15 September 2021

DATE

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DEDICATION

This thesis is especially dedicated to:

- My LATE parents, my mother, Mrs Jane Refiloe Makgata-Zwane and my dad, Luke 'Butinyana' Zwane, who, during their lifetime, despite their skimpy financial resources, and against a plethora of other odds, sacrificed their lives in order to send me to school, and taught me the value of education and from whom I shall continue to draw inspiration;
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To Whom It May Concern

EDITING CONFIRMATION: Mr RP ZWANE's THESIS

This letter is meant to acknowledge that I, MM Mohlake, as a professional editor, have meticulously edited the thesis of Mr Richard Pitso Zwane (Student Number: 35096772) entitled "Educators as Victims of Learner-On-Educator Violence in South African Schools: A Model for Countering the Violence against Teachers".

Thus I confirm that the readability of the work in question is of a high standard.

For any enquiries please contact me.

Regards



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Disclaimer: Subsequent alterations remain the responsibility of the author.

ABSTRACT

Most of the research on school violence focus on educator-on-learner occurrences by concentrating on causes without providing solutions to the violence problem at schools. Hence this empirical study focused on how educators managed and understood the violence against them; and how this violence influenced their daily teaching practices within school environments. With this understanding, it was intended to provide a succinct meaning as proceeding from the observations and virtual and/or face-to-face interviews held with both educators and School Principals of four Case Study schools. The aim was achieved through the exploration of educators and School Principals' experiences and perceptions. The findings revealed that educators are battling to manage and control the learner-on-educator violence at schools. Thus, Grounded Theory facilitated the exploration of the strategies that educators employ to cope with and manage the learner-on-educator violence. These unique set of coping-skills could be used to counter the violence against educators at school. The Grounded Theory design particularly permitted the researcher to understand and explain the phenomenon through the theoretical development processes leading to the creation of a new 3-step Grounded Theory model. The theory created was grounded on the data of the four Case Study schools. The theory emerged from categories and their sub-sequent themes. The researcher used Charmaz's Constructivist Approach to Grounded Theory for reasons that the approach offered attractive features such as being flexible in its organization. The multiple-site Case Study of four schools proved useful in compensating for the saturation point requirements of Grounded Theory studies (Merriam et al., 2016). The study further revealed educators at schools as experiencing ever-increasing discouraging attitudes from learners that are frustrating and confrontational, affecting educators' personal and professional lives. The study confirmed the findings from literature that learner-on-educator violence is a global challenge within schooling systems, including that of South Africa. This has manifested in the encroaching distrust towards 'senior administrators', lack of constructive involvement of parents and schools identified as becoming toxic workplace locations and this depicting negativity about schools as centres of teaching. As a way of mitigating the problems related to the learner-

on-educator violence at school, recommendations were made that schools should promote colleague-to-colleague support; continue monitoring access and entries to schools; and apply well-studied deterrence strategies of which some of them were put forth and recommended by this study.

Key Terms: Educators, Learner-on-Educator Violence, Coping-Skills, School-Community, Preventive-Strategies, Deterrence, Encounters, Grounded Theory, Management, Educator Experiences

LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

CJCP	Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention
CSVr	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DBE	Department of Basic Education
EBC	Expert Behavioural Consultants
EBS	Effective Behavioural Support
LTSM	Learner Teacher Support Material
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa
NCES	National Centre for Education Statistics
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
NSSF	National School Safety Framework
NTAC	National Threat Assessment Centre
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety Act, Act No. 85 of 1993
PPS	Primary Prevention Strategy
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RCL	Representative Council for Learners
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SADTU	South African Democratic Educators Union
SAPS	South African Police Services
SASAMS	South African School and Administration Management System
SASA	South African Schools Act of 1996
SASA	South African Security Agency
SATU	South African Educators Union
SGB	School Governing Bodies
SMT	School Management Team
SPS	Secondary Prevention Strategy
SRO	School Resource Officers
SSSC	School Safety and Security Committee
TPS	Tertiary Prevention Strategy
USA	United States of America
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Violence against educators in South Africa is not a new manifestation (De Wet, 2010; Payne & Smith, 2013). South African schools were declared as battlegrounds since 2003 (Mncube & Netshitangani, 2014). Violence against educators has been increasing and needs an exigent response (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013; Linda, Daniels, Fakude, Marie & Modeste, 2015). Violence against educators is a major work-related problem and studies on the phenomenon are limited while public perceptions are indifferent (Anderman, Eseplage & Reddy, 2018; Chia, Gerberich, Alexander, Ryan, Nachreiner & Mongin, 2013).

As policy-makers and funders of research have largely overlooked violence against educators, not enough is known about the consequences of violence against educators (Linda et al., 2015). According to the 2010 indicators of the *School Crime and Safety Report*, 9% of educators (i.e., 352 900) in the USA were threatened by learners, an increase of 252 800 cases from 2003 to 2004 and 289 900 cases from 2007 to 2008 (Wilson, Douglas & Lyon, 2011). In addition, the Centre for Disease Control in the USA found that more than 5% of educators (209 800) were physically attacked by a learner for the year 2013/14 (Linda et al., 2015). This trend is also widespread and reported in other countries such as Taiwan, Turkey and Israel (Chia et al., 2013; Anderman et al., 2018). In 2014, the rate of violent actions against educators in Taiwan, Turkey and Israel was nearly double as high as the rates for all workers in the USA. Furthermore, almost a quarter of all nonfatal injuries and illnesses that caused educators to miss work stemmed from violent actions (APA, 2016).

In South Africa, concerns about the escalating violent incidents against educators are evident by the number of media reports (McMahon, Martinez, Reddy, Espelage & Anderman, 2017; Anderman et al., 2018; Leanne, 2019). Educators are vulnerable and are not immune to violence instigated against them by their learners (Espelage, Anderman, Brown, Jones & Lane, 2013). In many instances, educators are at the receiving end of physical attacks by learners and they are not able to defend themselves from these attacks (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013; Anderman et al., 2018).

Some of these attacks have resulted in fatal injuries and deaths (Mgijima, 2014; De Wet, 2016). In order to maintain stability in education, there is a pressing demand to act against violence directed at educators (Jacobs, 2014; MacMahon et al., 2020).

The effect that this violence has on education planning has implications beyond the immediate culprits and victims. Research has shown that the aftermath of the prevalence on educators' mental health has precarious effects (Burton & Leoschut, 2012). Educators are at the heart of the delivery of national education goals and their wellbeing is essential for continuity of good educational practices (SACE, 2011; DoE, 2011). The intention of the study is to provide a model for countering the effects of learner-on-educator violence at schools.

1.2 Background to Study

Educators have been subjected to physical and psychological violence in South African schools (Rossouw & Stewart, 2008). Even primary school learners considered as blamelessly young and innocent, assault their educators such as two boys who sexually harassed a primary school female teacher (Van Nieuwenhuizen, 2018). In another incident that took place in a farm school, two boys gang-attacked a young male educator, hitting him with chairs and fists, because he asked them why they were late for a lesson period (Ntantalala, 2018). Learners in the South African schools have aggressively grabbed educators' necks; kicked them; bitten and scratched them; thrown objects at them; stabbed them; and have even killed them, posing a constant concern for educators' safety (Pahad & Graham, 2012; Grobler, 2018).

Violence against educators has a significant impact on teacher recruitment, teacher retention and teacher effectiveness to ensure positive academic outcomes for learners (Espelage et al., 2013; De Wet 2016; Anderman et al., 2018). Violence against educators is defined as a range of behaviours directed toward educators that include bullying and intimidation, verbal threats, theft, and physical bodily attacks, which violate school rules, negatively affect school climate, and endanger the well-being of all educators (Espelage & Anderman, 2017; MacMahon, et al., 2020). All of these actions and behaviours confirm violence and victimisation of educators (MacMahon et al., 2014; Leoschut & Makota, 2016).

Learner-violence against educators negatively influences their psychological state, hampers community development and jeopardises civilised democracy (Payne & Smith, 2016; Anderman et al., 2018). It is against this background that this study focuses on how the violence against educators can be countered. By understanding how educators interpret the violence of learners against them, this understanding assists in developing a model for addressing learner-on-educator violence.

1.3 Problem statement

The South African Media continues to report that educators are exposed to hostile learners in schools, which affects teaching and learning (De Wet 2016; Van Nieuwenhuizen, 2018; Leanne, 2019). In the Limpopo Province, 942 cases of teacher assault were reported between January and September 2018. During the same period, the Gauteng Province reported 531 cases, the Western Cape 26 and the Mpumalanga Province 113 (NAPTOSA, 2018).

While the South African constitution emphasises the right to an environment free from harm (RSA, 1996), educators continue to experience worse forms of assaults by the learners they teach. A number of such incidents happen inside classrooms or within school premises (Pahad & Graham, 2012). Educators are human beings before they are educators. Educators are defenceless and to a certain extent voiceless. In certain occasions, some educators have opted to abandon and leave the teaching profession (Anderman et al., 2018). The perceptions of educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence need to be heard for the sake of addressing the negative situation. The impact of school violence on educators' safety has received little attention (Pahad, et al., 2012). There is limited literature on educators' perceptions on the violence against them and the interpretation of these perceptions with impact on successful teaching (Jacobs, 2012; Ebersöhn, 2013).

This study is focused on learner-on-educator violence in South Africa because South African schools are becoming battle sites of widespread violence (Ebersöhn, 2013). The escalation of cases of violence against educators is a security concern as educators are considered the custodians of education. Fatalities in South African schools continue to be widespread news. While scholars have been concerned about the psychosomatic impact of school and community violence on children in South Africa (Ncontsa, 2013), limited attention has been paid to violence against educators.

Violence against educators has been investigated internationally, for example, in Turkey, the USA and Finland (Espelage et al., 2013; Pas et al., 2015; Balwanz & Hlatshwayo, 2015). However, there is a deficiency regarding research on this phenomenon in South Africa. This study focuses on how educators as victims of school violence manage and understand learner-on-educator violence within the school environment.

Based on educators' experiences of how this violence affects them, a model is developed pertaining to coping and managing the phenomenon of violence against educators in order to counter such negative behaviour.

This study is guided by the following primary research question:

- How can the violence against educators be countered in South African schools?

In order to answer this primary question on how educators, as victims of school violence, manage and understand learner-on-educator violence at school, the following sub-questions are formulated to guide the study:

- What are the experiences and perceptions of educators on learner-on-educator violence?
- What is the influence of learner-on-educator violence on educators' teaching practices?
- What strategies do educators employ to cope with and manage learner-on-educator violence?

1.4 Aim of the Study

This study focuses on the phenomenon of educators as victims of school violence; how educators manage and understand the violence against them; and how this violence influences their teaching practices. The ultimate aim is to develop a model for countering violence against educators at school.

The following aims direct this study:

- To understand how educators experience and interpret learner-on-educator violence;

- To determine how learner-on-educator violence influence teaching practices at school; and
- To develop strategies that educators can adopt to cope with and manage learner-on-educator violence within the school environment.

1.5 Theoretical framework

In order to answer the formulated research questions for this study, a two split theoretical framework residing in a qualitative Research Design by means of Ecological Systemic Theory and the Grounded Theory approach is used. As the Grounded Theory approach offers a research approach that enables a researcher to understand people's experiences as is conceivable (Charmaz, 2014), the Grounded Theory approach is appropriate for this research purpose of generating theory from an exploration of the learner-on-educator violence experiences of educators.

The purpose is to understand if something new can be discovered which could reasonably apply as a theory to solve an existing dilemma from the point of view of a grounded study (Glaser & Holton, 2007; Berkowitz & Benbenishty, 2012). This offers the researcher the prospect of developing a theory about educators' perceptions of the violence against them by learners in order to develop a model of ameliorating the situation (Berkowitz et al., 2012). With reference to the Grounded Theory approach, this approach is based on conducting research by building a theory from the ground up, brick by brick. 'Bricks,' in context of this study, are perceptions of educators' experiences that are to be grounded as the study progresses towards the final exploration process (Holton, 2010; Chang, 2013). The Grounded Theory approach is aligned with the requirements to explore in order to construct a theory contributing towards an improvement of a system enhancing educator welfare in schools (Dunne, 2010). Holton (2010) emphasises that Grounded Theory is used to explore challenges related to the why and how questions methodically, with this theory being grounded in the data itself rather than being deduced from literature. It predominantly focuses on the practice itself, as it can be used to give the practitioner a conceptual tool with which to guide practice.

Grounded Theory encompasses unique methodological components such as constant comparative analysis and theoretical sampling with data collection and analysis taking place simultaneously, rather than in a linear arrangement (Charmaz, 2006; Dunne, 2010). Grounded Theory as an iterative process results in the researcher growing more and more to become “grounded” in the data to progressively richer concepts and models of how the phenomenon being studied really unfolds (Chang, 2013). Bilali et al., (2012) articulate that Grounded Theory develops from a grounded substantive theory to a grounded formal theory as classifications are saturated and linked to other perspectives, thus pursuing the goal to develop a theory from the systematic analysis of data.

Since the schools that were selected for study are official public entities that function in specific environments and contexts, the second part of the theoretical framework pertains to environmental theories as embodied by the Ecological System Theory by Bronfenbrenner (1994). Environmental theories emphasise the impact that the environment and social context wield on violent behaviour and contemplate that the individual learner transfers a vigorous part throughout the learning processes (Frias, 2016).

The researcher approaches learner-on-educator violence as emanating from the environment in that a person (learner) learns behaviour in reaction to particular ecological actions. In this regard, Bronfenbrenner’s (1994) Eco-Systemic Theory is an ecological relevant methodology for this study. It is used as a theoretical framework approach to understand educators’ perspectives with regard to views on how educators interpret the violence against them with reference to personal safety in a school confronted with learner-on-educator violence. With reference to Bronfenbrenner’s Eco-Systemic Theory, violence at school as this violence represents learner-on-teacher violence, is an interaction amongst numerous systems and interconnected contexts. Chang (2013) argues that these interconnected and encrusted contexts consist of the culture of families, school, neighbourhood, learners and educators as well as the political, social and economic status of the whole society. The Eco-Systemic approach determines that to understand a phenomenon of this magnitude, namely, of violent behaviour, both the *micro violence* present in such learners’ immediate contexts (family or school) and the cultural and structural *macro violence* in the broader society must be considered (Jacobs, 2014).

1.6 Educators as Victims of Violence

While educators may be perpetrators of school violence, they are also victims and casualties of school violence as perpetrated against them by learners at school (Du Plessis, 2008; Berkowitz et al., 2012; Leoschut & Makota, 2016). This study focuses on how educators as victims of violence by learners manage and understand learner-on-educator violence within the school environment. In order to explore the topic of learner-on-teacher violence, the following concepts are relevant, namely, school violence, common types of violence against educators, an international perspective on school violence, a national perspective on violence directed against educators and the importance of educator safety and wellbeing. Due to the complexity of the concept of school violence, research on learner-on-teacher violence is limited and needs continuous exploration to contribute to ameliorated endeavour (Debarbieux, 2013; Chang, 2013; Grobler, 2018).

1.6.1 School Violence

There is no agreement on the definition of school violence and meaning varies depending on the author, framework and purpose of study (Makhasane & Khanare, 2018). A definition of school violence includes features such as harassment, sexual abuse, bullying, verbal abuse, initiation, intimidation, theft, gangsterism and drug-related crimes (Jacobs, 2012; Chang, 2013; Madikizela-Madiya & Mncube, 2014). Events such as assassinations, beatings, and assaults are incorporated in the canopy term of 'school violence' (Burton & Leoschut, 2012). School violence includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, bullying and any acts that cause the victim pain (Burton et al., 2012). Burton et al., (2012:2) define violence as follows:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation.

School violence mutates around numerous components, namely, individual, school, family and broader community level threatening factors that merge to produce defencelessness to violence (Netshitangani, 2014). For this reason, exploring violence occurring in schools need to be extended beyond the school to include a study of the broader community where this violence is fostered. Since school violence is a multidimensional phenomenon, the definition for school violence should consider

emotional/psychological and physical actions and the different perceptions on this complex occurrence (Pillay, 2014). With reference to this multidimensional feature of school violence, it pertains to any verbal or physical act, which resonates to a victim some pain while that individual is within the boundaries of the school (Jacobs, 2014; MacMahon et al., 2020).

1.6.2 Violence directed at educators

Violence directed at educators is classified as work place violence, including workplace harassment or workplace bullying, and pertains to any behaviour aimed at harming another employee in the form of threat, offensive gesture or physical attack (Gerberich et al., 2011; Chia et al., 2013). Workplace bullying is conceptualised as when an individual frequently experiences negative acts and when an imbalance of power exists between the affected individual and the wrongdoer of the bullying incident (Samanani & Singh, 2012). In the context of this study, the wrongdoer is the learner and the teacher is the victim. The generally common violence directed at educators is verbal violence involving name-calling, racial slurs, cursing, screams, passing of remarks and use of foul language (Masitsa, 2011). Emotional abuse directed at educators take the form of physical threats, sarcasm, spreading of rumours, persistent teasing, exclusion, torment, humiliating remarks (Burton, 2008). Physical violence directed at educators takes the form of hitting, beating, kicking, strangling, using of objects such as knives, sticks and stones with severe cases including bodily harm with the intention to cause death (Chia et al., 2013; Zebun, 2016).

Sexual violence directed at educators include verbal or physical sexual harassment, inappropriate touching, sexual assault or rape inflicted on someone (female teacher) by power or force (Bester & Plessis, 2010; Gerberich et al., 2014). Cyber violence, associated with the advancement of technology, pertains to the use of social media misdirected into destroying the victim emotionally by character assassination in the sense of the distribution and circulation of defamatory images and content about the victim (Leoschut et al., 2013; Zebun, 2016).

1.6.3 An International Perspective on Violence against Educators

School violence is a global problem (Netshitangani, 2014; Grobler, 2018). Civic society in countries with cultures as dissimilar and diverse as Japan, Jordan, Brazil, Norway, Israel, Malaysia, the United States, and Ethiopia are distressed by violence against educators (CJCP, 2009; UNESCO, 2017). According to Debarbieux (2013), the United States media frames this problem as an American dilemma affecting predominantly middle and upper middle-class white educators and learners. However, acts of violence against educators take place across all parts of the United States society and in many nation States across the world such as Japan, Norway and Israel (Furlong et.al, 2010; UNESCO, 2017). In the United States, 9% of educators reported being threatened with injury, and 5% reported being physically attacked by a student for the 2013/14 school year (APA, 2016).

Similar violence has been reported for educators in countries like Canada where educators are emotionally, sexually and physically attacked (Bilali et al., 2012). Taiwanese educators report that the magnitude and negative impact of learner-violence toward educators may have mental health and stability effects for the educator workforce and this has detrimental, long-term consequences on the lives of educators, affecting their families and educational goals at large (Chang, 2013). In Germany, a national large-scale research conducted in 2013 indicates that 80% of reported cases points to victimisation in the workplace with many educators being bullied and confronted by learners (Frias, 2016). Violence against educators is also happening at a high rate in developing countries where its effect on schooling and learning results in hampered living (Ozdemir, 2012). Chang (2013) affirms that school violence, as pertaining violence against educators, is a global phenomenon affecting virtually all countries, including developed and developing countries.

1.6.4 A National Perspective on Violence Against Educators

The South African history is predominantly violent (Mampane, Ebersöhn, Cherrington & Moen, 2014). This long-standing encumbrance to violence preambles from the Apartheid system of governance, which sustained violence that was already present in violent schools (Zulu, Urrbani & Van der Merwe, 2004; Mnyaka, 2006). Apartheid was, in itself, violent and thus sustained violent confrontations (Zulu et al., 2004: Mampane et al., 2014).

The Apartheid government maintained its tyrannical policies while a number of youth were aggressively involved in the liberation struggle, as both perpetrators and victims (Mnyaka, 2006). For this reason, present-day learner-on-teacher violence within the South African education system continues to be blamed on this historical context by many researchers (Mgijima, 2014; Mampane et al., 2014; Jacobs, 2016). However, 26 years after the end of Apartheid, learner-on-educator violence cannot be attributed to Apartheid any longer. Many national policy and legislation frameworks in South Africa were promulgated to safeguard both educators and learners (Tintswalo, 2014). Despite these guideline regulations and schools putting in place their own policies, violence at schools has continued. It is evident that violence against educators is a problem far beyond the reasons of the historical context.

Teacher victimisation instigated by learners are a cause for concern by South African school leaders (Mgijima, 2014; Makhasane et al., 2018), and have far-reaching consequences on the entire schooling system (Harber et al., 2011). Jacobs (2016) affirms that because of the culture of violence in South African schools, the primary business of schools, which is teaching and learning, has been weakened. Various sources reveal that learner-on-teacher violence stemming from different roots including family, community and schools lead to a disjointed educational school leadership (McMahon et al., 2014; Anderman et al., 2018; Grobler, 2018).

Educators exposed to learner-on-teacher violence have opted to resign as educators (Netshitangani, 2014). This has led to a vacuum for some scarce subject areas, namely, Mathematics and Sciences. Measures to retain educators in the teaching profession prove to be futile with teacher morale being low, hampering teacher retention (Linda et al., 2015). Other South African studies point to manifold reasons of violence in South African schools. These embraces, amid other effects, authoritarian practices of socialization, namely, intimidation, sexism, xenophobia, and retaliation when provoked (Jacobs, 2016 Burton and Leoschut (2013) point to alcohol and drug abuse as main factors increasing disrespectful behaviour of learners that provokes learner-on-teacher violence in South African schools. This act by learners derails lessons and presents a barrier to teaching and learning. There is the perception that ineffective measures to caution deviant learners are lacking ever since the abolition of corporal punishment (Ebersöhn, 2013). One study by Singh (2010) on Representative Councils of Learners (RCLs) in schools indicates that RCLs are unproductive in assisting with the countering of learner-on-teacher violence.

Instead, there is much emphasis on rights-based issues, which often negate the limitation on rights as this limitation pertains to the general application that rights have limits insofar as these rights must not have negative outcomes for fellow human beings. Singh (2010) also emphasises that there is low parental involvement in disciplining deviant learners. However, studies in general do not provide a model for confronting the problem of violence against educators; instead, studies merely offer a list of causes of the phenomenon of violence against educators.

1.6.5 The Importance of Educator Safety and Wellbeing

There is acknowledgment both in local and international literature that the occupation of being an educator is a demanding profession (Gerberich et al., 2014; Frias, 2016; Grobler, 2018). A phenomenon related with the wellbeing of educators is occupational anxiety (Furlong et. al., 2010). Occupational anxiety is associated with the declining physical and emotional wellbeing of educators. According to Payne et al. (2013), occupational anxiety pertains to a disorder commonly associated with the difficulty to discharge one's full abilities in the work sphere resulting in low productivity, negatively affected personal relationships and distorted individual management.

Wellbeing is closely related to the concept of educator safety which relates to educators' state of existence being characterised by health, happiness, prosperity and welfare in order to work productively and fruitful and being able to make positive contributions to society (Pillay, 2014). The wellbeing and safety of educators is crucial in order to enrich the quality of teaching, learning, and overall school improvement (Wubbels, 2011; Pahad et al., 2012; Jacobs, 2012). Ebersöhn (2013) emphasises that ensuring educators' wellbeing must be cherished as an objective to ensure learners' academic performance is satisfactory. In this regard, Chang (2013) concurs that satisfactory learner-achievement is contingent on educators feeling valued. Thus, supporting the wellbeing and safety of educators and retaining them in the teaching profession is a matter of concern in South Africa (Netshitangani, 2014).

1.7 Motivation for Study

Considering the international and South African literature deliberated for this study on violence against educators, a limited number of studies have been conducted on the phenomenon of learner-violence against educators. According to Gerberich et al. (2014), school violence in South Africa has largely been researched from a quantitative methodology and often deficient of a specific contextualization that is exploratory in nature, descriptive and that gives rise to “lived experiences”. De Wet (2009) affirms that experience and its location within the person's life realm are fundamental in appreciating the very nature of a phenomenon, such as the phenomenon of violence against educators. This study on violence against educators focuses on how educators perceive school violence directed at them and on their teaching practices. The aim is to contribute with a model of understanding and ameliorating violence against educators in the name of improved teacher wellbeing engendering improved learning success. In this regard, the study aims to promote non-harmful school environments and enhancing school leadership that cares for its educator component. The researcher taught at a high school for 13 uninterrupted years. He observed how learners have changed regarding their attitudes towards their educators. The moral and value systems of learners have degenerated, and they have developed more aggressive behaviour towards their educators owing to fundamental dynamics like poverty, drug abuse, and family disintegration. Learners turn to violence in response to these debilitating circumstances. Grounded Theory, based on how educators, as victims of school violence manage and understand learner-on-educator violence, results in a model of expertise on violence against educators in order to pursue ameliorating solutions. In this regard, the study aims to inform public school leadership practices on steps to ameliorate violence against educators and to contribute to the body of knowledge on improved teacher wellbeing for the sake of improved learning.

1.8 Research Methodology

To facilitate this study on violence against educators, both a literature study and an empirical investigation are employed to find answers to the postulated research questions.

1.8.1 Research Paradigm, Research Approach and Research Design

The research methodology for the study pertaining to the research paradigm, research approach and Research Design are discussed next.

1.8.1.1 Research paradigm

This study on violence against educators proceeds from primarily a Constructivist Research Paradigm. The researcher's ontological and epistemological location finds similarity with the view of a Constructivist Grounded Paradigm as proposed by Charmaz (2014). According to Charmaz (2014), Constructivist Grounded Theory celebrates first-hand knowledge of empirical worlds, takes a middle ground between Postmodernism and Positivism, and offers accessible methods for carrying out qualitative research in the 21st century.

Constructivism assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, recognises the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims toward interpretive understanding of subjects' meanings (Glaser, 2005). The constructivism Research Paradigm enables the researcher to understand and interpret information from interviews with participants as basis for building a model that counteracts the negative influence of violence against educators. This embraces rationality with the researcher's ontological position, which is primarily relativist in nature (De Wet, 2010). This allowed the researcher to gain insight, from participants' perceptions, on the impact of violence against them, to subsequently answer the primary research question and sub-questions. The meaning of actions in the social world are understood to be related to the multiple influences and perceptions of actors within a specific context (Charmaz, 2006). The individual perceptions of participants created knowledge and understanding of a relevant model to offsets violence against educators in schools. Specific situations from the collected information are then be used as building blocks for the proposed model to counteract the violence against educators.

1.8.1.2 Research Approach

This study uses a qualitative research approach primarily located within Grounded Theory. A qualitative research approach provides a detailed representation of the status quo (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research clarifies a phenomenon in a manageable technique giving richness and finer aspects of a phenomenon in a more substantial way than a quantitative research approach (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Through a qualitative research approach, much acknowledgement is given to the individual in the exploration process, not just the apparent influence of a phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). Leedy and Ormrod (2010) emphasise the strength of qualitative research in its ability to offer multifarious verbatim explanations of how persons translate a given research issue.

A qualitative research approach is thus effective in ascertaining imperceptible elements, such as social norms, socio-economic status, gender roles, ethnicity and religion. In this study, the researcher precipitates all aspects in relation to violence against educators, around the responses from participants, until a saturation point is reached. Open-ended questions with probing are characteristics of qualitative research methods. This allows participants the prospect to respond in their own words, rather than choosing from fixed responses (Creswell, 2007).

1.8.1.3 Research Design

The Research Design as a roadmap, or blueprint, of procedures on how the research is to be conducted, points the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis (Glaser, 2005; Creswell, 2007). The Research Design as a structured framework, anticipates how the researcher conducts the comprehensive research process (Pas et al., 2015). For this study, the Research Design is an exploratory multiple-Case Study of four schools (Merriam, 2009). This study uses a multiple-site Case Study as opposed to a single-site Case Study (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Yin, 2011). The researcher concurs with Nieuwenhuis (2010) and Yin (2009) that a multiple-site Case Study provides richer data for a broader and more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of study. The multiple-site Case Study was used to collect data in order to answer the questions of “how” and ‘why’ of countering violence against educators.

In this regard, actions pertain an exploration of educators' experiences as victims of learner-on-educator violence; how they manage and understand learner-on-educator violence; and how these learner-on-educator incidents influence them in the teaching and learning process.

1.8.2 Selection of Sites and Participants

Creswell (2007) defines a research population as a discrete group of people, animals or things that can be identified by at least one common characteristic for the purpose of data collection and analysis. A research sample is derived from a given research population. Research sampling refers to the procedure used to select a portion of the research population for study (Merriam, 2009). The researcher identified four public high schools where the research study was conducted. Schools were selected based on predetermined criteria. Indicators for selecting research sites pertain to known incidents of violence against educators having occurred, or exposure of a school to one or more forms of educator attack or a school that has been linked to violence against educators by the media. Data were collected until saturation is reached (Charmaz, 2006).

The criteria for school inclusion in the sample is summarised as follows:

- The School Principal identifies his/her school as having challenges within the context of the study;
- The school is accessible for data collection;
- The School Principal and staff are willing to allow the researcher to collect data for over a period of 6 months; and
- The School Principal and educator participants have been employed at the school for at least three years.

Qualitative research is normally grounded on Non-Probability and Purposive Sampling rather than Probability or Random Sampling approaches (Creswell 2009). With Purposive Sampling, the researcher handpicks the case or cases to be studied on the basis of their own judgement, based on prior information about that group of subjects and in particular their characteristics being sought or because of them being the holders of the data required for that research study (Elliot et al., 2012).

As such, a researcher constructs a research sample that is reasonable to his/her specific requirements. With this study, five educators (one School Principal and four post level one educators) from each of the four schools selected were approached to participate in the study. The total number of participants taking part in this study is 20. The School Principals were involved in identifying the participants to participate in the study. Participants were selected based on predetermined criteria. According to Holton (2010), a sample must be relevant to both the theoretical and conceptual framework and the research question. In this study, the question relates to how can violence against educators be countered at schools?

The researcher used predetermined characteristics to include a participant (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In this study, educators who are victims of forms of violence by learners were approached as participants. The participant educator must have been exposed to different incidents of school violence either at school or in the vicinity of school during their teaching career. Participants selected are educators with at least five years of teaching experience, with at least three years at the specific school. Experienced educators have accrued some effective strategies of coping with the violence directed at them by learners at school.

Furthermore, owing to their veteran thought patterns and attitudes, this allows the researcher to construct an appropriate counteracting model to violence against educators (Madikizela-Madiya et al., 2014). Hence, an educator must be teaching at a school where forms of violence have occurred. Moreover, the educator must be willing to volunteer to participate for the duration of the study. Participants fell within the 30-60-year age range. The retirement age for educators in South Africa is 60 years, hence the given ultimate age range of participants is appropriate for inclusion in the sample with the at-least-30-year age restriction pertaining to the assumption that the age of 30 should have provided for enough experience to comment on the phenomenon of study. Non-Probability Purposive Sampling was used to select these participants (Creswell, 2014). The rationality and authority of Purposive Sampling centres on the choice of information-rich cases that best epitomises the population for in-depth study (Corbin et al., 2008). The findings will be generalised based on the conceptual power of the representative sample.

Descriptions that convince to be true to real-life incidents were considered. Data were collected until saturation is reached (Charmaz, 2006).

1.8.3 Data collection

According to Creswell (2009), on a qualitative research approach, data collection methods in qualitative research integrate interviews, observations and Document Analysis. In this study, semi-structured individual interviews were used to gather information. The underlying principle behind the use of this type of interviews is to allow participants purposefully selected to be able to explicate themselves independently, having all the available allocated time to share their information-rich understanding of the phenomenon of violence against educators in their schools.

1.8.3.1 *Semi structured interviews*

Data collection involved semi-structured individual interviews of approximately 45 minutes in length, conducted by the researcher with School Principals and educators. As managers, School Principals were asked questions pertaining to management issues arising because of violence against educators in their schools. Educators were asked questions relating to their daily confrontations with learners. The interviews consisted of open-ended questioning.

The researcher acknowledges the limitation of using interviews in that participants give a reflective interpretation of their experiences when conducting the interviews, which are reliant on remembered storylines. The process only allows participants to reflect on their experiences of being victims because of learner-on-educator violence. Although there is no reason to doubt the honesty and the frankness of the participants, reflecting in this technique implies that participants may choose what they want to tell the researcher. Hence, questions and follow-up questions were used as prompts for increased understanding based on an interview schedule (Mncube et al., 2014). The purpose of an interview schedule is to guide the researcher to address all aspects pertaining to the phenomenon of study (Ayres, 2007). The length of time for the interview is enough to get substantive information pertaining to violence against educators at school. The reason for individual interviews is to collect data from participants characterised as rich-information cases (Cohen et al., 2011). Data were collected from Post Level 1 educators and School Principals of the selected public schools within the Gert Sibande Region of Mpumalanga. Semi-structured individual

interviews were employed to collect data from both School Principals and educators on the phenomenon of learner-on-educator violence, how this violence influences teaching practices, and what counter actions are used against this violence.

1.8.3.2 Document analysis

To allow the process of triangulation, documents relating to the school's Code of Conduct for learners, such as the school's constitution, and the school's policy on discipline, class rules and other documents pertaining to learner conduct that may give information relevant to this study, were accessed from each research site (Elliot et al., 2012). In this regard, triangulation serves the purpose of explaining more completely, the richness and difficulty of human behaviour by studying it from more than one viewpoint (Charmaz, 2006), which with this study pertains to interviewing, observation and Document Analysis.

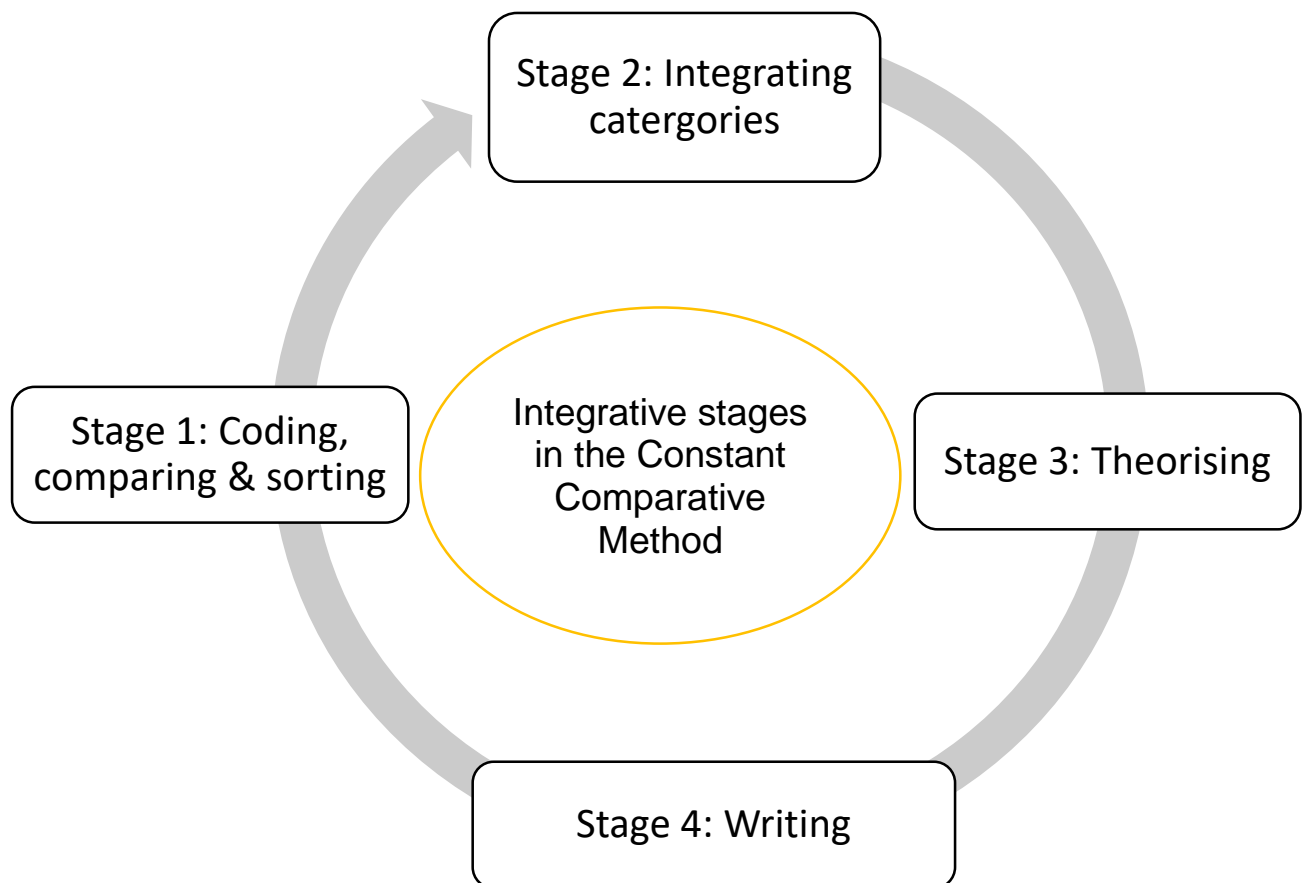
1.8.3.3 Observation

In this study, the researcher uses Non-Participatory Observation, which means the researcher remained as undistruptive as possible in order to extract, record and interpret information from the background with zero direct involvement (Elliot et al., 2012). Observation allows the researcher to obtain data on non-verbal behaviour and communication (Creswell, 2009). Observation is a powerful data-collection strategy that is critical to transformative work (Martin et al., 2013). Observations are made relating to watching what participants do and say during meetings and interviews in order to create a clear understanding of the phenomenon studied (Creswell, 2009; Pergert, 2009). The cyclical process of data collection determines that data collection continues until saturation of data is achieved – with saturation of data pertaining to the point at which no new information emerges from interviewing, observation and Document Analysis (Glaser et al., 2007).

1.8.4 Data analysis

Coding as qualitative Content Analysis occurs through a Constant Comparative Method of crosschecking and theorising as the main processes used in data analysis (Glaser et al., 2007). Figure 1.1 depicts the qualitative data analysis process showing the three comprehensive steps of data analysis. Within each of these steps, overlapping phases of the Constant Comparative Method of analysis were used. Educators were interviewed individually and face-to-face. With the permission of the participants, the researcher used an audio recorder to record the deliberations from the interviews, which were transcribed by himself for a first immersion into the content. Simultaneously, the researcher engaged in data analysis and interpreting the information as it was collected (Charmaz, 2014).

Figure 1.1: The Process of Qualitative Content Analysis



Source: Adapted from Lawrence & Tar (2013)

With reference to the coding of the data from the transcribed interviews as first stage of Content Analysis, open, axial and selective coding were used to analyse the collected data for this study on violence against educators. Qualitative research is interpretative in that the researcher provides an explanation for the behaviours of the participants (Creswell, 2009). Interpretation of transcriptions of the studied educators' experiences of learner violence against them takes place by means of a process of constant comparative analysis of the data and the categorisation of the communicated narrations of participants (Charmaz, 2006).

1.8.4.1 Open coding

Holton (2010) defines open coding as breaking down data into smaller segments. Open coding involves labelling the segments or concepts, examining and comparing them and putting them under concepts that are more abstract (Charmaz, 2006). The tools of analysis to facilitate open coding are questioning and constant comparative analysis (Holton, 2010). Data collected from interviews with participants were segmented into abstract concepts with comparison as technique applied in understanding violence against educators.

1.8.4.2 Axial coding

According to Creswell (2007), axial coding refers to suggestions the researcher makes of the abstract concepts in the open coding stage. Kauppi and Korpola (2012) state that the aim of axial coding is to identify a core category or basic social processor central idea, event or happening in terms of the data collected. All events with similar basic social mainframe were put together (Chamberlain et al., 2004). Core categories of violence against educators become clearer as sifting of concrete notions continues.

1.8.4.3 Selective coding

Selective coding represents the stage of coding that entails the researcher identifying a storyline and writing a story that integrates the categories in the Axial Coding Model (Holton, 2010). Joyce (2013) refers to a storyline memo, based on a theoretical discussion of the conceptual categories and their properties, representing a true, credible and simplistic theory.

In this study, a theoretical discussion on methods that curb violence against educators is conceptualised in relation to forming a model at a later stage of the research.

1.8.5 Trustworthiness and transferability

In order to address the concern of objectivity in this research study, the researcher concurs with Burton (2008) who emphasises that researchers must focus sensible cannons for qualitative data analysis, in the sense of shared ground rules for drawing conclusions and verifying the sturdiness of these ground rules.

Bounds and Jenkins (2016) contend that Social Science is scientific to the extent that it uses appropriate methods and is rigorous, critical and objective in its handling of data. Criteria to ensure rigour with interpretive research include participant feedback, triangulation, including participants' responses, and the researcher's position (Babbie & Mouton, 2009; Glaser, 2009). Objectivity is reputed within qualitative research as being synonymous with trustworthiness (Babbie et al., 2009).

A significant norm for decent qualitative research acknowledged by Ayres (2007) is its trustworthiness, which is netted in the question on how the inquirer can persuade his or her audiences (including him or herself) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to or worth taking account of (Babbie et al., 2009). Within the context of qualitative research, trustworthiness (as validity) focuses on the context of data collection and the methods of the generation of the data rather than on the inherent truthfulness of the data (Creswell, 2007). In this regard, trustworthiness incorporates the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Creswell, 2007).

In this study, the Constant Comparative Method is built in a number of steps during data collection, data analysis and the theorising of findings to check the authenticity and truthfulness of the data. The researcher triangulates the findings and demonstrate the theoretical truthfulness of the propositions developed. The researcher also ensures that the multiple views and realities of participants are truthful and are represented at each research phase process (Chamberlain et al., 2004).

Numerous steps were built-in to crosscheck and analyse the data with participants (Guba & Lincoln, 2010). In this study, direct quotations of participants are used to illustrate important findings and to ensure participant voices and understandings are echoed.

1.8.6 Ethical considerations

The researcher observed the ethical measures during the research in order to guarantee the safety and rights of the participants. Alertness was ensured to observe and carry out adequate ethical measures (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009). The researcher ensured that participants remain anonymous, and their information kept safely in a locked cabinet and a password encrypted computer. The information remains out of reach of unauthorised persons and provides an accurate account of educators' views on violence against them. The use of unbiased language regarding race, gender, ethnic groups, sexual orientation, disability or age in drawing up the interview schedule was applied (Elliot et al., 2012). In conducting the interviews, the researcher discouraged fraudulent practices such as suppressing, falsifying or inventing findings to meet the research needs.

Fieldwork commenced after obtaining ethical clearance and permission to conduct research at selected public high schools from the Department of Education. The researcher also requested permission to do research from the School Principals of the selected public high schools. In addition, the researcher obtained informed consent from the participants. Explaining to them the purpose for the research and expectations from participants were key. The participants were asked to read and sign informed Consent Forms. The Consent Form declares that participation in the research is on voluntary basis and the participant has the right to withdraw from the research at any time without adverse consequences. The prescribed research request documents from the Gert Sibande Regional Office of the Mpumalanga Department of Education and Training were completed and submitted for approval to conduct research in the purposefully selected schools. The request documents were not used as an official instruction to persuade participants to be involved in the research.

1.9 Concept clarification

The key concepts that are used in this study are defined below.

1.9.1 Violence

According to Joyce (2013), 'violence' is defined as the premeditated and deliberate usage of bodily force or power, susceptible or actual, against self or another person, or against a group or community, that either gives rise to or has a high prospect of subsequent injury, death, emotional harm, mal-growth or deprivation. In this study, violence means any deliberate usage of physical force, power or emotional violence act directed at educators by learners.

1.9.2 Violence against educators

According to Ncontsa and Shumba (2013), violence against educators is described as any form of verbal, emotional or physical violence that is inflicted on a teacher with the intention to cause harm or torment. In this study, violence directed at educators is a component of school violence, with this school violence directed towards educators with an intention of causing psychological or physical harm. These include intimidation, verbal attack, malicious insults, and acts of racism, bias based hate crimes, assault and aggression.

1.9.3 Educator safety

'Educator safety' is defined by Gerberich et.al. (2014), as a concept that relates to educator's state of existence being characterised by health, happiness, prosperity, and welfare in order to work productively and fruitful and be able to make a positive contribution to his or her community. In this study, the concept is applied to also mean a safe school. The concept 'safe school' and educator safety are intertwined. A safe school is defined as a school environment free from danger, absence of harm or violence, intimidation, harassment, humiliation, ridicule or fear. On the other hand, the question of educator safety in schools and the child's right to receive education are interweaved. For both educators and learners, this safe environment is vital.

1.9.4 Lived experience

The term 'lived experience' describes the first-hand account, impersonations and impressions of living as a member of a collection cluster or group (Ozdemir, 2012). In this study, the term is used to describe the ultimate experiences of educators as they discharge their duty of teaching and care for the learners they teach. Experiences include distressing emotions, such as frustration, anxiety, anger and depression burnout; physical conditions such as verbal attacks, threats, intimidation, sexual harassment, tensions; and any attitudinal fatigue associated with learner-on-educator violence in a typical public high school.

1.9.5 Victim

The meaning of 'victim' from the *Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary* is someone who experiences physical or mental pain of a type that may lead to severe hurt or death. According to the CSVN Report (2010), a 'victim' is defined as someone who has been harmed, injured, or even killed as a result of violence by someone else's actions, event, belief or unpleasant circumstances. In the context of this study, 'victim' is an educator who has suffered or been exposed to any form of violence by learners.

1.10 Organisation of the thesis

This study focuses on how educators as victims of violence by learners manage and understand learner-on-educator violence within the school environment. The study is structured according to the following outline:

1.10.1 Chapter ONE: orientation to study

Chapter 1 represents an overview of the study on violence against educators. This overview includes deliberations on the statement of the problem, the rationale for study and formulation of the research questions. The research methodology for the empirical investigation is introduced as this introduction pertains to data collection strategies, discussions of the research paradigm and research approach and sampling procedures. The ways of arranging for credibility and trustworthiness of research findings are followed by a discussion of ethical considerations and a clarification of high frequency concepts.

1.10.2 Chapter TWO: Theoretical framework

Chapter 2 gives attention to the applicable theory used as theoretical framework to understand how educators as victims of school violence manage and understand learner-on-educator violence within the school environment. In order to understand educators' experiences, a systematic two split theoretical framework relating to Grounded Theory and Eco-Systemic Theory approaches are used.

1.10.3 Chapter THREE: Literature review - An international perspective on violence against educators

Chapter 3 focuses on violence against educators reviewed from an international viewpoint. This is done through the review of international studies on educators as victims of school violence.

1.10.4 Chapter FOUR: Literature review - A South African perspective on violence against educators

Chapter 4 focuses on a review of literature in relation to the South African context of violence against educators and how educators manage and understand the learner-on-educator violence situation within their school environments. In this regard, educators' counteractions to the violence against them are studied.

1.10.5 Chapter FIVE: Research methodology for the empirical investigation

Chapter 5 comprises a discussion of the research methodology for the empirical investigation. It includes an account of the processes carried out in order to collect relevant data to answer the research questions satisfactorily. These processes pertain to a consideration of accompanying research methods and selection of research sites and research participants. Data analysis techniques and the handling of credibility, trustworthiness and ethical considerations are also discussed.

1.10.6 Chapter SIX: Research findings

Chapter 6 represents the research findings from the empirical investigation as concluded from data obtained through interviewing, observation and Document Analysis.

1.10.7 Chapter SEVEN: Summary, conclusions and recommendations

Chapter 7 summarises the main findings from literature and the empirical investigation from which conclusions are deduced and recommendations for improved practice suggested. The recommendations are accompanied by a highlighting of the contributions of study for improved practice.

1.11 Summary

Research overlooks learner-on-educator violence in the face of incalculable incidences where educators are at barrage with learners resulting in a hampering of educator safety, educator protection and teaching and learning continuity. It is important to focus on how educators manage and understand the violence against them in order to assist educators and schools in dealing with this unfortunate quandary. Educators are at the centre of the delivery of national educational goals and their wellbeing is crucial for the stability of teaching and learning endeavours.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS AND GROUNDED THEORY AS THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

Theory is an imperative feature for any empirical study as it affords a framework for reviewing and putting into perspective a specific phenomenon investigated (Elliot & Higgins, 2012). According to Pergert (2009), research conducted in a vacuum runs a challenge of theoretical emptiness even though it is exploratory. A researcher who sets out to explore an issue from a position of expertise is able to use the proficiency to frame the inquiry (Mncube & Netshitangani, 2014). Theories are therefore, an artefact of scientific analysis and advantage researchers comprehend the ecosphere around them (Burke, 2014). Theories can be simple or multifarious subject to the phenomenon explored (Pergert, 2009). According to Khaled (2014), theories are systematic declarations of rationally dependable and connected assumptions about a phenomenon, centred on first-hand held controllable observations that may be believed or negated.

In this study, the researcher is cautious that theories are vital and augment understanding explanations to violence against educators at school. In this case, the researcher wants to understand and interpret learner-on-educator violence from the perspective of educators as victims. The intention is developing a model on how the violence against educators could be countered. To this end, Ecological Systems Theory and Grounded Theory as an amalgamated theoretical framework are appropriate lenses for making reasonable judgements of answering the primary research question that guide this study (Makhasane & Khanare, 2018).

2.2 The Ecological Systems Theory by Bronfenbrenner

Urie Bronfenbrenner formulated the Ecological Systems Theory in 1977. He outlined a four-nested system that frames human transactions consisting of the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystemic and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). According to Bronfenbrenner (1994), the nested system influences how a child grows and behaves towards its counterparts.

Later in 1979, Bronfenbrenner added another system (the Chrono-system) that proceeds to give an account of history and time, which forms an individual's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

The Ecological Systems Theory has been used to lay the background of this study and to outline and interpret the inter-reliance of organisms and their immediate environment, in this case both learners and educators are looked at in relation to their immediate surroundings pertaining to violence against educators (Pergert, 2009). At an advanced stage of the study, Grounded Theory approach is useful as a lens to unpack the phenomenon with respect to stating a theory emanating from the analysis of data. In other words, data collected from educators' perspectives as victims through their experiences of violence against them by learners are used and the theory systematically emerges from the data (Charmaz, 2014). According to Gregson (2004), each system in the 'four-nested system' influences the other, thus producing a developmental effect on the individual, hence a correlation exists whereby change in one factor has an influence on other factors.

Environments are not fixed but are rather in a state of continuous shift that often engages an individual's adaptation processes to cope with the available changing resources in that environment (Martin, Mckenzie & Healy, 2013; Tintswalo, 2014). Research has shown that over the years violence against educators has become a complex phenomenon that has its roots in the interacting factors of the changing environment (Martin et al., 2013; Mncube & Netshitangani, 2014). In relation to this study, educators in schools are equally not immune from these shifting and changing environments. Thus, the ecological perception accepts that individuals in such environments are not only exposed but also feel, think and behave as to respond to the requirements of their immediate environment (Ebersohn, 2013; Bounds & Jenkins, 2016). Elliot et al., (2012) affirm that ecological glitches are primary regarding violence erupting from environments, especially from those of low-income urban social order. Therefore, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory benefits this study in understanding the violent behaviour of learners against their educators as erupting from the direct environment of low socioeconomic status as affirmed by Elliot et al., (2012).

The Ecological Systems Theory unpacks the various factors at play in the environment, which are fundamental to understanding learner-on-educator violence (Madikizela-Madiya & Mncube, 2014). The following paragraphs describe each of the four-nested system by Bronfenbrenner, namely, the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystemic and macrosystem.

2.2.1 Microsystem

Microsystem is the basic unit of the ecological system that directly influence the developing individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). It is the miscellaneous of relationships between the developing individual and significant people such as parents, relatives, helpers, peers and educators (Martin et al., 2013). Eliason and Schope (2007) affirms that the existence and involvement of third parties, such as relatives, peers or neighbours can affect a child's immediate environment. In this regard, the system is viewed as the elementary component of the ecological system that accounts for the interaction between a person (child) and the environment (Elliot et al., 2012).

A microsystem has an array of events, roles and interactive relations experienced by the developing individual in a given locale with specific physical and factual characteristics (Joyce, 2013). In the social interactive sphere, there are numerous parts of the individual, comprising emotional and cognitive factors, such as personality, awareness and opinions (Pergert, 2009). Learners' behaviour consequently, becomes sensible by what occurs around them communally or can be erudite through individuals who are close to them (Bounds & Jenkins, 2016). An environment that individuals are exposed tend to mould them together with the circumstances and other persons they intermingle with (Gregson, 2004). Individual historical settings and biological factors influence how persons conduct themselves and surge their chances of becoming a victim or a perpetrator (Elliot et al., 2012). These factors affecting behaviour include manipulation, cruelty and mistreatment of the person, alcohol abuse or drugs and psychological problems (Joyce, 2013).

There exists a two-way-directional way concerning relationships at this stage, for instance, the school (through educators) may influence the behaviour of a learner but the school (educators) itself is, in turn, affected by the behaviour of the learner (Tintswalo, 2014).

Research has shown that an individual's personality and learned biological shortfalls may add to their violent propensities (Opic, Lokmic & Bilic, 2013). Eliason and Schope (2007) identified anti-social personality disorders, conduct disorder, thoughtlessness, neurotoxin exposures, and serious head injuries as a few of the reasons that influence persons to violent behaviour. Children show hyperactive behaviour in the classroom and several have self-confidence challenges with very low tolerance levels towards specific conditions (Opic et al., 2013). Martin et al. (2013) identified other features that embrace issues of age, sexual orientation, education, and income. Madikizela-Madiya (2014) found that lack of supervision, absenteeism and poor parental participation in the child's development might culminate into violent trends in learners. Parental participation in child upbringing creates a remarkable variance to how youngsters react to circumstances (Mncube et al., 2014). Research shows that kids coming from households where parental chastisement is erratic and extreme, lack communication, comprise domestic violence, are insecure and where families operate as a disjointed family unit display noticeable deviancy in their behaviour (Mncube et al., 2014; Opic et al., 2013).

For purpose of this study, the microsystem is considered and referred to as suggested by Bronfenbrenner, for observing educators' fissionable reactions as features that usually escalate from interactions between learners and educators relating to an incidence of violence. By fissionable reactions, it is referred to evolving negative interaction between educators and learners. It helps to depend on what originally happened between two parties, the intensity and duration of the incidence. This better frames what can be understood as what drives learners towards violence against their educators as this forms the gravity of the phenomenon (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

2.1.2 Mesosystem

The mesosystem is a system of various microsystems created every single time the developing individual transcends into a new situation (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The two-way-directional impact (bi-directional influences) of the microsystem, in this instance, extends to the magnitude that a slightly higher-order environment is at play, for example, the entire school, the home elevated to the level of the community, the extended family, and collective interactions at the level of peer clusters (Elliot et al., 2012).

The occasion here is in how parents and educators work together in educational planning for the developing child (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Particular individual relationships prescribe whether a person (child) takes part in violent behaviour or does not (Gregson, 2004).

Mesosystem reconnoitres the closeness of relationships, namely, with family, peers, intimate allies and colleagues and escalates the possibility of a person being a victim or perpetrator of school violence (Mncube et al., 2014). Persons in stressful surroundings with petite backing habitually are at more risk of committing or undergoing school violence (Opic et al., 2013). A broad study of peer relationships as a factor causing violent behaviour suggest that associations with transgressors or drug users upsurge the risk of violent behaviour, most particularly in the form of gang culture (Eliason & Schope, 2007). Amid the two microsystems, deficiency of communication also proliferates the child's likelihoods of violence, in that the parents do not notify educators of new anxieties in the child's life that could elucidate the bothersome behaviour or educators do not anticipate parents to monitor learners' homework or support their discipline principles (Joyce, 2013).

For the purpose of this study, the mesosystem is used to determine the transactional practices of the learner (child behaviours as encroaching on their way of thinking, relating and acting towards educators) and as imbedded in the relationship between the learners and their environments. One common type of a transactional practice is the one of most educators being renowned for holding private individual dialogues with their learners, in an effort to understand what pushes violence towards them (Khaled, 2014). The participation of the learner as a child, growing in an environment comprising of home, school, neighbourhood and peers, is concerned with their adaptive fit into this interwoven complex arrangements (Sibisi, 2016). In this study, the applicability of the adaptive fit is in the fact that different spheres of influence play a role in the development of a child. Understanding such factors of influence assists to isolate cases of experience of violence and how such become detrimental to the child growing in these environments that eventually fit to be contributory feature to violence against educators.

2.2.3 Exo-system

According to Eliason and Schope (2007), the exo-system is described as a social milieu or stratum of society that exists beyond a person's immediate experience, which, however, has an emotional impact on him or her. Examples of such a system include parent's place of work, the health systems, or the actions of the resident School Management Team (Martin et al., 2013). Bronfenbrenner (1994) submits that such a system incorporates, amongst other things, the sphere of work, the neighbourhood, the mass media, activities of government, the supply of goods and services, communication and transportation amenities and casual societal systems. According to Eliason and Schope (2007), community influence has colossal influential effects on persons. Violent inclinations might be stress at a parent's place of work results in stress encounter at home. Being unemployed is pertinent factor causing acute stress at home (Martin et al., 2013).

The most common community causes for school violence are living conditions due to poverty, joblessness, different racial and ethnic beliefs, and congestion due to overpopulation (Madikizela-Madiya et al., 2014). This system is known to wield influence on disadvantaged backgrounds (Tintswalo, 2013; Opic et al., 2013). It has been found that parental job loss, conflictual school management policies, high proportions of educator fatigue, gnawing away and the deficiency of resources all have an undesirable effect on a child's growth and progress (Mncube et al., 2014). The existence of gangs, easy *hors d'oeuvre* to dangerous weapons, together with the use and supply of substances lead to school violence and have a direct influence on the child's socialisation and personality development (Bounds et al., 2016). According to Martin et al. (2013), parental behaviour, attitudes of communities and caregivers in the homes have profound influence on the learners' educational development and performance, as well as on their social attitudes, behaviour, and reactions at school. For the purpose of this study, this system is used as a way of observing all events that are beyond the learner's direct control, which, however, have an emotional consequence on him or her (Bester et al., 2010). The exosystem is considered a pertinent level for the study, because it considers things that could influence the process of teaching and learning at the context involving the interactions of educators and learners outside the school.

Educators facilitate learning as individuals in their classrooms and collectively, as members of a school. Therefore, it is important to explore educators' experiences in such contexts because, if these experiences are not known, it would be difficult to propose recommendations on how educators could address violence against them by learners. At this level, it is important to spell out the complexities of interactions between educators and learners that lead to violence against educators and halts the entire teaching and learning from an exo-system perspective.

2.2.4 Macro-system

According to Bronfenbrenner (1994), the macro-system consists of the all-embracing organized configurations of society such as the economy, educational system, legal system, of which the other nested systems (micro, meso and exo systems) are tangible facades. All societal factors such as beliefs, customs, bylaws and morals are found at this level (Opic et al., 2013). The characteristics of the macro-system that influence the lower strata embrace cultural characteristics, political disruption or economic disturbance, all of which can uniquely or mutually profile societal development and impact on all the lower strata of the ecosystem (Martin et al., 2013). The macro-system represents the larger societal factors that assist in constructing a suitable macroclimate where certain specific behaviours blossom or are repressed (De Wet, 2009).

The daily glorification of violence in the media reinforces the common endorsement of violence in schools, confirming ecosystem functioning (De Wet, 2009; Mncube et al., 2014; Madikizela-Madiya et al., 2014). The media has assisted in creating an atmosphere of fear among educators, parents, and school officials (Makhasane, 2018). It has often been observed that the media coverage of violence against educators by learners tends to be unnecessarily graphic, focusing on victim blaming and placing more emphasis on the victim rather than the criminality perpetrated (Bounds et al., 2016). Such Media reporting can be instrumental in strengthening the preconceived notions about educators as perpetrators of violence and can lead to increased violence against educators (Collet, 2013). Media report on school violence influences public perceptions; giving rise to particular attitudes and can influence decisions by policy makers (De Wet, 2016).

The more frequently an issue is presented in a specific way, the more likely it is for readers to perceive the media's version as the truth. While news is assumed reliable, comprehensive and unprejudiced, professionalism in journalism can also be questionable (Joyce, 2013).

For the purpose of this study, this system is used to understand how political, economic and cultural contexts affect the child's growth to which the child is a member but does not necessarily spend time in these contexts (Collet, 2013). By studying these contexts, reference is made to a holistic judgement that provides an understanding of why some learners may be at risk of perpetuating violence, while others may be cheerful and participate in positive school-life engagements (Khaled, 2014). In one study, children who have difficulty forming emotional attachments showed a decreased ability to experience positive emotion and were not able to seek or accept physical or emotional intimacy, and reacted violently when held, cuddled, or comforted (Sibisi, 2016). Behaviourally, affected children are unpredictable, difficult to console, and difficult to discipline (Bounds et al., 2016). They have a strong desire to control their environment and make their own decisions.

In this study, changes in routine and attempts to control situations that stimulate rage, violence, or self-injurious behaviour are understood and referred to. Research has established that, in the classroom, the outlined challenges (viz., rage, violence or self-injurious behaviour) inhibit the acquisition of core academic skills and lead to rejection from educators and peers alike (De Wet, 2016). It was also referred to that an increased risk of anxiety, depression and hyperactivity all reduce frustration tolerance and, as such, increase learner-aggressive behaviour towards educators (Joyce, 2013). This study engaged educators in as far as their interactions are concerned with violent learners to establish the extent and truthfulness of such agitating behaviour with the aim of countering the distressing influences.

2.2.5 Chrono-system

In 1979, Bronfenbrenner added another layer of the ecosystem, the 'chrono-system'. The chronosystem is a system of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory that embraces the concept of time. Time and the period persons exist in will influence their development (Opic et al., 2013).

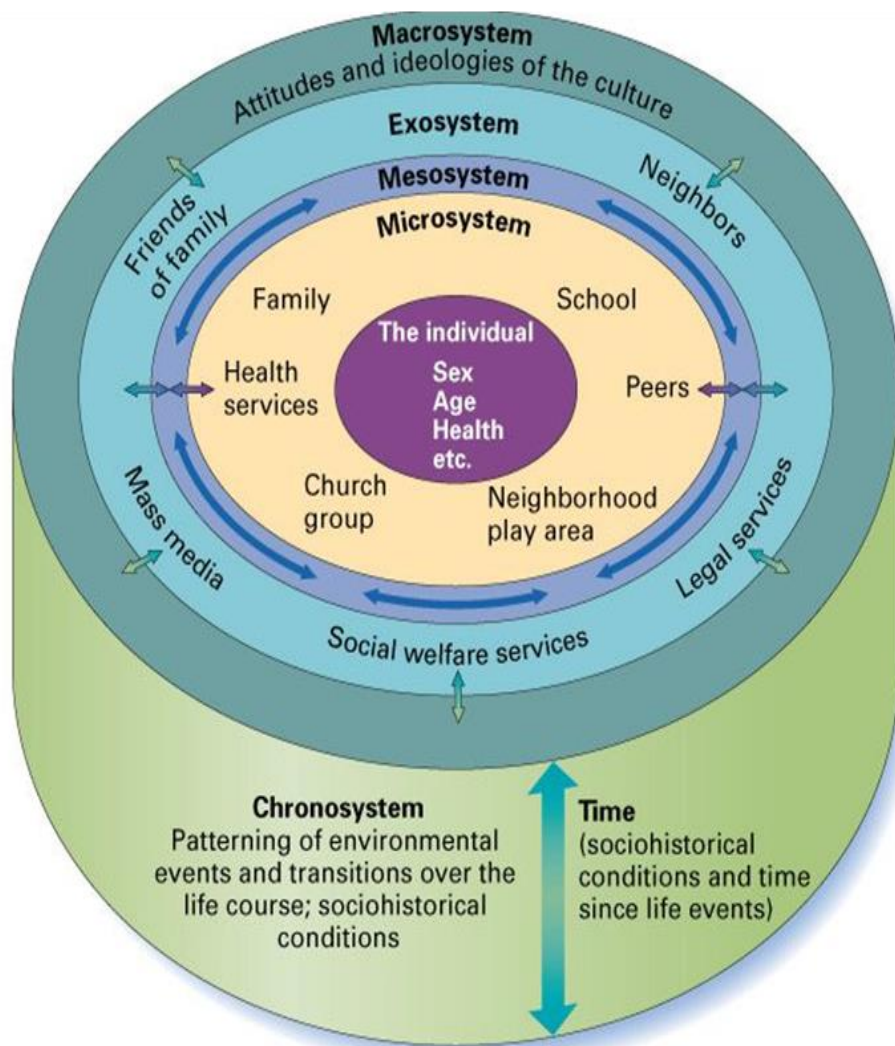
This system lays emphasis on the influence of the psychosocial development and the socio-historical placement on a person (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). For example, the effect of marriage breakup on a child, particularly in the initial stages of the separation or even the demise of a loved one, may cause much disjuncture on the growth progression of the child (Sibisi, 2016). The same thing happens with reference to changes in family's place of residence, employment, and socio-economic ethics (De Wet, 2016).

According to Bronfenbrenner (1994), with the chrono-system transformation and stability is inevitable over time, in both the individual and the environment in which that individual survives. Within the chrono-system, features can both be exterior, such as the socio-dynamics of xenophobic attacks, and interior such as the psychological issues that take place with the ageing of a person (Sibisi, 2016). In relation to this study, over time, the influence of the external environment can be a threat to educators' stability, reduce their quality of life, and thus experience direct victimisation and thus affecting entirely the learning/teaching process.

According to Martin et al. (2013), the influence of the external environment functioning as a threat to educators' stability creates varying reactions amongst educators, for example, the use of gadgets like Smartphones and tablets, do have influence on learning and teaching in classrooms. If learner parents cannot control the use of these gadgets well, it may cause addiction on the child not only currently but also in the near future, overtime affecting the child's growth and interactions. This may influence the teaching and learning process by creating problems of discipline for the teacher in the classroom (Makhasane et al., 2018). Educators in turn may develop emotional responses embedded in anger towards the learners they teach. Parents' role in this regard become very important. If children watch videos or play games of an aggressive nature on a smartphone, it has been shown by research that they develop aggressive behaviour overtime, which navigates into the classroom, thus disrupting not only the development of the child but also the whole education process (Collet, 2013; Khaled, 2014; Sibisi, 2016).

In this study on learner-on-teacher violence, the researcher embeds and contextualises the historical and time aspects of the Bronfenbrenner’s model as far as 10 years back in order to situate how the interactions of educators and learners have evolved. This helps reflect an understanding of the nature of challenges between educators and learners; and the story relationships that assist the researcher understand the learner-on-teacher violence. History helped to indicate the relationships that have developed overtime amongst educators, learners, parents, and stakeholders (Thomas, 2014). The strata and specific aspects of the Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems that influence and are influenced by a person’s history and time dimensions are charted in the following suggested summary model (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory



Source: Adapted from Santrock (2014)

2.3 The Grounded Theory

This section provides a contextual discussion about the use of Grounded Theory. It describes a brief development of Grounded Theory Model (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The definition of Grounded Theory approach is also given (Charmaz, 2009; Glaser, 2012; Pergert, 2009). The three main versions/approaches to Grounded Theory and the application of Grounded Theory in the study are outlined. A brief outlook of the Grounded Theory strengths and weaknesses. The researcher concludes with an explanation of how Grounded Theory is applied to the own study context.

2.3.1 The Development and Definition of Grounded Theory

Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss founded the Grounded theory approach to studying social phenomena in the 60s (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This methodology to research has gone through various developments that has given rise to diverse approaches to Grounded Theory (Glaser & Holton, 2007).

Literature confirms three main approaches to Grounded Theory model, namely, original interpretive classical Grounded Theory model developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967); Strauss and Corbin Grounded Theory approach developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1997 & 2008) and the Constructivist Grounded Theory as championed by Charmaz (Charmaz, 2006; 2009 & 2014). Holton collaborated with promoters of the Grounded Theory approach, namely, Glaser and Elliot, in order to develop the Glaserian Grounded Theory model further (Glaser et al., 2007; Holton, 2009; Elliot et al., 2012). Evidence of the historic origins of the approaches to Grounded Theory is presented in scholarly journals, namely, the Grounded Theory Review and Re-modelling Grounded Theory (Pergert 2009; Lawrence & Tar, 2013). All of the approaches to Grounded Theory have their roots in the original approach developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The three versions of Grounded Theory and how each of these three versions applies to the study on learner violence against educators are discussed later in this chapter.

Strauss and Corbin (2008) define Grounded Theory as a universal methodology in which the researcher seeks to develop theory that is grounded in data. The most appropriate use of Grounded Theory is when existing theories are unsuitable or insufficient, as is the case with the violence instigated against educators by their learners (Elliot & Higgins, 2012).

Existing theories that other researchers do use to interpret learner violence against educators are inadequate in the sense that they do not facilitate the process of moving back and forth between data collection and analysis. Thus, theoretical formulation does not emerge from the data but rather imposed on the data. As a result, less clear but conceivably equally important instances of categories, whose true significance has yet to emerge, can be missed (Holton, 2010).

Grounded Theory as defined by Charmaz (2014) is an orientation to research that places prominence on the conception of theory from the research process meaning it pursues to create theory from research and data analysis. According to Charmaz (2014), Grounded Theory method starts by detecting, namely, the field of interest, and theory emerges from what is observed in the data. The data are systematically gathered and analysed as the study progresses (Holton, 2010).

In this regard, Grounded Theory is discovering theory from data (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Most traditional methods of research seek out to test theory or have a theory preceding the research process (Elliot et al., 2012). Grounded Theory offers a move from the testing or verifying a theory to the generation of theory (Lawrence & Tar, 2013). In view of that, theory ought to come out from an engagement in research rather than being forced from it (Glaser, 2012). The statement also infers that the researcher must allow themes and categories to surface naturally from data to create the subsequent theory (Chamberlain, Camic & Yardley, 2004). According to Lawrence and Tar (2013), the different approaches of Grounded Theory research are prescriptive depending much on the stance of the original author. For example, this dependence on the stance of the specific author may result in inconsistencies. Some of these inconsistencies are very authoritarian, for example, the Glaserian interpretive Grounded Theory refutes use of literature from the onset, as this is viewed as contaminating the research process (Glaser, 2012). However, other approaches leave possibility for the researcher to conduct his or her research in a technique that fits the research environment (Charmaz, 2014). Some promoters of Grounded Theory method encourage novice researchers to use the method adaptably (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). Glaser (2005) reject to admit any inflexible use of this method. As an alternative, she embraces the method as an administrative framework, which in principle means any researcher can reasonable adjust to apt the perspective of the specific study.

The elementary principle of Grounded Theory is to permit free innovation of theory and to restrict any presumptions (Elliot et al., 2012). Whereas there is no distinctive restriction to the rationality of modern-day technique of Grounded Theory method, it is acknowledged that the authorities of Grounded Theory sought to lessen researchers' burden of mechanical elucidation of research procedures (Charmaz, 2014). Bruce's (2005) reasoning with reference to theological studies, affirm that Grounded Theory method must be renowned as an ultimate human activity, in which every society and individual characteristically grasps and engages with the research process for the subsequent nature of a phenomenon. This means researchers must be unrestricted with respect to exploring new and less confined methodologies to understanding a phenomenon.

Being thoughtful of the foregoing debate, this study uses two theories, namely, the Grounded Theory method and the Ecological Systemic Theory of Bronfenbrenner to guide the researcher and define the scope of the study and, as such, the researcher has left flexibility and independence for in-depth exploration of the violence against educators by learners in the data (Pillay, 2014). This is to allow a clear formulation of the theory grounded in the data constructed and coming from educators' experiences. The motivation to use the two theories is to systematically move back and forth on the research process in order to erect the theory grounded in the data in order to explore the ecology of the contexts of the teaching and learning environment as put forth by Bronfenbrenner.

2.3.2 Types of the Grounded Theory Model

The three common versions of the Grounded Theory Model, with each version's application to this study on learner-on-teacher violence, are discussed next. The versions of Grounded Theory pertain to three dominant Grounded Theory designs, namely, the systematic version, the emerging version, and the Constructivist version (Creswell, 2012).

2.3.2.1 *The Glaser and Strauss Systemic Version*

Glaser and Strauss pioneered the original interpretive Grounded Theory model over 50 years ago (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Glaser was proficient in quantitative sociological studies while Strauss was an expert of Symbolic Interactionism (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Symbolic Interactionism is an approach to research that considers human beings as moving towards things built upon the meaning they have of them (Dunne, 2010). In other words, humans build and rebuild meaning of reality in a constant interaction with self and others (Charmaz, 2006). Henceforth, this constant interaction is one of the interpretive perspectives in research. It embraces that people are in an incessant process of interpretation and meaning as they change from one state to another (Khaled, 2014). In this study, the researcher does incorporate Symbolic Interactionism as part of the framework because Grounded Theory experts commonly use Symbolic Interactionism in their research process (Elliot et al., 2012).

In the exhibition of their study 'Awareness of Dying' Glaser and Strauss systematically showed how to develop and discover a theory grounded in data by integrating Symbolic Interactionism in their study (Cooney, 2011). The original emphasis stressed on a constant comparison and verification of data until a theory emerges from data. They were opposed to verification of existing theories but urged social researchers to go into the field and gather data without a ready-made theoretical framework (Glaser, 2012). They advocated for researchers to tolerate and accept what they found from the actual field of research rather than relying on outside influences (Charmaz, 2006). Glaser and Strauss encouraged novice researchers to delay literature review because they believed it influences researchers to view issues through the lens of the external world and ideas (Elliot et al., 2012).

In this study, the researcher applies the Glaser and Strauss version in the stages of information coding, namely, open coding, axial coding and selective coding. In the first stage of coding that is open coding, construction of initial categories of information about violence against educators by learners are segmented. After that, the researcher uses axial coding to choose open categories and relate them to others from the educators' views. Lastly, the researcher uses selective coding to interpret the relationships that emerge from the categories. Storylines that interconnect the categories are written and this allows the researcher to understand how the violence against educators can be countered using strategies emerging from the educators' views (Creswell, 2012; Glaser, 2012).

2.3.2.2 The Strauss and Corbin Emerging Version

The conglomerate between Strauss and Glaser dissolved in the early 90s (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Strauss found new partnership with Corbin and they published their own version of Grounded Theory model known as the Classic Grounded Theory (Walker & Myrick, 2006). They hold the view that literature and external ideas do not contaminate the research process. They were for a more open-minded approach to Grounded Theory. They acknowledged the role of literature but without the risk of researcher contamination preceding embarking on a study (Cooney, 2011). They contended being conscious of the field and being investigational observant is beneficial rather than as problematic for the researcher (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The core factor of the Strauss-Corbin's view of Grounded Theory is the obligation that researchers take a spontaneous attitude and are mindful of their stance within the study. In this study, the researcher applies the Strauss and Corbin emerging version to develop educators' explanation of violence against them by learners, and to use these explanations to develop categories that later are refined into fewer categories, followed by comparing data with the emerging categories. Lastly, an emerging theory regarding the violence instigated against educators by learners is written down, thus carefully constructing a theory by discussing the interrelationships amongst emerged categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

2.3.2.3 The Charmaz Constructivist Version

As a previous student of Glaser, Kathy Charmaz admitted the progressive nature of Grounded Theory from the time when the developers of the version established the classical methodology (Charmaz 2006). Charmaz is one of the pioneers of the modern-day Grounded Theory approach (Charmaz, 2006).

In reaction to constructing an inheritance of the Grounded Theory methodology to aid investigations in the scope of social justice, she enunciated a different methodology with more flexibility (Cooney, 2011). Charmaz specified that her interpretation of Grounded Theory must practically be perceived by the lens of the present-day era (Elliot et al., 2012).

This embraces an agreed-upon flexible guideline that permit researchers to construct meaningful theories concluded through uninterrupted stages of data analysis and theoretical advancement, created on robust first-hand experiences of participants, allowing researchers to attain believability (Charmaz 2009 & 2014).

Charmaz (2014) premises from a Constructivist perception, which puts significance on the phenomenon studied, how mutually data and analysis are formed, from the experiences of participants, and how connotations and engagements are cemented to explicit circumstances (Cooney, 2011). A theoretical perception, derived from rationality, accepts that individuals make themselves, humankind, and truth using Symbolic Interactionism (Charmaz, 2014). The researcher must of necessity be capable of keenly interacting with the subjects (individuals) being explored and be able to observe situations from their perspective in their natural milieu (Ebersöhn, 2013). This infers that the study begins using experiences or part of exploration and probes how participants in the study (in this case educators as victims of violence against them by their learners) localize themselves within the study phenomenon (Elliot et al., 2012). According to Charmaz (2014), Constructivists regard that multiple social realities occur simultaneously rather than as a single reality, thus accepting that interpreting the studied aspect is itself building a theory.

Grounded Theorists form a theory established on the data created from participants relating their experiences (Charmaz, 2009). However, Charmaz received criticism from Glaser (2012) concerning the Constructivist Approach to Grounded Theory as nothing but a misleading and poor approach. Glaser contended that Charmaz re-constructed Grounded Theory to a descriptive, qualitative data analysis method from its original theoretical fundamental (Glaser & Holton, 2007; Pergert, 2009).

Charmaz (2014) put emphasis on the open-minded landscape of Grounded Theory in the elucidation of pragmatic happenings and experiences. She argues that this permits Grounded Theorists to follow their instincts and latent investigative notions (Pergert 2009; Charmaz, 2014); but then advised researchers that authorizing concepts and search guesses are not identical to authentication (Charmaz 2014).

Authorisation and guessing is just a common-sense practice that commences with initial coding, in which the researcher links data with data, understands whatever participants observe as awkward and construe it logically (Cooney, 2011).

Khaled (2014) agrees with Charmaz (2014) that constant memo writing supports researchers to be elaborate in the breakdown of data at the same time amassing their conceptualisation trait. The researcher incessantly absorbs himself or herself with the data, where the data enlightens and guides the researcher (Martin et al., 2013). Hence, Charmaz's Constructivist Approach to Grounded Theory is a widely accepted version because it creates more room for views, beliefs, feelings and ideologies of people to be easily construed (Pergert, 2009; Dunne, 2010; Khaled, 2014).

This study uses the Charmaz's Constructivist Approach to Grounded Theory because of its nature of placing importance on the views, principles, beliefs, emotional state and norms of participants as these strengthen the technique of inquiry (Cooney, 2011). Experiences of educators as victims and their ontological assumptions are vital in the process of understanding violence against them (Pergert, 2009), therefore, a Grounded Theory methodology is used to explain how the researcher in the practical field extracted data (Bounds & Jenkins, 2016). In essence, this study formulates a *theory* of how educators manage and understand violence against them by learners at school in their real-life discipline; how *learner-on-educator* violence incidents are handled; and what practical steps are engaged in to facilitate a countering influence that will be accepted as a wide-ranging school practice.

2.3.3 Application of the Grounded Theory in theory Conception

Grounded Theory has, for a long time, existed as a respected technique to conduct social and educational research (Glaser, 2012). Yet according to Charmaz (2014), the present-day Constructivists place priority on the phenomenon under study and sees both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants and other sources of data. Charmaz's disposition pivots on shifting Grounded Theory from an approach with positivist foundations to a methodology that can be applied in diverse theoretical frameworks presenting a more concrete interpretive tradition (Pergert, 2009).

The Grounded Theory approach gives the researcher various options, principles and carefully outlined processes to follow (Elliot et al., 2012). The strategic procedural route in the Grounded Theory approach is the practice of the Constant Comparative Method. The method comprises four intersecting phases (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

The four phases are, namely:

1. Comparing instances relevant to each category;
2. Integrating categories;
3. Demarcating the theory; and
4. Writing or inscribing the theory.

The above process is similar to that which Cooney (2011) operationally employed where she recommend three overlapping stages in the Constant Comparative Method as:

- Generating categories and theoretical relations;
- Coagulating or jellying the theory; and
- Writing the theory.

In principle, the similarity in the two comparison methods allows a researcher to apply these conventional principles in the same study (Collet, 2013). However, allowing for flexibility because the elementary principle of Grounded Theory permit free innovation during the formulation of a theory (Elliot et al., 2012; Charmaz, 2014).

According to Glaser (2012), Grounded Theory approach permits the researcher to be less concerned about data fears but to put much focus on the main concepts that are fit for purpose in developing the envisioned theory. Grounded Theory approach can be useful to create both substantive and formal theory (Charmaz, 2006). Glaser (2012) describes formal theory as being abstract and conceptual, whereas substantive theory is established from conducting research in a single specific contextual situation and can elementary be used in building a formal theory (Cooney, 2011).

In this study, the focus is on generating theory on how educators manage and understand learner-on-educator violence within the school environment. This implies the researcher must be able to enthusiastically interact with the individuals being investigated and understand things from their interpretation in their natural set up (Pergert, 2009).

In other words, this study starts with the educators' experiences, proceed to inquiry, and ask how the educators as participants of this study construct or locate themselves within the violence against them by learners.

Two types of theory can be advanced using Grounded Theory: formal or substantive theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In Grounded Theory, an inductive model of theory development exists, whereby the process is one of creating a theory grounded in views from members of the study (Creswell, 2012). The rationality of Grounded Theory can stretch across substantive (key) areas and therefore into the territory of formal theory, which means producing abstract concepts and postulating relationships between the concepts in order to understand challenges in manifold substantive area (Charmaz, 2012).

Although theory adds to research by permitting researchers to speculate and interpret phenomena analytically, the route of formal theory development is one which go beyond numerous substantive areas of study that are abstract (Charmaz, 2012). The process of formal theory development implicates discussing an abstract area of investigation where the formal theory stipulates the relations between the concepts (Pergert, 2009). Formal theory draws from a range of contexts and incorporates psychological, socio-cultural and practical contemplations (Walker et al., 2006). Most grounded theories are substantive theories since they emphasis on explicit areas of study. In this study, the substantive area is violence against educators perpetrated by learners they teach.

The fundamental stages of generating substantive and formal theory in a Grounded Theory research are similar because they embrace theoretical sampling, constant comparative analysis and theory development. In other words, the theoretical thinking behind Grounded Theory is imbedded in the practice of Symbolic Interactionism that ventures on social roles as they communicate human behaviour (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This implies that, in this study, the fundamental principle of Symbolic Interactionism applies.

Symbolic Interactionism is an approach to research that human beings move towards things constructed on the significance they have for them (Holton, 2010). Walker et al., (2006) describe Symbolic Interactionism as one of the interpretive perspectives in research. Symbolic Interactionism embraces that individuals are in a repetitive process of interpretation and description as they proceed from one circumstance to another (Glaser, 2012).

According to Cooney (2011), Symbolic Interactionism must be built upon the following three principles:

- Daily life encounters of individuals, meaning things are derived out of the social interaction an individual has with others;
- Interpretations are controlled and adjusted by an interpretative process used by the individual engaged in the things she/he encounters; and
- Individuals act towards things based on the meanings they attach for them. These things include physical objects, other people, families or competitors, establishments such as schools, civil services, value systems such as trustworthiness or impartiality.

Within Symbolic Interactionism, the idea of interpretation is one of the main features in understanding human behaviour and social gravities (Pergert, 2009). Interpretation in this context is not stagnant, as persons' behaviour can transform, or be prejudiced by intrinsic or extrinsic aspects that are pertinent to them at any given moment (Lawrence, 2013). By 'extrinsic' it is meant behaviours that create continued performance because there is an external reward associated with doing them. By 'intrinsic' it is meant that which is innate that motivates repeating certain behaviours. The theoretical perspective of Symbolic Interactionism assumes that interaction is innately, self-motivated and interpretative (intrinsic) and Symbolic Interactionism relates how persons construct, ratify and modify meanings and engagements that, in turn, depend on language and communication (Chamberlain et al. 2004). Symbolic Interactionism explains social phenomena from the perspective of the participants (Charmaz, 2014).

Thus, in this study, Symbolic Interactionism is fundamentally an appropriate theoretical lens to explain the social phenomenon of violence against educators by learners. Since meanings ascend from engagements, and as a result influence actions, in this study, Symbolic Interactionism is used to address how the learner-on- educator violence unfolds and, as such, disclosure of teacher experiences is key. In this way, this study addresses how educators who experience violence against them by learners, assign meaning to the challenge and how they cope with it in school environments.

The stages that pertain to qualitative Content Analysis are discussed in Chapter 5. Therefore, the stages of the Constant Comparative Method pertaining to all aspects of educators' experiences of violence against them, as seen from the point of view of educators as participants are be labelled and categorised. Qualitative Content Analysis becomes useful at the level of categorization and jelling conclusive concepts such as theoretical sampling and theory emergence, which helps build up a theory countering violence against educators at school.

2.3.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Grounded Theory Approach

As is known with every research methodology, Grounded Theory does have various advantages (strengths) and challenges (weaknesses). The strengths pertaining to facilitating and enabling theory development and researcher's conceptualisation with respect to simplicity and objectivity, and weaknesses pertaining to ontological and epistemological views of researcher are discussed in turn below.

2.3.4.1 Strengths of Using Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory has numeral strengths that it affords researchers, namely, facilitating and enabling theory development; posing no concerns about data accurateness (Pergert, 2009; Charmaz, 2014). As an established and verified research technique practiced over time, researchers can rely on its flexibility (Brown & Mobarak, 2009); and it is an innovative and stimulating qualitative research approach. Grounded Theory research, as a fast growing and all-embracing research methodology applicable across a number of fields, encapsulates the following strengths:

- In facilitating and enabling theory development, Grounded Theory offers researchers with a chance to formulate new theories inventively and originally so, and offers the projections of providing new radiance in areas around which inadequate research has been conducted (Holton, 2010).
- In the emancipation of researchers wherein data accurateness is a concern, Grounded Theory exempts from the burden of proving accuracy (Glaser, 2012). Glaser et al. (2007) urge novice researchers not to concern themselves with normal human distortions trying to get a precise description in challenges, hence Glaser et al., emphasises the importance of conceptualising and relevancy with respect to phenomenon of study.
- Glaser (2012) contends that Grounded Theory appears as a methodology that skilfully advantages novice researchers to conceptualise with simplicity by following to objectivity and tediousness of Constant Comparative Method of creating categories and their properties.
- As a fast growing methodology, there is much indication that this research approach is an exciting and evolving area of qualitative research (Dunne, 2010; Martin et al., 2013; Charmaz, 2014). Modern arguments with regard to diverse Grounded Theory approaches are suggestion of the rising awareness of the research approach and its fine-tuning as a Research Design (Cooney, 2011; Glaser, 2012; Charmaz, 2014).

The beginner researcher has the opportunity to pull resources together and some level of erudition the Grounded Theory research practice offers, in enlightening and conducting his/her identifiable research process flexibly (Charmaz, 2014; Bounds & Jenkins, 2016). According to Merriam (2009), a researcher does not find knowledge but constructs it. In the end, the aim of a Constructivist researcher is to cling attention to and emphasis on the participants' views of the experience, aiming at developing a meaningful understanding of the phenomenon in question (Charmaz, 2009).

In this study, the researcher explains his conceptual logic and direction by prioritising the significance of actual educators' experiences pertaining to violence against them. In this way, an immediate account of the interactions between educators and their learners emerges.

The strength of Grounded Theory methods lies in the researcher's flexibility and that continued engagement with the data to make this flexibility real and important (Brown et al., 2009). Researchers can draw on the simplicity of flexibility of Grounded Theory without transforming it into rigid prescriptions concerning data collection, analysis and theoretical leanings (Charmaz, 2014). In this study, the researcher draws from, in terms of application procedures, this simplicity. For example, the researcher maintains simple language and straightforward ideas to make theory readable and understandable. This ensured accuracy, fluidity and open-mindedness framed around viewpoints and conservations with educators. While Grounded Theory has various strengths it also has obtained a reasonable amount of criticism (Glaser, 2012).

2.3.4.2 Weaknesses of Using Grounded Theory

A number of weaknesses have been levelled against the Grounded Theory model, namely, essentially with respect to its ontological and epistemological, which are lacking in illumination views (Charmaz 2014), inadequate recognition of implied theories that direct structure and weak in authentication of theory (Cooney, 2011). According to Charmaz (2009), she opposes Glaser and Strauss's presentation of positivistic predispositions contained by their articulation, so apparent in what Charmaz portrays as inexperienced epistemology. Charmaz view Grounded Theory methods as a set of principles and practices, not as prescriptions or packages. She emphasize flexible guidelines, not methodological rules, recipes, and requirements.

An additional contest for researchers is usage of Grounded Theory dialectal terminology, which appears unclear (Elliot et al., 2012). This ambiguity may confuse novice researchers to the methodology (Pergert, 2012). For example, attainment of theoretical saturation of the data and being sensitive when to end, proves challenging for new users of this method to control (Lawrence, 2013; Khaled, 2014). To counter this challenge of reaching saturation, Charmaz suggests researchers to be open to what is happening in the field and be willing to deal and cope with it. When a researcher is stuck, going back and re-coding of earlier data will clarify and define new leads of data (Brown et al., 2009; Charmaz, 2014).

Where necessary, Charmaz (2014) proposed abilities to heighten affirmative capability of handling Grounded Theory, namely, intellectual abilities, aptitude to deal with difficulty and uncertainty. Brown et al. (2009), also proposed communication skills as an expert interviewer, administrative skills and be able to work individualistically.

In this study, the researcher has means to combat these negative sentiments pertaining to reaching theoretical saturation and intellectual abilities through chiefly engaging with obscurity and uncertainty at different points throughout the research process. To counter obscurity with regard to giving logic to and refinement of emerging theory, the researcher sorted and integrated categories reflecting the studied phenomenon (violence against educators by learners) and careful logic of the categories in order to balance teacher experiences and theoretical statements flowing out of them. To counter uncertainty with regard to interrelationships of categories, the researcher uses diagramming. Diagramming is a method of creating categories in order to create visual representation of the categories (Charmaz, 2014). Diagramming can enable a researcher to see the relative power, scope and direction of the categories during analysis, as well as the connections among them (Brown et al., 2009). Diagrams can serve useful and diverse purposes at all stages of analysis (Charmaz, 2014). Therefore, in order to gain knowledge and skill with regard to data categorisation and theoretical saturation, given that the researcher is an amateur, repetitive reading of the application of the Grounded Theory as an organized methodology was considered (Cooney, 2011).

2.3.5 The Choice of Using Grounded Theory in this Study

The Grounded Theory Research Design is appropriate for this study. Although much research has been done on school violence, there is insufficient investigation conducted in the area of violence directed at educators (Joyce, 2013; Bounds & Jenkins, 2016). This has offered the researcher the prospect to conduct a research based on a qualitative research approach that seeks to generate knowledge and skills based on a Grounded Theory approach, which could be used to counter learner-on-educator violence at school. According to Charmaz (2009), Constructivist Grounded Theory has the opportunity of direct familiarity of empirical studies, profits a central ground amid post-contemporary and Positivism, and provides reachable techniques for advancing qualitative research into a feasible research technique of this era.

For this study, direct familiarity of empirical studies implies that the researcher will gain knowledge in that the Grounded Theory method includes taking comparisons from data and attaining to create abstractions and simultaneously achieving to connect these abstractions to data. It means learning about the specific and the general and seeing what is new in these abstractions and exploring their links to bigger societal problems by constructing larger unrecognized solutions in totality. An inventive interpretation sparks new views and leads other researchers to new landscapes. Grounded Theory methods can provide a route to see beyond the obvious and a path to reach imaginative interpretations (Charmaz, 2014).

As this is an empirical study, the central ground that is profited is the subsequent spark of new ideas relevant in the area of countering school violence, especially violence against educators. The value of contribution is the growth in the body of knowledge, namely, literature in the development of new theories pertaining to combating violence against educators at school. Post-contemporary and Positivism do relate to this study on learner-on-teacher violence in fostering openness to teacher experiences that emerge from processes of teacher social interactions and their teaching environment. For this study, Grounded Theory is a reachable technique, particularly in that Constructivist Approach accepts the belief of manifold social realities; acknowledges the reciprocal conception of understanding by the observer and the observed principle; and purposes headed for interpretive understanding of issues' connotations (Collet, 2013; Khaled, 2014).

Applied to this study on learner-on-teacher violence, Constructivism holds that both data and analysis are social creations that replicate what their construction bring about. Constructivist Grounded Theorists take an instinctive stance toward the research process and regard how their theories develop, which implicates reflecting on the point of view that both researchers and research participants interpret meanings and experiences (Charmaz, 2014). In other words, any analysis is contextually placed in terms of period, setup, culture, and circumstances. Since Constructivists see facts and beliefs as interconnected, they recognize that what they see and do not see resides on beliefs and principles (Brown et al., 2009). Thus, Constructivists attempt to become aware of their presumptions and to deal with how they influence the research (Dunne, 2010).

They realize that Constructivists' Grounded Theorists can paradoxically import predetermined ideas into their work when they remain ignorant of their initial assumptions (Cooney, 2011). As a result, Constructivism nurtures researchers' reflexivity about their specific interpretations as well as those of their research participants (Charmaz, 2009). For this study, an attempt to become aware of the presumptions and how they affect the research processes were observed through the researcher remaining unbiased and making conceptual sense of the participants' information.

2.4 The Merging of Ecological Systems Theory and Grounded Theory as Theoretical Lenses

A theoretical framework consists of concepts together with their definitions and reference to literature in relation to studied phenomena (Merriam, 2009). The Constructivist Grounded Theorist must demonstrate an understanding of theories and concepts that are relevant to the topic of research and that relate to the broader areas of knowledge being considered (Charmaz, 2014). A theoretical framework is not often something found readily available within literature. As such, a researcher must read and acquire pertinent models and theories relevant to the studied phenomenon.

In this study, the selection of Grounded Theory and Ecological Systems Theory is influenced by the appropriateness and ease of application of the two theories with relevance to violence against educators within the school environment. The articulation of the theoretical assumptions of the two theories lies in the explanatory power that these two theories offer to building new knowledge that contributes to interpreting and countering the impact of learner-on-teacher violence.

According to Dunne (2010), the merged theory serves the following roles in guiding the development of a new theory:

- Rationality of giving old data new interpretations and new meaning;
- Prescribing and evaluating solutions to research problems;
- Providing ways of discerning certain facts among the accumulated knowledge that are important and which facts are not; and

- Articulate means to guide and inform research so that it can in turn, guide research efforts and improve professional practice.

In this study, the practicality of ‘why’ and ‘how’ a merged theory approach to interpret the research findings is located within the explanation above. Furthermore, merged theories arise from repeated observation and testing and do incorporate facts, laws, predictions, and tested assumptions that are widely accepted. In this study, the merging of the two theories offer tools to get at varied constructions or competing definitions of the learner-on-teacher violence, as given in action not merely stated in reconstructed accounts of educators within school environments.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, Ecological Systems Theory and the Grounded Theory model were discussed as merged theoretical framework appropriate for making reasonable judgements in answering the primary research question that guide this study. The Ecological Systems Theory has been used to lay the background of this study and to outline and construe the inter-dependence of organisms and their immediate environment, in this case both learners and educators as relating to their immediate surroundings (Pergert, 2009). A description of the Grounded Theory as a research approach was given. A brief account on the development and common definitions used for the Grounded Theory approach were explicated. A view of the different versions was recounted. A discussion of the application of the Grounded Theory method in research, giving the strengths and weaknesses amid its use by prospective researchers; and lastly, the chapter concluded by giving an account of the choice of using the Grounded Theory model. In Chapter 3, a literature review focuses on violence against educators reviewed from an international viewpoint. This is done through the review of international studies on educators as victims of school violence.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW - AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST EDUCATORS

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 focuses on violence against educators reviewed from an international perspective. This analysis has been done through the review of international studies on educators as victims of school violence. Even though a great deal of attention has been paid on teacher education and youth studies, however, few models exist that counteract acts of violence against educators (De Cordova et al., 2019). The detrimental actions of learners against their educators are internationally recognized as a more serious challenge and a pronounced distress (Berg & Cornell, 2016). The cases of disobedient learners in schools which have become prevalent today, were considered uncommon some 40 years ago (Martinez et al., 2016; Benevene, Ittan & Cortini, 2018). Regardless of the acknowledgement, violence against educators is a prevalent phenomenon viewed as strikingly noticeable and concerning; however, it continues to be understudied and disregarded (Yin, Huang & Chen, 2019). Violence against educators draws very narrow attention internationally though it has an extensive impact, particularly to individual educators' wellbeing, schools and school environments, educator staffing and retention and learner educational outcomes (Martinez et al., 2016; Bounds & Jenkins, 2018).

As this literature draws its explanations from international environments, namely, Europe, North America, Middle East and Asia; scrutinizing and paralleling experiences of violence against educators from country to country is crucial (Buonomo, Fatigante & Fiorilli, 2017). Studies were reviewed on violence against educators, including a socio-economical perspective; insinuations of violence against educators; perceptions on how violence against educators come about; anticipatory measures aimed at countering violence against educators; as well as how to curbs learner-on-teacher violence (Dicke, Elling, Schmeck & Leutner, 2015).

Following the review of literature mentioned above would facilitate theory formulation that addresses violence against educators in the South African schools (De Wet, 2007). This aspect is further explicated in Chapter 6.

The following paragraphs explain what has been reported by different international studies, namely, on school violence from a global perspective, the nature and magnitude of violence against educators, comparative influences of school, family, neighbourhood, and the social perspective on violence against educators.

3.2 School Violence from a Global Perspective

Defining the term 'school violence' is belligerent and amasses problems because of deficiency of lucidness and differences amongst theoreticians (Bounds & Jenkins, 2018). School violence from an international context refers to all purposeful, violent and aggressive acts and/or threatening another individual on school surroundings or during school gatherings (Martinez et al., 2016; Reddy et al., 2018). While superficially noticeable, school violence is regarded a socio-ethnic distress for the reason that it has damaging and damning effects stretching from psychological, for example, post-traumatic anxiety to physical such as death of an individual (Bass, Cigularov, Chen, Henry, Tomazic & Li, 2016; Buonomo et al., 2017). Post-traumatic anxiety refers to a condition characterised by failure to recuperate after going through or witnessing a frightening occurrence (Berg & Cornell, 2016).

School violence is globally indicated as escalating and is linked to dis-serviced school systems, weak infrastructural organisation such as poor or lack of facilities, incompetent and inexperienced educators and the continuing marginalization of youth across the board (Espelage et al., 2013; Bass et al., 2016). Moreover, pertinent to global studies is the undesirable educator psychological distress that seems to be fuelled by the upsurge of school violence (Reddy et al., 2018).

According to Montuoro et al. (2017), a key violence causal feature is the inconsistency and differences amongst private and public schools, as this seems to generate an attitude of comparative deficiency among learners at public schools. 'Comparative deficiency' is a concept referring to differences in terms of the quality of teaching and learning, and learning outcomes; and the administrative component of a school, educator inputs and inequalities that exist in the education system (Bass et al., 2016). Research has shown that school violence proliferates with issues such as poverty, high learner incompetency rates, school capacity and the high learner-teacher ratio per each educator (Berg et al., 2016).

In the most recent data by the National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES) on school crime and student safety, a noticeable difference between public and private schools is gangsterism (Musu, Zhang, Wang, Zhang & Oudekerk, 2019). Only 5% of the learners' aged 12 to 18 years in private schools reported that gangs were active at school, 25% of the learners in public schools reported gang activity (Musu et al., 2019). Concerning hate crimes, 6% of private school learners said that, they had been labelled a hate-based name or word, while 10% of public school learners made such a report (Musu et al., 2019). Nearly 19% of the learners surveyed in private schools said they had encountered hate-based graffiti at school, compared to 36% of the learners surveyed in public schools. To this end, a similar but isolated survey on the Indicators of School Crime and Safety, asked educators at all school levels (elementary through secondary) on whether they had been victims of crimes at school during the 2007-2008 academic year (Musu et al., 2019). Only 3% of private school educators said that they had been exposed to physical harm compared to 8% of public school educators (Musu et al., 2019).

These findings conclude that on average, many features of violence and crime are lesser in private schools than in public schools. Thus Bass et al. (2016), affirm that there are apparent relations between youth and 'school violence'; meaning, being involved generally in risky behaviour. For example, learners at school are prone to using illicit substances and engaging in assaultive violence. Such crimes are rife in school premises, as schools seem to be opportune sites where exposure to, taking part in and perpetration of violence happen. Consequently, school violence is regarded as constituting conditions of both execution and victimisation in the cycle of violence, as well as disorderly and lawless behaviour fuelled by countless factors, such as the crime occurring inside schools, violent ill-treatment, anti-social behaviour, possession of weaponries, substance abuse and hooliganisms. Furthermore, Won et al., (2019) insist that the numerous expressions of 'school violence' may as well embrace schoolyard battles, bullying and acts of criminality.

According to Reddy et al. (2018), to adopt a homogenous or identical understanding of school violence often dwindles the hidden features embraced by the conspiracy of silence, mostly in relation to less clear types of violence. Some violent types remain unclear because of institutionalized and systematic silence of this bothering issue with no efforts being made to highlight its plight and harmfulness (Skaland, 2016).

This declaration is further supported by Benevene et al., (2018) who argue that 'school violence' outspread yonder the traditional school fights into a crucial fragment of a wider culture of violence, thus to understand this violence requires a broader multidimensional approach.

This expression is specifically valuable in relation to the South African context hemmed in intricacies of school violence taking place inside South African schoolyards. This description admits that the versions of school violence go beyond school establishments and implying other role players must be included to entirely cross-examine the fundamental drivers of the phenomenon (Skaland, 2016). It is necessary to stress that the interest of this study is to ruminate that schools are the centres of focus. To study what takes place within schools advances more consideration for the creation of a theory that guides the South African context. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, it is important to comprehend the term 'school' as denoting the 'physical location' wherein violence as perpetrated by learners against educators has its origins (Montuoro et al., 2017). This is the global understanding that provides an anchoring point on which this study rotates.

In this regard, the researcher discusses school violence as perpetrated against educators, its disruptions and educators' perceptions pertaining to its threats and the experiences of being a victim. The literature examined, in relation to this study, a variety of other perspectives of school violence, namely, the nature and extent of learner-on-educator violence; educators as victims; teacher preparation and training; and strategies for responding to and preventing school violence, specifically pertaining to violence against educators.

3.2.1 The Nature and Extent of Learner-on-Educator Violence Internationally

International studies have identified teaching as a stressful occupation, with weighty psychological demands, including the need to develop positive relationships with learners and their parents; relationships that, ultimately, play a momentous role in educators' development of self-worth and a sense of protection (Skaland, 2016; Benevene et al., 2018; Berg & Cornell, 2016). This implies that the influence of any violence perpetrated by a learner or even a parent against a teacher is predominantly more serious, and epitomizes a key occupational healthiness anxiety that educators are exposed to (Reddy et al., 2018).

The educators' role similarly implicates upholding discipline and dealing with learner distractions (Berg & Cornell, 2016), and also encouraging security and safety amongst educators in the interest of learners and the society, since learner-on-educator violence affects the quality of education that schools provide (Petlak, Tistanova & Juszczuk, 2019). Therefore, the culminating safety of educators in schools is a multifaceted concept understood internationally at different levels depending on the variety of personal, environmental, and the various interacting influences in different countries (Benevene et al., 2018).

To capture a few of the kind of violent actions by learners in general as experienced across the globe, it takes on several forms, namely, victimization, teacher injury, school harmful climates, violence erupting from educators' disciplinary actions, and the use of preventative security measures (Benevene et al., 2018; Won & Chang, 2019). The learner-on-educator violence has implications that are far-reaching and are beyond the classroom interactions (Birolim et al., 2019). In essence, the learners' violent manifestations are reported in more than 50% of schools in Europe, Asia and Middle East (Skaland, 2016; Benevene et al., 2018; Berg et al., 2016).

In a study conducted in 2015/16, about 10% of U.S educators were exposed to harm that caused injury, and about 6% of the educators were bodily attacked during the previous 12 months of the year of study (Musu-Gillette et al., 2018). In the same vein, other studies submit that 7 to 13% of American educators are victims of bodily and physical attack in a given year (Martinez et al., 2016; Reddy et al., 2018; De Cordova et al., 2019). The research also revealed that, it is predominantly learners and not educators, who are perpetrators of violent incidents in schools (Arvidsson et al., 2019), though educators also re-count moments of attack from parents of learners and from internal co-teacher-worker violence (Reddy et al., 2018).

In another U.S. study of 2016/17, piloted by the American Psychological Association Task Force investigating classroom violence against educators, it was found that 80% of educators through 48 nation States recounted facing at least one occurrence of at least one kind of unfair treatment in the workplace (Montuoro & Mainhard, 2017). This occurred during the course of the utmost latest school year 2017 (Montuoro & Mainhard, 2017; Reddy et al., 2018).

Comparatively, one other study involving 243 participants illustrated the commonness of many sorts of violent ill-treatment against educators during the preceding two years and the figures fluctuated from approximately 21% to 78% with a collective pervasiveness at 53% (Benevene et al., 2018). According to Arvidsson et al. (2019), 28% of educators in New Zealand experience insignificant types of bullying daily or weekly as perpetrated by their learners. The study further reveals that 82% of those bullied educators have repeatedly experienced class disturbances or continual ill-mannered behaviour, 40% had their private possessions or stuff being stolen or vandalised and 27% had been threatened or substantially attacked on more than one instance and 11% received recurrent ethnic, sexual or religious remarks (Buonomo et al., 2017; Birolim et al., 2019).

In a similar situation, in New South Wales, within the first school term, 'school violence' caused 34 educators ended needing medical attention after being attacked by learners (Dicke et al., 2015). The results also revealed that learners were responsible for 33% of ferocious assaults on educators and bodily attacks made up 41.5 % of episodes of cruelty (Dicke et al., 2015). Comparably, a similar study piloted in Turkey, indicated 24% of educators experienced emotional abuse and 14.7% experienced verbal abuse, while 6.3% wounded physically. Numerically, this translated to 6990 violent acts perpetrated by learners that have occurred inside, and outside of schoolyards. The results also indicated that male educators were exposed to physical violence while female educators were mostly facing verbal and emotional violence (Ozdemir, 2012). In a research conducted in Slovakia, experiences of 275 educators were reported (De Cordova et al., 2019). The study showed that educators experienced acts of violence from learners and were stressed emotionally. The results indicated that 35% of violent cases was verbal, 13% was damage to property, and 5% physical attacks. Generally, 50% of the educators measured have had destructive and damning experiences (De Cordova et al., 2019).

The literature again pinpoints an increase in numbers of aggression actions directed at educators across diverse school types and localities (Reddy et al., 2018), by way of learners and parents of learners as most common guilty parties (Birolim et al., 2019). Violence directed against educators instigated by learners and/or their parents, elevates to some peculiar kind of violent behaviours (De Cordova et al., 2019).

Such instigated incidents consist of being cursed, spat on and being jeered, inapt remarks and purposeful disrespect, yelling and screaming at, bullying and verbal threats, pestering provocation some concluded through internet, injury to or robbery of individual property and physical attack (Skaland, 2016; De Cordova et al., 2019). The accessed studies agree that verbal uttered violence was re-counted most frequently than other forms of violence (Reddy et al., 2018). The study shows that violence directed against educators is a worldwide phenomenon with comparable natures and consequences existing everywhere in the world (Martinez et al., 2016). The violent experiences have an undesirable influence on the general good of educators, physically, psychologically, and on emotive healthiness (Arvidsson et al., 2019). According to Dicke et al. (2015), these particular circumstances are capable to impede the professional speciality of educators by developing a harmful outlook concerning school and the teaching profession itself. Yin et al., (2019) affirm educators who experience learner-on-teacher violence could lead to a festering-damaging attitude to their profession. For example, resulting into depressing their professional growth, or sinking their enthusiasm and commitment. In addition, learner-on-teacher violence does not distress only the actual victims, but also persons who eye witness the incidents (Won et al., 2019). Learner-on-teacher violence also influence the learning environment, the quality of teaching which finally has a bearing on the standard of the delivery of national education goals (Kauppi & Porhola, 2012).

When the quality of education is compromised, severe negative effects follow and the wellbeing of educators and performance of learners suffers (Kauppi et al., 2012). Numerous extra expenditures accrue in the sort of absenteeism; loss of teaching time; expenses emanating from medical and emotional restoration; and costs accrued in training new educators and substitution of educators who exit the teaching profession (Buonomo et al., 2017). Although the commonness of violence against educators continues to worry, international research studies reveal less yonder prevalence and are inadequate and little has been identified about the origins that prompt teacher victimization (Arvidsson et al., 2019). To this end, there are noted similarities between the violent actions by learners in first and third world countries.

For example, according to studies on aggressive attitudes and behaviour in developing countries, there is every reason to understand that a hazardous relationship exists between young-age aggressiveness and criminality at a later age (Finigan-Carr, Gielen, Haynie & Cheng, 2016).

Thus, a similar gravity of school violence both in the developing and in the developed countries exists (Finigan-Carr et al., 2016). Further, in developing countries, studies conducted there on school violence indicated that such countries face rapid social and political transformation, and the issue of school violence is receiving more and more attention because of the seriousness of the problem in those countries (Finigan-Carr et al., 2016; Arabiat et al., 2018). Overall, studies reveal that school violence is happening at an alarming rate in developing countries and its impact on schooling, learning and living is certainly more serious, which negates the universally held understanding that violence is predominantly a problem for first world and industrialized countries (Arabiat et al., 2018). Although the economic loss triggered by violence at school is similarly huge in both the industrialized and developing countries, it is supposed that the effect on society, including on education, is more serious and excruciatingly felt in the developing countries, due to the issues that already exist with the development of economic, educational and human resources (Duncan et al., 2017).

This is pertinent pertaining to this study in relation to preventing, reducing or diverting the negative effects of violence against educators and subsequently on learning, teaching and the social lives of both educators and learners.

3.2.2 School, Family and Neighbourhood Influences on Violence against Educators

There is a common plea advising researchers to shift attention from individual physical characteristics of victims and aggressors to an understanding of how settings, both internal and external to the school influence learner-on-educator violence (Buonomo et al., 2017; Benevene et al., 2018; Won & Chang, 2019). The paragraphs below explicate on these external and internal environments.

3.2.2.1 Influences of School on the Learner-on-Educator Violence

The school influence is a growing characteristic of schools defined as the environmental regulatory practice on the demographics and structural make up of schools (Yin et al., 2019). Communicating school influences often follows a theoretical difference between school and schooling (Espelage et al., 2013). School is an institution that provides teaching; while schooling is process by which teaching take place. A theory of schooling should largely embrace the conception of its social administrative features, mainly formulated through and in line with a country's national policies (Van Dat, 2016; Martinez et al., 2016). A theory of school must demonstrate how the administrative practice of schools affects schooling (Johnson, 2012). Educators experience and go through many such school influences such as unfair treatment and aggression in schools (Bass et al., 2016). In a study on the effects of learners' violence against school employees, 14 school administrators who were interviewed indicated a greater likelihood of experiencing a majority of emotional responses of anger, feeling upset, scared and crying (Bass et al., 2016). Within a school environment, these experiences subsequently relate to experiencing negative influence of school violence (Kauppi et al., 2012).

Moreover, such feelings are predictive of an increased likelihood of communicating with a school administrator in general (Bass et al., 2016). International research has also shown deviations across school contexts and roles. For example, Berg and Cornell (2016) report that worldwide, physical attack of school employees has higher likelihood to take place within the classroom (63%) followed by the staircase attacks (28%), inside the school office (5.2%), school parking area (2.9%), or other location (11.4%). The other form of learner-on-teacher violence repeatedly takes place while a teacher is chastening a learner or when separating fighting learners (Dicke et al., 2015).

In a study by Buonomo et al., (2017) similar remarkable occasions of learner-on-teacher violence were recorded across different educator designations or roles; with physical education educators experiencing peak risk of bodily and non-physical violence, followed by general register class educators. Educators who narrate fewer supports by their School Principals are further vulnerable to multifarious ill-treatments across parent perpetrators, learners and co-workers (Biolim et al., 2019).

One significant, yet often ignored facet is the school leadership influence. Principals, Deputy Principals, school management members and other leaders should, establish a detailed enquiry into the specifics surrounding the assertions of violence against educators (Austin et al., 2016). School leaders should effect all compulsory steps in responding privately and publicly in a supportive approach to the affected educators and should address the greater school and community desires when violence is perpetrated against educators (Berg et al., 2016). Hence, the view that, principals through school policies, are seen as significant contributors to research in combating learner-on-teacher violence by providing a countering intervention model might prove accurate (Skaland, 2016).

3.2.2.2 Influences of Family

The family is one of the dominant influential socialising environments for kids during teenage years (Chen et al., 2020). Various risk elements of domestic (family) violence are subsequently located within the family which takes into account, family conflicts, criminality springing forth from parents involved in crime, large family sizes, low parental education, poor family administration systems, cruel and/or erratic disciplinary practices, poor monitoring and supervision of children's activities (Church, 2012; Chen et al., 2020).

Children who are open to conflict and domestic (family) violence such as spousal-partner fights are exposed to violent role models and will, in all likelihood, learn the behaviour and its associated rewards (Evans et al., 2014). Similar studies on youngsters from families exposed to domestic violence are identified in the international context relating to negative effects on school functioning and increased risk for developing post-traumatic stress and symptoms (Martinez et al., 2016; Bounds & Jenkins, 2018). The episodes of spousal-partner violence have a direct influence on learner-on-teacher violence (Lewis et al., 2011). For example, in a Finnish study, it was shown that children from spousal-partner violence are not easy to handle (Rönkä, Sunnari, Rautio, Koironen & Taanila, 2017). While educators are able to identify children in some kind of trouble, but often struggle to understand and interpreting signals connected to domestic violence, particularly spousal-partner conflicts (Rönkä et al., 2017). According to Sorlier and Ogden (2015), children from spousal-partner violence are regarded as high risk to handle, as such educators fail to

cope with these type of children at school. Educators are alleged to resort to actions igniting fragile situations further (Tresco et al., 2010).

In another study on children affected by home environment violence, an important finding emerged that children who do suffer home based violence tend to behave negatively at all levels of society (Peterson, Riggs, Guyon-Harris, Harrison & Huth-Bocks, 2019). This contributes to such children being disobedient to school authorities and fellow schoolmates. De Cordova et al., (2019) affirm educators as members of staff at schools have an irreplaceable capability of observing different indicators or warning signs early, of those learners who depress a schooling system. Some international reports accessed, particularly the American Psychological Association Report (2016), affirm a commitment by governments of different nation States in funding the tackling of unscrupulous behaviour in schools and to help educators with techniques to handle problematic learner behaviours.

There is a bulk of international research concerning the *influence of families* on the phenomenon of violence against educators with this influence mainly pertaining to physical aggression which includes the infliction of physical harm, interpersonal aggression characteristically considered as verbal abuse, for example, shouting and screaming, spreading rumours, and discriminating behaviours (Kauppi et al., 2012). Some researchers have employed the concepts *bullying* and *victimization* to illuminate such sorts of abuse and violence, and some have used concepts such as *harassment* and learner-to-teacher-aggression (Berg et al., 2016; Montuoro et al., 2017; Benevene et al., 2019). Hence, international research is primarily dedicated to prevalence and impact of learner-on-teacher violence and less on counteracting models (Dicke et al., 2015).

The relatively limited studies on family life, however, have deliberations on the special effects on youths' educational outcomes pertaining to learners' social and emotional development, management of classroom behaviours, delivery of accurate learning content, and support of critical thinking (Bounds et al., 2018; Yin et al., 2019). The reflections on the special effects of learners' educational outcomes pertaining to learners' social and emotional development, management of classroom behaviours, and support of critical thinking, helped the researcher to have an in-depth

understanding of the relation among violence exposures, post-traumatic stress challenges and school functioning (Bounds et al. 2018). In this study, the role of learner descriptive characteristics, such as parental level of education and teen-age sexual characteristics, play a part in the analysis of the relationship among learner-on-teacher violence; post-traumatic stress; and school operational difficulties (Arabiat et al., 2018). This study wants to understand how educators can cope with such learners in order to counter violence against them.

3.2.2.3 The Neighbourhood Effect

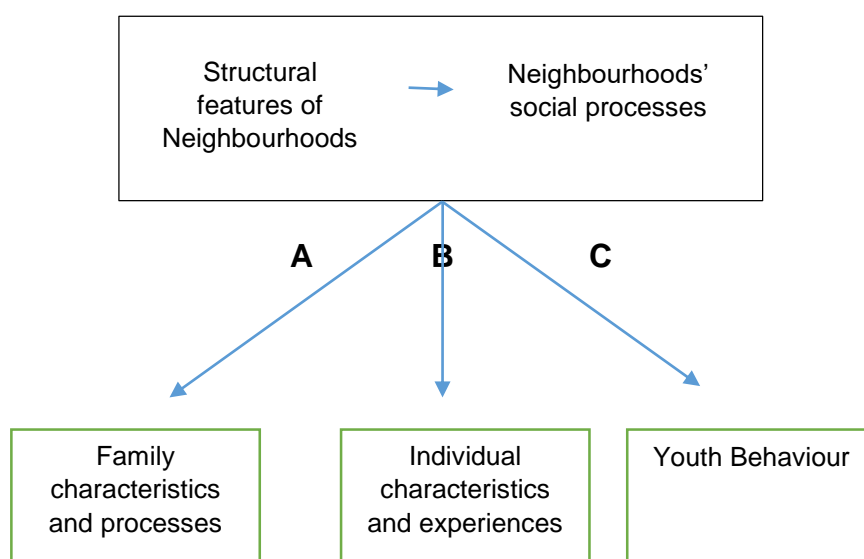
Commonly, the neighbourhood effect is defined as an evolving phenomenon of neighbourhoods, the net of neighbourhood differences in their configuration and conformation (Burdick-Will, 2017; Maman et al., 2019). According to Burdick-Will (2017), if neighbourhood effects are in fact existent, then neighbourhood differences in some result, like the frequency of criminality, could be a function of the societal structure of neighbourhoods, and not exclusively owing to dissimilarities in the population configuration across neighbourhoods. Research indicates that exposure to confined neighbourhood violence is connected to learners' behaviour and engagement in schoolrooms (Burdick-Will, 2017). Any school exposed to an exceedingly discernible, distressing occasion, for example, a shooting or natural disaster; there is an anticipation that teaching and learning at that school will be halted (Reddy et al., 2018). In specific circumstances, such as after the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut, USA, governments have taken steps to abandon teaching and learning at such schools and possible accountability in terms of academic standardised requirements deferred (Martinez et al., 2016). This action reflects a credence that school-violence impacts teaching and learning significantly. Exposure to neighbourhood violence is related to decline in test marks and increase in stress, depression, and aggression, all of which can progress to disorderly and off-putting behaviour for educators in the classroom (Burdick-Will, 2017; Wodtke & Parbst, 2017). Moreover, the effects of gun-use type of violence and other forms of ferocious crimes spread out far-flung outside school into the neighbourhood (Maman, Yaffe & Falah, 2019). School children attending schools in unsafe neighbourhoods, where violence is practically an everyday activity have been found by research to be associated with negative cognitive, behavioural, and psychological wellbeing outcomes (Martinez et al., 2016; Yin et al., 2019; Maman et al., 2019).

This has a direct impact on the child’s behavioural pattern towards educators. Approximating factual influence of the seepage of neighbourhood violence gives practical complications owing to the likelihood of presenting misleading notions (Wodtke & Parbst, 2017).

However, learners residing in violent neighbourhoods are likely to be dissimilar and behave differently from their counterparts in nontoxic neighbourhoods, and schools that instruct diverse numbers of such learners are prospectively contrast in their habits that are related to attainment (Wodtke & Parbst, 2017; Buonomo et al., 2017). In order to modify these concerns, learners are compared internationally to themselves in dissimilar calendar existences using separable fixed special variables (Wodtke & Parbst, 2017; Bass et al., 2016).

In one research in which this principle was applied, the results indicated that when fellow learners are exposed to heightened levels of neighbourhood violence, learners’ performance on standardized test scores spiral around similar effects of very low scores (Burdick-Will, 2017). These international trials were highly related to the subject-specific conformation of learners’ schoolrooms to their attainment in different years (Wodtke & Parbst, 2017). The neighbourhood effect can be summarised as depicted in Figure 3.1 below:

Figure 3.1 Framework of the Neighbourhood Effect



Source: Adapted from Kirk (2006)

Figure 3.1 encapsulates a conceptual framework of the link concerning neighbourhood features and processes and youth behaviour (Kirk, 2006). This illustration highlights the point that neighbourhoods theoretically affect youth behaviours in various means directly and indirectly (Burdick-Will, 2017). For example, with reference to arrow numbered **A**, the indirect relatedness between neighbourhoods and youth behaviour through family characteristics and processes, neighbourhood circumstances may affect parent actions. For this illustration, parents in return react to harmful neighbourhood settings through, for instance, restricting the extent of time their kids spend outdoor of their home environment; and through additional restrictions that may differ from parent to parent (Burdick-Will, 2017). If parents discover that there exist uncontrollable neighbourhood situations that contribute to the naughtiness of the youth, they may respond by either manipulating their kids with regard to which peers in the neighbourhood they may associate with, or by leaving that given neighbourhood (Wodtke & Parbst, 2017).

With the arrow numbered **B**, an illustration is made indicating the relationship between neighbourhoods and youth behaviour portrayed by individual characteristics and experiences (Maman et al., 2019). The association could signify the effect of neighbourhood organization of resources on young people. For instance, if a neighbourhood has reputable library services, then such resources may prove advantageous for motivating youth interest in education (Wodtke & Parbst, 2017). Another illustration is potential neighbourhood machinery that powers youth behaviour towards neighbourhood violence (Burdick-Will, 2017). Youth exposure to violence maybe influenced on their mental healthiness, and may deaden the person's character and promote the use of violence over time (Burdick-Will, 2017; Maman et al., 2019).

Lastly, arrow numbered **C** epitomizes the direct influence of neighbourhood characteristics on youth behaviour (Kirtzmilller, 2013). An illustration is made that depicts the neighbourhood's directly influence youth behaviour through the conception of illegitimate and criminality prospects (Ozfidan, Cavlazoglu, Burlbaw & Aydin, 2017). In certain specific neighbourhoods, there are comparatively more seemly targets for a criminality occasion than in others (Van Dat, 2016). Moreover, certain neighbourhoods have deficiency of dexterous parents or caretakers to detect distrustful suspects or goings-on in the neighbourhood (Sharkey, 2010).

For the purpose of this study, the analysis of the neighbourhood effect presents an opportunity to illuminate a deeper understanding of how violence against educators within the neighbourhood climate could be tackled; and how more concisely the theory could be formulated around careful analysis of the neighbourhood effect on the phenomenon under study.

3.3 Cross Country Comparison of Learner-on-Teacher Violence

The purpose of probing learner-on-teacher violence across different nation States is to advance and improve cross-country comparisons and to preserve techniques that have a beneficial role in curbing violence against educators (Bounds & Jenkins, 2018). Such comparative probing of information on violence against educators may be pragmatic to achieve a better perception on how life threatening this school safety problem has grown to be in each specific country (Won et al., 2019; Arvidsson et al., 2019).

International comparisons have a resilient effect on the community inside nation States and significantly expedite policy conception pertaining to school violence in given countries (De Wet, 2007). The resilience effect is the process of being able to adapt well and bounce back swiftly in occasions of stressful incidents such as class disruptions or serious episodes of aggression and violence against educators in schools (Southwick et al., 2014). Developing this resilience benefit to adaptively handle and quickly find a way to deal with changes, setbacks, frustrations and failures brought by the stressful incident (Ungar, Ghazinour & Richter, 2013). Countries around the globe are in search of a response to the challenge posed by the violence against educators at schools.

The following discussion focuses on the meaning and significance of cross-country comparisons, the role that culture forces and specifically, 'multiculturalism' play in international perspective of violence against educators, and the comparative success recorded when following specific violence programmes.

3.3.1 The Meaning and Significance of Cross Country Comparison

Cross-country comparison is defined as an approach adopted by researchers internationally to formally share experiences, insights and interventions on specific issues of a pandemic nature, prevalence or rampancy (Buonomo et al., 2017; Yin et al., 2018; Arvidsson et al., 2019). Research has shown that global geographical locations have an impact on the level of violence at any given school (Dicke et al., 2015; Skaland, 2016; Reddy et al., 2018). Countries across the world may acquire special information significant from one another's understanding in relation to efficiency of policies and intervention strategies (Alhija, 2015; Petlak et al., 2019). For example, the United States of America have devoted billions of cash in the most recent years for the discourse of school violence (Reddy et al., 2018). For the duration of the funding period, a few interventions were formulated and appraised and the key policy guiding principles were positioned in averting school violence (Bounds et al., 2018). A parallel advancement has been observed in other nation States such as Germany, Israel and England (Birolim et al., 2019). Furthermore, other global partnerships were formed to advance teaching curricula that shape capacity in schools in order to thwart school violence (Kauppi et al., 2012).

The affluence of information amassed in different countries could benefit and enlighten other countries facing comparable problems (Espelage et al., 2013). In another school- violence awareness campaign, the State of France has augmented encouragingly their intervention programmes that avert the violence against educators (Skaland, 2016). Frustrations with existing intensities of violence, prevailing policies, and failing interventions has prompted new nationwide inventiveness in order to launch a countering effect to this social challenge (Birolim et al. , 2019). A significant stride of this countrywide concerted effort was the assembling of the International Scientific Advisory Board (Birolim et al., 2019), with the ambition to access the programmes earning tangible results in other nation States and to scrutinize their applicability to the French milieu (Buonomo et al., 2017; Birolim et al., 2019). Debates engaged on in the International Scientific Advisory Board points to the difficulty of transferring international interventions and policies from one global environment to another (Birolim et al., 2019).

Literature on transformational science validates that such interventions and policies advanced elsewhere and verified proficient in one context may not translate or thrive in another context (Dicke et al., 2015; Martinez et al., 2016). For example, relative data-based interventions, which were generated in the U.S. in order to prevent school violence in urbanised schools with huge volumes of smaller African-American and Latino learners, were not found fruitful when executed in context of French urbanised schools with similar huge volumes of Islamic North African (Won et al., 2019). Such a challenge necessitate global partnership in order to ascertain aspects, which support transferring school security interventions and policies from one nation State to another (Mussu-Gillette et al., 2018). Therefore, understanding reasons why particular cultures authorize or nullifies certain interventions may offer discernments in relation to prospect of realization of curriculums conveyed from a different global environment (Montuoro et al., 2017).

In this study, studying what emerges from the cross-country comparisons is helpfulness of the concept in locating the theory gaps in the literature of the learner-on-teacher violence in order to develop and build an effective theory to acts of violence against educators.

The next paragraph discusses, from an international perspective, the role of multiculturalism dynamic forces on violence against educators at schools.

3.3.2 Role Played by Multiculturalism Dynamic Forces Internationally

Multiculturalism is defined as any education system or training or teaching programme that integrates historic events, writings, values, philosophies, and perspectives of societies from different cultural backgrounds (Neupert et al., 2013). For instance, educators might adapt and slot in lessons that mirror the cultural multiplicity of the learners in a specific school, grade or class (Florian & Rouse, 2009). In many examples from literature, the term 'culture' broadly refers to the wide-ranging conceivable understanding incorporating race, ethnicity, nationality, language, religious conviction, class, gender, sexual orientation, and exceptionality - a concept useful to describe learners with particular special needs or incapacities (Deardorff, 2012; Neupert et al., 2013).

Van Dat (2016) urges educators to upsurge their responsiveness to social and cultural diversity, owing to the significantly societal changes in recent times with the growth of multiculturalism and diversity across the globe. Ozfidan et al. (2017) explain that trainee educators and those educators already in the field of work must seek to grow into experts in their specific subject areas and must develop positive knowledge affluence in order to affirmatively influence their learners' lives; and to attempt escaping errors their own educators may have done. Until now, it seems challenging to accomplish the latter suggestion; owing to the new educator-field challenges and trends, namely, the assault of educators by learners they teach (Berg et al., 2016), something which was not common in the different cultures 40 years ago. Various international research have presented atrocious educator attacks where educators in turn are said to replicate patterns they discern are correct for them to retaliate (Maman et al., 2019). Educators impart knowledge the same manner they were instructed and likewise in their retaliation (Berg et al., 2016; Montuoro et al., 2017; Maman et al., 2019).

The current context in which educators work is different from the context in which they were raised up and this presents communication complications. Comparatively, over a little time-interval the global social order has passed through intense renovations that have shaped substantial modifications to values, social relationships, beliefs and the social stratum themselves (Burdick-Will, 2017). For example, immigration currently defines the global social order, with gradual ethnicity and cultural diversity expressly visible (Deardorff, 2012). Such fresh global order reveals new forms of encounters pertaining to the violence against educators.

According to Ozfidan et al. (2017), multiculturalism provides the occasion to acquire and to construct an open-minded global society. This seem to offer an idea that multiculturalism provides channels of new information assimilation as suggested by Deardorff (2012). Maman et al., (2019) advocate that novice educators must be forewarned to grow their attentiveness and understanding of social and cultural changes in order to gain expertise of becoming reputable professionals skilful at handling the intercultural and transcultural actuality. As charted by Martinez et al., (2016) it is the fundamental role of educators to transfer and entrench social values, such as social equality, tolerance, cultural appreciation, and deference for individuality

and necessary autonomies. Ozfidan et al., (2017) affirm intercultural-transcultural instruction, training for diversity and gender equality edification infer different educational and social goals for different countries, and educators must be directly involved in this aspect. As part of the educator's value system, social skills and progressive attitude concerning diversity are essential to convey intercultural edification to their learners and give more to an open-minded, impartial and rational society (Florian et al., 2009). Intercultural proficiency and training for diversity are imperative and continually provide indicators to discriminatory factors and even animosity speech that occur across societies (Montuoro et al., 2017). However, the challenges and absence of tolerance to diverse viewpoints can give rise and ripen narrow-minded societies (Neupert et al., 2013), which infers a deepening challenge of violence against educators around the globe.

Concerning the influence of educators in the growth of social and individual expertise, Wodtke et al. (2017), emphasize the significance of educators' expert training and preparation in issues of diversity. Ozfidan et al. (2017), affirm the new duty of preliminary educator training as equipping individuals arriving in the teaching profession with an accountability mind-set that cultivates diversity, learning and involvement that fits anywhere in the world. Hence, the notion of training an exceptional teacher is common in literature (Florian et al., 2009; Musu-Gillette et al., 2018; Yin et al., 2019).

The bringing up of youths and advancement towards maturity requires tolerance for, and mastery of social systems, especially the social settings of schools (Espelage et al., 2013). Information, values, attitudes and beliefs of educators have a significant impact on learners, which makes the educator a pivotal orientation in learning and training on tolerance, interculturalism and diversity (Neupert et al., 2013).

The focus of this study is to explore experiences of school violence against educators that will contribute towards creating a theory that counteracts violence against them. For this reason, the influence of educator values on the teaching process cannot be overlooked. Moreover, the learners' attitudes become very important, especially when it comes to the expansion of their attitudes to diversity and the gaining of the value of acceptance (Kitzmilller, 2013).

The increase of cultural and societal differences adds intensely to constructing such aptitudes and capabilities (Berg et al., 2016). Hence, the relevance of analysing the few available successful programmes constructed to counteract effects of violence against educators at schools is unavoidable.

The following paragraph discusses the relative success of the international interventions implemented to counteract the learner-on-teacher violence at school.

3.3.3 Relative Success of Specific School-Violence Programmes

School violence events have drawn the attention of governments to programmes designed to prevent and reduce the problem (Siegle, 2010). Legislation, policy and software development programmes have been advanced but the problem of learner-on-teacher violence has yet to be eradicated; and is in reality worsening in nearly all countries (Dicke et al., 2015; Petlak, Tistanova & Juszczak, 2019).

This discussion on the success of specific school-violence programmes embrace a few interventions that have been tested and implemented around the globe to address verbal and low-level physical victimization, classroom abuse and school-violence incidents in general. These violent incidents at school, relate to violence against educators pertaining to; emotional harm to the victims, the rights of the learner and the educator, educator's ability to teach and on the learner's ability to learn, negative influence on surrounding communities, negative influences on a country's growth objectives and economic costs for the country (Birolim et al., 2019).

The review of the specific school-violence programmes has been analysed in the context of countries affiliated to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is a forum where governments of 36 member States worldwide with market economies work with each other, as well as with more than 70 non-member economies to promote and encourage economic growth, prosperity, safety, security and sustainable development of member States (Yaffe, 2017). OECD include countries like Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom (Petlak et al., 2019). According to the U.S., South Africa is an associate member in six OECD Bodies and Projects, and a Participant in 15 others (Harrison, Johnson & Roberts, 2019).

South Africa also follows and use 19 OECD instruments, including most recently the Recommendation of the Council for Development Co-operation Actors on Managing the Risk of Corruption (OECD, 2020).

For the purpose of this study, the analysis of these interventions are important in order to understand the broader global school-violence regulatory strategy by the OECD member States. This helps the researcher to create a more concrete theory that interprets teacher victimization by identifying the characteristics that distinguish threats against educators, to be acquainted more with the common school-violence regulatory strategies and the understanding of the deeper occurrence of intimidations and/or attacks made against educators around the world. Some of these interventions assert to address the more serious types of school violence, such as sexual abuse, drug and alcohol use, assault with weapons, and physical violence against educators, for example, stabbing and assassination of educators. While these violent types have resemblance pertaining to their origins, effects, intervention and prevention, they are also in contrast in numerous ways. These different ways are explained in Chapter 7 of this study.

The literature reveal that different countries use different approaches to school-violence prevention and maintaining safe schools (Dick et al., 2015; Reddy et al., 2018; Bounds et al., 2018). There are three common intervention programmes implemented around the globe as school-violence reducers (Martinez et al., 2016). According to Reddy et al. (2018), the broad programmes are, namely, *surveillance* (for example, metal detectors, security guards, etc.), *deterrence* (for example, rules, regulations, zero tolerance policies), and *psychosocial intervention* (for example, integrated trauma healing and recreation activities for children of war, evidence-supported interventions such as cooperative play and cognitive behavioural therapy). The discussion below focuses on summarizing the effectiveness of the three intervention programmes to counter violence at school influencing the countering of violence against educators; and how the programmes are used to reduce the school-violence problem in schools. It is important to focus attention on the effectiveness of these intervention programmes because reduced school-violence incidents means a reduction and/or elimination of violence against educators in schools.

3.3.3.1 Surveillance

Surveillance strategies have been imported from the criminal justice and the army into education (Petlak et al., 2019). Most frequently, the use of surveillance methods were introduced amid fears of escalation of school violence and a growing realization that, school safety was becoming a major public concern for almost all governments (Reddy et al., 2018). According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (2020), surveillance means to watch (someone or something) closely, especially in order to prevent or detect a crime. From an international perspective, the use of surveillance in schools has been established as a critical approach in helping schools to perceive crimes and offences happening inside schools before they actually cause havoc within the school social climate (Kitzmilller, 2013).

For effectiveness of surveillance, most OECD countries seem to encourage formation of school-police partnerships (Florian & Rouse, 2009; Kitzmilller, 2013). As part of curbing school violence, governments from the OECD member States are expected to fund schools by providing vouchers to remunerate School Resource Officers (SROs). SROs are officers who are permanently stationed at public schools, where part of their duty is to establish a school-police partnership that focuses on law enforcement from time to time (Simon, 2007). They have three roles, namely, law enforcement, counselling and at times teaching duties (Florian et al., 2009), but their duties differ from country to country (Wodtke et al., 2017).

The SROs work hand-in-hand with district and regional education officials. With the surveillance approach, district officials are obliged to make weekly visits to schools to do classroom observation and to check interaction between educators and learners, for example, hallways interactions between school breaks, at school canteens or cafeterias during eating times and observations at school playgrounds (Berg & Cornell, 2016). By observation of such interactions, suspected learner aggressors can be identified and a decision be made early with respect to helping the school management to control incidents of similar nature and to curb their recurrence in the future. By so doing, immediate intervention and prevention of an occurrence is sought and severe consequences diverted. The focus is to identify the type of school crime or offence, security measures that can be taken and possible learned experience for future reference (Maman et al., 2019).

The work of SROs take a significant amount of a day's time and mental discipline, meaning an SRO is perceived as well-trained, disciplined, law-abiding and a committed person (Berg et al., 2016).

For purposes of this study, building relationships between educators and learners is important. As such, the idea of observing interaction between educators and their learners and their perception of one another are critical and were applied by the researcher. Forming of healthy relations is a practice that amplify and reshapes school discipline positively (Espelage et al., 2013). The implication is the helpfulness of consistency in creating school internal stability pertaining to reducing potential harms. School internal stability is the consistency in school discipline and school achievement. This study aims to create a theory that combats violence against educators by their learners in creating this stability in South African schools.

3.3.3.2 Deterrence

Deterrence is a concept referring to the belief that people choose to obey or violate the law after calculating the gains and consequences of their actions (Shelton, Owens & Song, 2009). There are two basic forms of deterrence, namely, general deterrence and specific deterrence (Doss, Glover, Goza & Wigginton, 2015). General deterrence is a calculated notion of deterrence that is used for crime prevention in the over-all populace of a given community or country. As a result, a country's punishment of lawbreakers works as an illustration for others who have not yet taken part in unlawful dealings (Doss et al., 2015). The country's punishment order is enacted to create awareness of the State's intentional terrors of authorized sanctions that are meant to deter carrying out wrongdoings, for example, the application of the death penalty (Clark & Stancanelli, 2017). By State's intentional terrors it is meant what the State intentionally carries out to sanction a public sentence or penalty on wrongdoers (Petlak et al., 2019). As people are logically self-absorbed, they will not commit crimes if the costs of committing crimes triumph over the profits of engaging in objectionable acts (Ungar et al., 2013). If the only purpose of punishment is to prevent crime in society, therefore punishments are unjust when their harshness exceeds what is necessary to achieve deterrence (Evans et al., 2014). In other words, it means this will not achieve a reducing effect of violence but rather an increase in criminality would result.

In the school set up, an example would have been historically, the use of corporal punishment, which was outlawed by many democratic States including South Africa. As general deterrence is intended to discourage people that witness the sanctions directed at the convicted from carrying out criminality themselves, corporal punishment was by tradition, and in some countries is still, used in public to instil fear and witness the pain of committing incidents, for example, of violence (Kent & Simkins, 2018). Certain general deterrence factors, such as ruthlessness and credibility of the threat, the problem of communication, type of offense, differences amongst individuals and nature of conflicting group norms, are still evident and applied in most African countries, and account largely for brutal forms of discipline than counteractive ones (Global Initiative, 2014). This study seeks for scientific and acceptable counteractive methods to combat violence against educators. Thus, violence in any form is a violation of both children's rights and educators' rights and breaches the respect for human dignity and physical integrity (Maman et al., 2019), and thus anything that causes harm to persons is barred.

Specific deterrence is intended to deter an individual offender from committing a crime in the future (Shelton et al., 2009). Promoters of specific deterrence also believe that punishing wrongdoers harshly will make them disinclined to re-offend in the future. For example, a drunk driver would be discouraged from drinking while driving because of the unkind experience he or she agonized from being arrested, or having his or her driver's license confiscated or his or her car locked away. The State applies profuse discomfort to offset the extent of pleasure resulting from drinking (Clark et al., 2017). Deterrence places belief in that, if people know that their undesirable acts will be reprimanded, they will desist from offending in the future. Furthermore, their reprimand must be swift in order to deter crime (Tresco et al., 2010). Likewise, the criminal justice concept as borrowed by the education fraternity globally has been implemented by most schools through policies and procedures, aimed at deterring the more serious criminal conduct by learners (Tuppince, 2017).

In this study, certain principled aspects of deterrence are used. Strengthening the theory being created takes into account which factors of the general or specific deterrence can be incorporated to make the theory sound without compromising rights of both educators and learners; for example, reviewing the severity and credibility of

the threat, reducing the stigmatizing character of deterrents and common sense legal sanctions.

This study acknowledges that deterrence users have removed the focus off the offender and opted to reflect on the totality of the criminal incident (Lindgren, 2011). This approach looks at the individual's motivation for committing the crime as the main factor of the criminal incident (Doss et al., 2015). The other factors conceivably are more detectible from the greater part of society in which the offender resides. For an offense to happen, it is hypothesized that a susceptible offender must first be in contact, with what he or she perceives to be an appropriate chance for him/her to commit an offence (Clark et al., 2017). The chances are reliant on the type of offense, the individual's concept of acceptable risk and degree of self-control (Johnson, 2012). This study is not a criminal justice study; however, deterrence continue to be used as an international intellectual approach to combating school violence. As such, specific deterrence factors such as youth recovery camps for lawbreakers; revival honesty programmes; reward morals programmes; and deterrence through rehabilitation helped the researcher to unpack and understand other underlying factors that could contribute to the national education campaign of reducing learner-on-teacher violence.

3.3.3.3 Psychosocial Intervention

School-based psychosocial interventions have been in existence since the early 1900s (Evans, Owens & Bunford, 2014). In recent years, the development of positive psychosocial programmes have brought forth new intervention models aimed at raising mental health and encouraging well-being in education for both educators and learners alike (Eiraldi, Mautone & Power, 2012). This epitomizes a shift in the research direction in the educational psychological sciences where positive progress has driven to major developments in understanding human disorders, impaired functioning, and the prevention of all other psychosocial syndromes, but fundamentally excluding the development of human potential and well-being factors (Tresco, Efler & Power, 2010).

A number of schools around the world have been trying out different psychosocial interventions with the aim to improving their school climates (Eiraldi et al., 2012). Some of these programmes have been found to be effective in reducing the need for school disciplinary actions, decreasing the incidence of behavioural problems, and consequently making those schools seem safer (Tresco et al., 2010).

According to Vancraeyveldt et al. (2015), there are two major approaches to psychosocial interventions, which have been experimented to yielding better results. These are Expert Behavioural Consultants (EBCs) and Effective Behavioural Support (EBS) and both emphasise on targeting the entire school climate (Vancraeyveldt et al., 2015).

Traditionally, school punitive practices were volatile and marginalizing; learners were punished, and often times detached from instruction for behavioural infringements following the incident (Doss et al., 2015). Punitive practices fail to communicate the more socially accepted behaviours and are, atypically, frequently the least effective for learners with challenging behavioural problems (Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). To address this impasse, psychosocial experts designed the Expert Behavioural Consultancy, which is a system that can be executed by educators and behavioural health professionals (Tresco et al., 2010; Evans et al., 2014). Expert consultants such as child and adolescent psychiatrists, school and clinical psychologists and other behavioural health specialists can play a major role in the implementation and reduction of behavioural incidents leading to violence against educators within the school environment (Eiraldi et al., 2012). These experts can support school districts or regional officials with improvement of existing systems or creation of new ones where they are non-existent and the mechanising of the use of EBCs, make available training, and support to behavioural teaching staff. A similar methodology can be used for safeguarding that, these interventions are effected in a racially thoughtful way (Evans et al., 2014).

In this study, EBCs provide a context for the acquisition of important skills that affect academic productivity, classroom behaviour, and teacher-learner relations. In this regard, EBCs are anticipated to provide background information and roots for an effective theory that speaks to psychosocial strategies that can be used to reduce learner-on- teacher violence.

Effective Behavioural Support (EBS) is designed to address the behavioural performance of all learners in a school, where educators of learners are charged with the responsibility of adjusting classroom habits and expectations with intention to decrease the effects of the individual learner's shortfalls on performance hindrances (Vancraeyveldt et al., 2015).

This is completed to assist an individual educator to stay on track in terms of control of learners in his/her class. This is also believed to reduce or eliminate aggressive behaviour towards educators because there is an increased healthy social interaction between the educators and the learners (Tresco et al., 2010). The programme is completed through an Adapted Instruction Plan (AIP), a plan designed to providing a context of special education and customized package that embrace adjustments to daily classroom habits such as class work, tests and puzzles, and homework for learners (Eiraldi et al., 2012). Collective special cases for the classroom embrace adapted seating plans, where the learner identified to be a potential aggressor, sits nearer the teacher and away from sources of potential environmental distractions (Evans et al., 2014). For example, learners with attention challenges are kept far from doors, windows or other learners with attention difficulties and the teacher make use of isolated attention reminder to prompt the learner to stay on track concerning a given activity (Florian et al., 2009).

Pertaining to this study on learner-on-teacher violence, Effective Behavioural Support (EBS) is used to lay hold of strategies that could reduce disruptive and other problematic behaviours. An increase of learners' exposure to tuition by decreasing disruptions during tuition, increase the number of learners attending school by reducing out-of-school deferrals, and decreasing the possibility that learners are excluded from classrooms, for example, learners who are often referred to school offices for discipline referrals (Vancraeyveldt et al., 2015). The length of time spent on tuition predicts academic achievement (Austin & Jones, 2016). So increased time on tuition due to improved learner behaviour should consequently lead to improvements in academic achievement and less teacher confrontations that lead to violence against educators.

3.4 The Global Impact of Learner-on-Teacher Violence

The scope and content of learners' knowledge, their capacity to think, learn and communicate, affect their opportunity of becoming industrious and creative adults and dynamic citizens (Smolkowski, Strycker & Ward, 2016). On the other hand, disruptive learner behaviour exasperates educators and interrupts instruction. For example, learners who display problematic behaviour are often left out of classroom instruction with disciplinary means such as School Principal referrals, in-school and out-of-school

deferments, and expulsion of learners for worse case scenarios (Jez & Wassmer, 2015). All of this leaves an unprecedented scar on the education outcomes.

The next paragraphs discuss the phenomenon of learner-on-teacher violence on the stability of societies and governments, the stability of public education systems and a discussion on war zones conflicts and their gravity on learner-on- teacher violence.

3.4.1 Learner-on-Teacher Violence on the Stability of Public Education Systems, Societies and Governments

Every society endeavours to have stability for the reason that social stability creates a coherent society where there is social synchronization between individuals in that society and those individuals work together to build an even better society (Lopes Cardozo & Scotto, 2017). In the field of education management and leadership, social stability thrives as a fundamental feature of social solidarity, giving school leaders to create credibility for their schools (Giles & Smith, 2012). For example, School Principals can promote diversity as well as increase wellbeing awareness and as a result, helping the school community to decrease negative coping strategies.

This implies education can contribute to social stability through building knowledge and skills to address tensions without violence or discrimination (Lopes Cardozo et al., 2017). On the other hand, governments must guarantee citizens their keenness to necessitate conditions that increase the quality of life of all individuals in the country (Jeff, Aaron, Greg & Johnson, 2015). Millican (2017) agrees that one of the main preconditions for social stability is a stable environment in which individuals can live together in harmony. This means prioritising the needs of individuals within the prevailing social governmental arrangements as well as involving them in the processes of access to goods and services and, especially educational opportunities that bring coherence (Jeff et al., 2015). There are strong connections between public education systems, society, government and stability that have implications, for example, planning and funding of educational goals in different country contexts (Jez et al., 2015). For that reason, stability becomes a condition that goes further than the absence of violence.

It is about societies, the State and regions of the State, people inside the State being able to manage encounters with violence and development of change peacefully over a given period. Thus, treating educators with the dignity they deserve can never be overemphasized.

Sensitivity to teacher recruitment, teacher education and training, teacher impartation values, tolerance and diversity, and positive creativity in socialisation processes and educators as role models to learners become important (Smolkowski et al. 2016). In one study, 40 classroom educators attended a principals' training course and were asked to write educational imaginations concerning their 'imagined school set up' (Pugach, Gomez-Najarro & Matewos, 2019). A Content Analysis of their imaginations indicated resemblances, such as respecting learner diversity, core National Curriculum and subjects of choice, a variation of instruction techniques and an affluent physical school atmosphere, and with regard to differences these were; time and space structures, classroom sizes and school playground and recreation areas (Pugach et al., 2019). Seventy-five percent (75%) of the educator responses viewed a school as consolidating the learner for society, whereas 25% remarked a school as a home for the realization of learners' potential (Pugach et al., 2019).

From these findings, it can be inferred that educational development is expected to thrive well if these educators move towards what they imagined; more diversity and exceptionalism, but concurrently honouring the areas of their dissimilarity. Contrary to this scenario, there are continuing episodes of violence against educators around the whole world (Smolkowski et al. 2016). Teaching and learning continues to be in jeopardy and educators witnessing acts of violence and themselves involved in physical confrontations with learners (Lopes Cardozo et al., 2017). The phenomenon of learner-on-teacher violence affects the stability of societies and is one of the major challenges for governmental authorities around the globe (Jez et al., 2015; Smolkowski et al. 2016).

Consequently, violence happens because of various reasons. The examples below summarise these reasons and the learner-on-teacher violence on social stability. For example, in Jordan, a national study revealed that educators, school administration staff, the school environment, media, and family circumstances, were described as main reasons for learner's violence against educators (Alzyoud, Al-Ali & Tareef, 2016).

In the case of Jordan, educators who experienced violence from learners are the reason of this violence owing to their own actions and practices (Wilson, Douglas & Lyon, 2011). Educators are often fatigued, detached, and overloaded with instructional and administrative responsibilities (Arabiya, Shaheen, Nassar, Saleh & Mansour, 2018). Thus, these responsibilities often impede educators not to talk to learners kindly or support learners in resolving their difficulties. In other situations, learners become violent against their educators because some educators have poor educational and academic expositions. For example, they are incompetent to offer counselling or psychological care to learners with particular experiences (Chen & Astor, 2009; Arabiat et al., 2018). Consequently, some learners lack good morals and discipline. School management fail to effect accountability standards and this fuel the violence against educators because they are unable to address the learners' desires appropriately (Alzyoud et al., 2016).

On the other hand, educators in Taiwan enjoy somewhat greater respect and job satisfaction than their global equals, for example, the Jordan educators' case. Consequently, learners in Taiwan are expected to bow to their educators as a sign of high respect and admiration (Chen et al., 2009). Yet in the same country, one study reported that their learners had verbally attacked 65% of surveyed lower-grade secondary school educators, which negates the notion that Taiwanese educators receive greater respect and job satisfaction than their global equals (Chen, Wu & Wei, 2020).

In this most recent national study, 30.1% of Taiwanese learners re-counted having participated in at least one aggressive behaviour against a teacher within a 12-month period (Chen et al., 2020). Violence in Taiwan schools manifest in various forms with harassment being the most common form of victimization, followed by property transgressions and physical crimes. In most cases, learners are the frequent perpetrators of violence (Chen et al., 2020).

In addition, parents and colleagues are also involved in a considerable number of wrongdoings that amounts to violence against educators. Thus, learner violence against educators in Taiwan is a serious challenge requiring immediate consideration of school managements. On the other hand, there is no precise mentioned intervention programme concerning learner violence against educators in Taiwan.

Thus in this study, the researcher concludes based on the illustrative data of all learners from Grades 4 to 12 in Taiwan, that the Taiwanese national study by Chen (2020), infer imperative evidence. To counter learner-on-teacher violence, strategies for addressing and preventing teacher victimisation should embrace as a critical component, an inclusive multi-systematic programme of anti-victimisation that protects educators from violence and encouraging dialogue between perpetrators (learners) and victims (educators). Bound et al. (2018) made an example of a case that, persuasive teacher protection for the nourishment of a functional education system is paramount and above all, the importance of putting means to echo for more research to fully understand how to influence educators positively through programmes and trainings that foster healthy relationship between educators and learners.

3.4.2 Learner-on-Teacher Violence, War Zones, Conflict and Their Impact

Violent conflict is one of the most significant challenges facing the world today (Harbom & Wallensteen, 2009). Global weaponries conflicts have a shattering impact on the mental health of individuals in communities affected by wars and this shattering impact is equally manifested in schools of the affected areas because populations include learners and educators alike (Arabiat et al., 2018). The most common disorders of the aftermath of such conflicts and war include Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression, which happens in up to 33% of people directly, exposed to traumatic war experiences (Alzyoud et al., 2016; Arabiat et al., 2018). Exposure to these traumatic occasions is the most significant risk factor in the context of this study on learner-on-teacher violence, which the researcher discusses in Chapter 7.

For youth specifically, the harmful effects of war trauma are not limited to particular mental health problems detectable but take into account comprehensive and multidimensional forms of developmental consequences. These war trauma effects puts families, and peer relationships, school performance and general life fulfilment at risk (Harbom & Wallensteen, 2009). For example, these could lead to extreme poverty, deficiency of resources for healthcare provisioning, a collapse of the school system, as well as amplified rates of family and public violence (Lopes Cardozo et al., 2017). Thus, results of war and armed conflicts are devastating on the socio-ecological balance, namely, community relations, families and shared environments.

International studies provide evidence that suggests that exposure to systematized violence and psychosocial challenges linked to traumatic war experiences could act as a catalyst for school violence (Harbom & Wallensteen, 2009; Arabiat et al., 2018). Particularly, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms, such as irritability and anger explosions, raised rates of alcohol ingestion by parents, may add to higher levels of school disruptive behaviour. For example, studies on post-war Sri Lanka and Uganda have revealed that the aftermath of parents' own experiences of war negatively affect children (Duncan & Lopes Cardozo, 2017). Reports of children's cruelty increased and perceived closely linked to the parents' exposure to war (Duncan et al., 2017). Children who are exposed to wars and conflicts have other stereotypically disorders that go along with functionality deficiencies putting at risk their ability to perform well at school, to do home chores, and participation in social interactions (Millican, 2017). These problems could make post-war traumatic children more challenging to handle not only for their parents, but also for educators at school (Smolkowski et al. 2016). Parents are also inclined to apply more violent and forcible parenting strategies, which may spill over to the school and cause more teaching and learning challenges for educators at school.

Pertaining to this study, conceptualization of education and conflict is important in recognising that violent conflict and war are seen as utmost impediments in strengthening the possibility of a broader international acceptable theory to violence against educators. According to Buckland (2011), the field of education is still in infancy concerning tragedies and post-conflict transitions but reasons of fragility are hotly debated. As such, this study may not directly address post-conflict fragilities but contributes to education in building resilience and adaptability of schools against learner-on-teacher violence.

3.5 Framework for Teacher Training and Its Impact on Violence against Educators

In Chapter 2 of this study, it was discussed that violence against educators take place within an ecological framework point of view, where personal factors conglomerate with environmental settings to effect the aftermaths of learner-on-teacher violence. Educators impact and are impacted by the incidents of learner-on-teacher violence. According to Church (2012), educators exposed to learner-on-teacher violence are often exhausted, which increases the threat of violence against them owing to the negative influence of the indicators of exhaustion of school environment and learner-educator interactions. This takes this discussion into the question of teacher-training framework on coping skills for intervening in school-violence problems.

If educators have to manage and address violence against them, and if establishing the school-violence training framework impacts educator outcomes specified to violence against them; then educators' experiences on preparedness, perceptions of coping and intervening skills against school violence and the degree of self-efficacy must be questioned. The following sections address teacher-training framework with respect to international policy on teacher preparedness, perceptions of coping and intervening skills against school violence and the degree of self-efficacy of combating learner-on-teacher violence at school from a teacher-training perspective.

3.5.1 International Perspective on the Framework and Policy for Teacher Training on Intervention Skills

There is inconsistency with respect to teacher training for school-violence readiness worldwide; namely, in relation to school-violence course content and methodological approaches, and gaps may exist in a variety of school-violence courses in different countries (Schultes, Stefanek, van de Schoot, Strohmeier & Spiel, 2014). This means, a case for an improved shared understanding of what needs to go into the critical features of decent school-violence teacher-training programme exists. The different Departments for Education worldwide are, by expectation, to have a minimum set of agreed features that should make up a core framework for teacher training for school violence. However, literature reveal a considerable variability with respect to different areas of content and essentials that guide a teacher for readiness to face school violence and its effects (Skaland, 2016; Reddy et al., 2018; Won et al., 2019).

3.5.1.1 Teacher Training in Relation to School Violence

There is excess of research evidence that addresses teacher training related to school violence mostly focusing on experimental training (Craig, Bell & Leschied, 2011; Schultes et al., 2014; Reddy et al., 2018). There is also a suggestion that the school-violence literature on intervention strategies may work to thwart school violence on a school worldwide stage, and, as such, cause a decrease against the threat of negative effects of teacher exposure to school-violence incidents (Martinez et al., 2016; Montuoro et al., 2017).

Teacher training has been highlighted an important element of teacher preparedness for school violence by the practical restorative justice system (Reddy et al., 2018). Restorative justice reports elements such as, risk assessment, problem solving and a few prevention models as substitutes to zero-tolerance policy reactions on violence against educators (Reddy et al., 2018). In addition, research support approved prevention models that integrates teacher-training features that decrease levels of violence against educators (Skaland, 2016). Decreasing violence against educators is the object of the intervention agenda and educators do get some training in order to play a part in the achievability of the programmes, which is done through integrating important components into the classroom curriculum (Espelage et al., 2013; Reddy et al., 2018).

Research point to those learner outcomes, which are in reaction to common social and emotional learning curricula (Espelage et al., 2013; Berg et al., 2016). These outcomes are interrelated to the class of educators who implement the curriculum and to those educators attending extra trainings and have presented a significant number of lessons on school violence and are highly rated as quality curriculum implementers (Espelage et al., 2013; Berg et al., 2016). However, there is scarcity of research that looks at how teacher training links to violence against them (Martinez et al., 2016; Reddy et al., 2018). This study seeks to address this lack in research by determining the connection between teacher training and teacher outcomes related to violence against educators. Although not directly addressing violence against educators, there is a limited number of studies that test how school-violence trainings impact teacher outcomes (Schultes et al., 2014; Reddy et al., 2018).

Research findings from such studies, show that giving educators training on prevention and intervention strategies of school violence proved effective in promoting teacher self-efficacy of fighting violence, and an increase in the use of their knowledge and skills was observed (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014; Berg et al., 2016).

3.5.1.2 Degree of Educator Self-Efficacy for Combating Learner-on-Educator Violence

Self-efficacy is the belief people have in their own abilities, specifically their ability to meet the challenges ahead of them and complete a given task successfully (Craig et al., 2011). Thus, educators' beliefs in their capability to productively prevail in stopping incidents or prevent their relapse is inescapable (Craig et al., 2011). Teacher self-efficacy has appeared as a significant prognosticator of educators' self-resoluteness in responding to school violence (Geissler & Lopez, 2011). For instance, educators' self-efficacy in learner-behaviour control grows the prospect of being upfront with learner-aggressors, and reduces the possibility of ignoring violent incidents (Schultes, et al., 2014).

Eight hundred and seventy-three (873) educators participated in a study on professional development training, (Schultes et al., 2014). An improved teacher's self-efficacy for applying an anti-violence intervention was observed, which subsequently projected the use of that intervention as a counteracting strategy (Schultes et al., 2014). These findings on the perceived significance of self-efficacy confirmed that educators require familiarity with behaviours that destructively affect learners, but it also demands their resoluteness that they possess the capability to react confidently against such behaviours successfully (Hinduja et al., 2014). Self-efficacy may thus facilitate improving the relationship between perceived significance and probability of intervening (Geissler et al., 2011). Subsequently, educators can be motivated to simplify and curb the occurrence of an incident if they consider the incident as grave; but conversely, they are highly likely to arbitrate if their confidence levels of knowledge and skills to intervene are meritorious (Pas, Bradshaw, Hershfeldt & Leaf, 2010).

In this study, teacher self-efficacy is useful as an element obligatory for all educators. Educators must encourage stimulation of a positive school climate, and be able to respond to occurrences that prowl school climate (Pas et al., 2010).

Thus, educators require alertness of issues before they occur hence their self-efficacy levels must be high in order to see to it that the promotion of a constructive school environment becomes a major part of their role as educators of learners.

3.5.1.3 Perceptions of Educators on Coping and Intervening Skills against School Violence

In this section, the researcher examines four areas from the literature that paint a picture of educators' general perceptions on coping and intervening skills against the effects of school violence from an international perspective.

- **Firstly, the researcher explores the general perceptions of educators on safety in schools.**

The problem of school safety has been around for a long time in the history of education (De Cordova et al., 2019), and the growing number of school shootings around the globe has raised up this problem to a new complicated phase (Lindgren, 2011). Teacher-training programmes have not certainly made any changes to this challenge to ensure both learners and educators are safe at schools (Benevene et al., 2019). The concept of safety in the education landscape can take on miscellaneous implications.

Firstly, in describing what it implies to make a nontoxic space for educators is laden with rigidity because research shows that school violence in its traditional existence is a universal issue and thus an international distress (Alhija, 2015), and secondly, educators around the world attach different perceptions as revealed by literature (Buonomo et al., 2017). Consistently educators meet a variety of safety challenges at school and in higher institutions of learning (Birolim, et al., 2019). Enough types of violence against teachers have been provided, for instance, physical assault, sexual assault, bullying and verbal abuse, all of which means it is imperative to formulate counteractive ways that prioritize educators' well-being. Two major perceptions have emerged from literature concerning school safety, one is, quality of relationships between learners and educators, commonly referred to as school connectedness and Multi-cultural Competence (Reddy et al., 2018).

Conventionally, school connectedness is defined as the perception of being cared for by school staff, building constructive relationships inside the school climate, and being relaxed to dialog to an adult inside the school premises concerning any problematic situation (Martinez et al., 2016). Research recommends to schools internationally, to have high levels of school connectedness, in order to actualize mechanisms to advance this important concept but implementation has been limited with only a few schools trying out the new innovations (Arvidsson et al., 2019).

This study ascertains that educators have a significant impact on thwarting school violence and in particular violence against them, by modelling out and using these simple innovative skills such as positive class sanctions through connectedness. There is limited literature that focuses on how educators can do this and be achieved, specifically the nurturing aspect of school connectedness with learners. Connectedness relies on good relationships, communication skills, feeling understood, personal human values such as dignity and respect (Schultes et al., 2014). Generally, research has confirmed the success of these skills in improving the quality of therapeutic relationships (Martinez et al., 2016; Buonomo et al., 2017; Reddy et al., 2018). In this study, the researcher believes that such skills could prove useful to enhance educator-learner relationships in counteracting violence against educators.

- **Secondly, the researcher explores educators' perceptions that emerged from literature is Multi-cultural Competence**

Multicultural competencies include awareness, knowledge, and skills, which includes educators being sensible of their self-cultural impact on the learners they teach, embracing potential opportunity of cultural exchange between educators and learners from different upbringings (Hinduja et al., 2014). Educators who are deficient of awareness of their self-cultural influence will tussle with increasing the awareness of other people (Giles & Smith, 2012). The prospect of educators being aware of self-norms and stereotypes creates an opportunity to improve awareness of learners from different racial groups, and consequently decreasing the occasion of minor hostilities, or unintentional trivial offences and rebuffs (Pas et al., 2010).

A typical technique for accepting and understanding of culture or racial differences between one's own cultural groups from that of other groups is to purposefully striving for added new knowledge (Craig et al., 2011). As a result, if educators discover that their self-cultural upbringing is different from their learners, it would force them to acquire more of their learners' history, perceptions to actuality, and current life concerns. Adjustments in how specific skills are useful with different learners will necessitate careful thoughtfulness on the part of the educator (Church, 2012). Educators who are focused in driving their efforts in the direction of being multicultural competent through their learners have a better chance to grow strong both in the educator–learner partnership and in improving the effectiveness of their educator–learner communication skills (Lopes Cardozo et al., 2017).

- **Thirdly, the researcher explores the general perceptions of educators' Classroom Management coping strategies at schools**

Out of the entire given educator responsibilities, Classroom Management is primarily the most significant and difficult (Lewis, Roache & Romi, 2011). In order to improve the delivery of quality teaching, and reduce learner misbehaviour and disruptions, effective Classroom Management is unescapable (Sorlier & Ogden, 2015). This implies that the most important trait in the professional practice of a teacher are Classroom Management skills, which have extensive effects to the learners' learning and well-being (Sorlier et al., 2015). For example, one major purpose of classroom discipline is to create order and the authority of the teacher in the process of teaching learners, in order to achieve the goals of the prescribed curriculum at a school. Hence, the provisioning of a suitable educational experience to direct the learners' values and to communicate to them the rights of people is important (Fossum, Handegard & Britt-Drugli, 2017). An important factor of educators' sense of professional effectiveness is the skill to cope with learners' proficiently (Fossum et al., 2017). The challenging task of many educators' professional practice is to discover this effective management technique that lead learners to change behaviour and as a result preventing the escalation of classroom discipline difficulties (Hutchings, Martin-Forbes, Daley & Williams, 2013).

Research has revealed that different methods of Classroom Management will have different effects on the levels of learner accountability, classroom learner response, reaction to curriculum instruction, attitude towards educators and educators' attitude towards learners behaving badly and connectedness to school climate (Hutchings et al., 2013; Fossum et al., 2017). For example, results of studies piloted in Australia and other countries, such as in Israel and Taiwan, show that recognising of responsible behaviour, and open dialogues with disobeying learners concerning the consequence of their behaviour on other learners, are indicated to have fruitful and useful outcomes (Lewis et al., 2011; Yaffe, 2017). It indicates that learners subjected to the technique of dialogue, for example, are more answerable to their behaviour, less inattentive, and affirmative to their educators and studies (Lewis et al., 2011).

In comparison, educator aggression – including tactics such as group punishment, name-calling and shaming, shouting in fury – seems to be more connected to learner aggression and escalations of learner attitudes towards teacher-instruction in classrooms (Fossum et al., 2017; Rao, Wang & Pang, 2019). In one study on the perceptions of primary school learners and secondary school learners in China, it was reported that highly responsible learners are found in classes where educators are highly intricate, specifically pertaining to decision making and recognition of good behaviour and having conversations with misbehaving learners (Rao et al., 2019). Thus, doing that lets learners to appreciate the influence of their behaviour on other members of the class community and to situate fresh effort on conducting themselves well. In this study, establishing the likelihood of a connection between teacher-Classroom Management techniques and the development of learner accountability are important. This study checks the learners' commitment to the protection of their educators' dignity by using probing questions during teacher interviews in order to establish from what educators are saying if it correlates with the microsystem as the basic unit of the ecological system that directly influence the developing individual (learner) as outlined in Chapter 2 of this study.

- **Lastly, researcher explores educators' perceptions on support as received from school management to counteract acts of violence against them**

Teacher professional development literature submits that the out-of-date *wait-and see* strategy applied by most School Management Teams (i.e., the attitude that things will be better) is unlikely to yield any continuous behaviour transformation in educators; but instead enduring, tailor-made support is necessary in order to encourage permanent significant changes to educator behavioural routines (Sorlier et al., 2015). For example, the existence of learner-on-teacher violence problem is certainly detrimental both to classroom and school climate and to persons involved in its perpetration, those who are its victims and for those who eyewitness the problem (Schultes et al., 2014). This makes learner-on-teacher violence a complex issue to address and fears that it might continue to escalate are increasing (Fossum et al., 2017).

In one study, it was revealed that educational authorities underestimate the harmfulness and effects of learner-on-teacher violence because they are sluggish to respond to the issue (Kraft, Blazar & Hogan, 2018). For example, a few experimental classroom based programmes were developed to support educators in implementing behavioural transforming strategies in the classroom (Kraft et al., 2018). Yet these strategies are seemingly failing. Researchers, policymakers, and school administrators continue to contribute to the body of literature to transform from *get-tough policies* to integrate new supportive policies that speaks to school safety and specifically against school violence (Skaland, 2016). Support-oriented methodologies are classified by a primarily integrative thinking (De Cordova et al., 2019). Integrative thinking embrace restorative justice involvements (Arvidsson et al., 2019). A frequent feature of many such support-oriented programmes is a group of specialists from various areas of fields functioning collectively in recognizing, on a single case basis, the desires of distressed educators and learners (Buonomo et al., 2017). In an effort to engage in integrative thinking the most important participants in this regard include, principals and deputy principals of schools, learner affairs staff who feature on disciplinary issues, SROs (School Resource Officers), psychotherapists and educators (Florian et al., 2009).

Effective application of such interventions logically accrues more tasks on current school workforce or else it may necessitate adding extra staff. Occasionally, implementation of these interventions may recurrently need teamwork amongst the various participants (Ozfidan et al., 2017). Even with these concerns, there has been an extensive impetus for schools to run through with support-oriented methodologies in order to take care of the school safety fears (Van Dat, 2016; Bounds et al., 2018). The initiatives partly support the implementation and partly the assessment of support-oriented methodologies to school violence and ordinarily the purpose is to improve knowledge on how to increase school safety in ways that do not contribute to the learner-on-teacher violence (Martinez et al., 2016).

However, there are some fears on the application procedures of the intervention practices. Firstly, while school managers and policy makers due to their fundamental 'rehabilitative philosophy' may identify the fears positively, several of the policies and programmes have not been empirically verified (Buonomo et al., 2017; Reddy et al., 2018). Non-empirical evidence compromises the reliability of the results and, where there is deficiency of empirical confirmation; researchers may give a wide range of points of view, which might not be helpful in resolving a phenomenon (Buckland, 2011). Secondly, there may be unsafe effects related to the use of such programmes, for example, harms caused by net widening (Ozfidan et al., 2017; Won et al., 2019).

Net widening is a concept borrowed from criminology referring to the effects of providing alternatives to custody or diversion programmes meant to direct an offender away from court rulings and it is a growing trend in the OECD member States in curbing violent behaviour of learners in schools (Ozfidan et al., 2017). This strategy could escalate the number of learners who are stringently under supervision by educators and, in practice also increasing the work of the courts of law, since some cases may require restorative justice measures (Kraft et al., 2018). While the intentions of net widening are meant for positive change, this strategy often produce an opposite effect, which ultimately give rise to more learner aggression in reaction to the application of net widening. As a result, educators become exposed to more aggression by learners and resulting in increased cases of learner-on-teacher violence at school (Harbom et al., 2009).

In this study, educators' coping techniques are explored in relation to the pressure from learner misbehaviour so that the researcher establishes how educators use Classroom Management techniques to discipline learners in class. Coping is characteristically regarded as the cognitive and effective response used by a person (the teacher in this case) to deal with difficulties encountered in daily life (Hutchings et al., 2013). According to Kraft et al. (2018), productive coping strategies are concerned with how educators effectively express themselves towards learners who misbehave.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, a review of literature on the international perspective of the learner-on-teacher violence problem was discussed. Attention was on school violence, particularly the learner-on-teacher violence prevalence, which is globally indicated as escalating. In order to understand violence against educators, relativity between neighbourhoods, youth behaviour through family characteristics and processes must be considered. Different nation States employ different ways to improve on techniques in counteracting violence against educators through preserving those techniques that work in their environments. Literature shows that multicultural dynamic forces internationally in the light of their responsiveness to societal changes are understood in different ways depending on different country's cultural backgrounds. The success of intervention strategies are measured against their relative success usually through universal acceptable intervention programmes. The global impact of the learner-on-teacher violence problem is indicated as not only affecting the stability of societies, but also that of governments too. This chapter concludes with the analysing of teacher-training framework. Aspects relating to international policy on teacher preparedness, perceptions of coping and intervening skills against school violence; and teacher self-efficacy in fighting learner-on-teacher violence at school from a teacher-training perspective, were explored.

CHAPTER FOUR
LITERATURE REVIEW:
A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST EDUCATORS

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3, the focus was on violence against educators reviewed from an international perspective. Chapter 4 focuses on violence against educators as reviewed from a South African perspective. The South African schools seem to be under siege because of the scourge of school violence (Davids & Waghid, 2016). School Management Teams (SMTs) are plunged in an unpleasant situation of not only paying attention to learner underachievement but also are under pressure to discover means to respond to violence against educators, and to reinstate schools as safe havens (Singh et al., 2014). Amongst the dominant problems faced by educators at school is that they are not adequately equipped to counter violent incidents, hence they have routinely reacted similarly in violent and deviating means (Grobler, 2018).

The aftermaths of violence against educators are serious and have a negative bearing not only on educators, but also on learners, taxpayers, and school systems alike (Baruth & Mokoena, 2016). Moreover, suffering hostile conditions in a work place cannot be industrious, or reassuring, particularly if it embraces violence (Makhasane & Khanare, 2018). Thus, teacher maltreatment may result in loss of incomes, loss of teaching time and productivity, amplified damages and compensation costs, lawsuit costs, negative publicity for schools, and negative learner behavioural outcomes (Singh & Steyn, 2014). Given these significant challenges, solutions are immediately desirable, and understanding the types of violent incidents that happen, as well as identifying and monitoring violence against educators, are important and allow for a comprehensive understanding and approach to the phenomenon of violence against educators in South African schools.

Chapter 4 focuses on a review of literature in pertaining to a South African context of violence against educators. This review specifically focuses on how educators manage and understand the learner-on-educator violence situation within their school environments from a South African perspective.

4.2 Violence against Educators from a South African Perspective

4.2.1 Introduction

Violence against educators predominantly seems to be a phenomenon that is increasingly stressful and tormenting in South Africa (Singh et al., 2014; Nako & Muthukrishna, 2018), and irrespective of whether it is trivial, moderate or severe, violence against educators has become an anomalous challenging problem (Mncube & Netshitangani, 2014). This abnormal nature of learner-on-teacher violence includes killings, assaults that are both physical and emotional in nature and these incidences have occurred in both public and private schools (Baruth et al., 2016).

There is plenty literature that describe the realities of the abnormality of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools (Collet, 2013; Baruth et al., 2016; Nako et al., 2018). In addition, some studies have communicated the frustrations of educators pertaining to mischievous learners and disinterested parents of learners (Opic et al., 2013; Sibisi, 2016; Ogina, 2017). These frustrations also pertain to both principals as managers of schools and educators as instructors of the curriculum, experiencing failure to cope with the managerial and instructional responsibilities respectively because of the violence against them (Makhasane et al., 2018). There is an emerging trend suggestive of an effective and protected teaching-learning environment being required because of the growing culture of school violence that is influencing the education sector negatively (Nako et al., 2018). The extent to which the media is so absorbed with the incidences of learner-on-teacher violence confirms their gravity and detrimental nature on both the lives of educators and sound education practices (Govender, 2019; Macupe, 2019; Seleka, 2020).

The following is a chronology of documented media reports of severe violent cases confirming their gravity and revealing that the learner-on-teacher violence is not a deception. This record is over an *eight-month* period from June 2019 to February 2020:

- June 07, 2019: Violence in SA's schools is worse than you think, and spanking is part of the problem (Riaan, 2019);
- June 14, 2019: The gunning down of a 48-year old teacher on the premises of a primary school and the stabbing to death of a learner at a high school

has once again shone light on violence at schools. Unfortunately, a solution stemming the bloodshed does not appear in sight (Simelane, 2019);

- June 16, 2019: Four educators at a Northern Cape school are so terrified of teaching a 14-year-old girl that they have even tried to obtain a protection order against her (Govender, 2019);
- August 01, 2019: Faction fights in Kwa-Zulu Natal Province turn school playgrounds into battlefields (Macupe, 2019);
- September 15, 2019: Minister for Basic Education reveals 1 345 hot spots for school violence (Naidu, 2019);
- October 08, 2019: Limited schooling after pupil stabbed to death in Johannesburg East (Kubheka, 2019);
- November 01, 2019: Guns, knives, and drugs found at Gauteng schools 'shocking' says Education MEC (Ngatane, 2019); and
- February 13, 2020: a 17-year-old pupil has been arrested for being in possession of drugs and selling them to his fellow pupils. The arrest came because of a random search conducted by the law enforcement agencies (Seleka, 2020).

From the chronological information, it can be inferred that there is an apparent and pressing need to build and sustain safe schools in South Africa, primarily by placing responsibility on learners, educators and to all who are involved in the education fraternity (cf. Mncube & Harber, 2013). According to Singh et al. (2014), who agree with Nako et al. (2018), school violence in South Africa is higher than that experienced by schools in the United States of America, where out of every 1000 learners, 57 experience violence of some sort as opposed to the South African scenario where out of every 1000 learners, 117 experience violence. Although these statistics only give a comparison in relation to learners as victims, they do communicate a picture of the severity of the school-violence problem from a South African perspective.

In this literature review, the researcher discusses the problem of violence against educators in order to ascertain a theory that will assist School Management Teams (SMTs) and educators to be able to bring their strategies in line with approaches resilient and adaptively beneficial in dealing with the plight of violence against educators in schools.

Much research has been kept on how educators' unprofessional behaviour can essentially perpetuate school violence and affect educators' Classroom Management practices (Collet, 2013; De Wet, 2016). According to Mncube and Netshitangani (2014), some studies of educators and violence are indirect in that they do not examine the problem of violence against educators from a perspective of providing encountering techniques. Thus there is an excess of literature that investigates the significance of social relationships among learners, educators and school management models, which indirectly makes reference to violence against educators, but very few of these studies deals with the concern of learner-on-teacher violence directly (Opic et al., 2013; Madikizela-Madiya & Mncube, 2014; De Wet, 2016).

The next section discusses the policy approach to violence against educators and the broader implications of policy for violence prevention within the school environment in South African schools.

4.2.2 Policy Approach to Violence against Educators in South Africa

According to Davids and Waghid (2016), the South African schools' violence dilemma is not only distressingly high, but also unbearably attests that whatsoever policies or codes of ethics promulgated seemingly do not reduce the violence against educators. The Department of Basic Education requires educators to abide by and accept all national protocols such as the effective management of learner behaviour and constructing an environment that will support learners develop and grow to their full potential (Singh et al., 2014; Ogina, 2017). The Department of Basic Education also charges educators, to implement the curriculum within the current policies in order to contribute in the improvement of school governance and their involvement in developing action plans on eliminating violence in schools (Gina & White, 2014). Educators are mandatory to deal with the cases of violence, yet they neither are equipped to do so, nor are they given the necessary support from district or provincial educational departments in dealing with rowdy learners (Singh et al.; Nako et al. 2018). *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* gives an umbrella of rights, which protect educators and learners from any form of violence (RSA, 1996). Section 10 of the constitution states that everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected while Section 12 states that everyone has the right to bodily and psychological integrity, and not to be treated in a cruel, inhuman or

degrading manner (RSA, 1996). This means that individuals in the school community are not allowed to interfere with one's own body in a way that hurts physically or emotionally. The constitution further states in section 24 that every person is entitled to stay in a safe environment not harmful to their health or well-being (RSA, 1996).

In South African schools' context, the problem of school violence is continually persistent and this safe environment is yet to be seen. According to the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention's (CJCP) in its 2012, National School Violence Study (cf. Burton & Leoschut, 2013) incidents of school violence have been persistent and unrelenting in South African schools. The CJCP 2012 report further specified that developing national policies and guidelines regarding school safety, monitoring and assessing school safety interventions across the Republic of South Africa is the responsibility of the Department of Basic Education (cf. Burton & Leoschut, 2013: 1-12). On the other hand, it is the responsibility of the South African Council for Educators to regulate educator activities, ensuring that all educators are officially registered as teaching practitioners mandatory by the SACE Act 31 of 2000 as amended by Education Laws Amendment Act, No. 31 of 2007 and Basic Education Laws Amendment Act, No. 15 of 2011 (SACE, 2011).

The South African Council for Educators (SACE) is the national constitutional body for educators in South Africa (SACE, 2017). The SACE legislative mandate is found more broadly in the *South African Council for Educators, Act 31 of 2000* (SACE, 2011). By law, all educators are obliged to adhere to the SACE regulatory requirements as stipulated in the SACE Act (SACE, 2011). Any educator found to have trespassed the requirements of the law, is reported and if found guilty of violating any part of the law receives admonishment accordingly (SACE, 2017). To this end, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) sanctioned five key policies from the list of many policies advising and guiding schools to decrease violence in school environments (DBE, 2019).

These policies are as listed below:

- The prohibition of corporal punishment as stipulated in the *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996*;

- National Education Policy Act (27/1996): The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa;
- Protocol to Deal with Incidences of Corporal Punishments in Schools;
- The Children's Act 38 of 2005; and
- The National School Safety Framework strategic guide 2015.

From these five key policies sanctioned by the DBE, the National School Safety Framework (NSSF) seems to apply, to some extent, to the context of this study. However, similarly with other interventions and legislation located within literature, the NSSF does not directly address violence against educators; rather it focuses on the learners, their safety and welfare (cf. Leoschut & Makota, 2016; Baruth et al., 2016). The NSSF is just one-step that government took in affirming their commitment to the rights of all children in South Africa, and, to realising the vision set out in the National Development Plan, and to ensuring safe and equitable access to quality education for children throughout South Africa (Leoschut & Makota, 2016). Yet the safety within schools does not only distress learners, but also embrace all members of the school community including educators and other staff. Other critical aspects to school safety are not addressed in this framework; and these include health issues, schools infrastructure, occupational health anxieties, disaster risk management and curriculum design to name a few (De Wet, 2016).

A policy that does not address or explain what a safe space is, or making sure an appropriate enabling environment is in place cannot assist school managers (principals) to effectively manage their schools thus principals will fail to help their educators pertaining to addressing violence against them by their learners (Gina & White, 2014). The National School Safety Framework strategic guide (DBE, 2015) addresses the following:

- Assist schools in understanding and identifying all security issues and threats;
- Guide schools to effectively respond to identified security issues and threats;
- Create reporting systems and managing of reported incidents appropriately; and

- Help the schools to monitor and qualitatively measure progress over time.

However, the framework has not been able to introduce or present a radical new approach to school-violence prevention, but instead, continues to emphasise on the existing and common policies on school safety measures and violence prevention initiatives, which seemingly have not succeeded (Nako & Muthukrishna, 2018). A noticeable key feature of the framework that entices, is the view of the relationship between 'violence' in general and its reference to the ecological factors relating to safety and caring schools. The framework has been able to locate schools within their bigger communities, however, it seems powerless in providing a practical systematic way out of the violence against educators.

The overall aim of a 'safety framework' must be to create a platform for a safe, violence-free and supportive teaching-learning environment for learners, educators, principals and School Governing Bodies (Joyce, 2013; Grobler, 2018). To achieve this, the school and community members nearer to the school should function collaboratively to realize that the violence against educators is detrimental to the schools and the general public alike (Khaled, 2014). This norm puts a responsibility on principals to collaborate with other schools within proximal communities and to learn from each other in working out clear definitions of their roles and responses in the process of addressing violence against educators they manage. Moreover, educators must be seen as a valuable resource for achieving both school curriculum goals and the broader national goals of an education system (Reddy et al., 2018).

4.2.2.1 South African Schools as Sites of Violence against Educators

Despite the fact that schools must be places contributing to effective teaching and learning in preparing future citizens, alarming security concerns, remain rampant in many South African schools (Ngatane, 2019). Various schools have grown and developed into sites of violence and crime with assault, drugs, sexual violence and gangsterism being routine and an everyday event (Riaan, 2019). When regarded holistically, school environments provide learners not only with acquiring academic knowledge, but with also prospects of growth concerning their personal development and learning to know how to live together with others (Baruth et al., 2016).

Violence in schools influences negatively on all personality developments, making instead, schools a habitation where youngsters learn mistrust and fear developing distorted awareness of their individuality and character, self-esteem, but acutely increasing instead, antisocial behaviours (Collet, 2013). For example, although the study was not entirely focusing on violence against educators, the National School Violence Study conducted in 2008 presented that 15% of learners had experienced violence at school (Burton & Leoschut, 2013) with 3 in 5 educators verbally being abused by learners with 2.4% of educators being sexually assaulted by learners. This study also indicated that 57.7% of educators at primary schools and 58.1% at secondary schools reported feeling unsafe at their schools when teaching (Burton, 2008).

A follow-up study in 2012 on school violence presented learners who had experienced violence at school at 20.2%, an increase of 5.2% in comparison 4 years after the 2008 study (Burton, 2008). Disturbingly, the 2012 School Violence Study found that one in five learners that translates into 1,020,597 learners across the country, are victims of violence at school each year (Burton & Leoschut, 2013). The 2012 report also reported that half of the learners surveyed experienced corporal punishment, which is a negative indictment on the educators (Collet, 2013). These two studies are further supported by the 2013 '*dynamics of violence in South African Schools*' report, which found that the victims of threats to violence, assault, sexual assault, including rape, and robbery were nationally documented as escalating (cf. Mncube & Harber, 2013).

In both national studies piloted in 2008 and 2012 respectively, classrooms are branded as the most common places of violence (Burton & Leoschut, 2013). Thus, learners, who are either classmates of the victims or other pupils at the schools, perpetrate much of the violence occurring in schools (Mncube & Harber, 2013). Alarming, educators are also victims of this violence, which has not been portrayed by the reports, nor any possible response offered to counter violence against educators. The alarming reports on educators as victims of violence are reported extensively on the media (Ford-Kritzinger, 2018; Naidu, 2019; Seleka, 2020). According to Mncube and Harber (2013), who agree with Davids and Waghid (2016), educators have reported accepting to have lost control of Classroom Management, as they are often neither

aware of substitutes to corporal punishment, nor aware how to implement the substitute corrective techniques.

In answer to this educators' dilemma, the South African Council for Educators (SACE) has recently compiled 118 alternative corrective techniques and given them in the form of scenarios, which are currently issued for public comments in their recent draft of the *Educators Handbook* (cf. SACE, 2020). Although the handbook may offer alternative countering strategies to the violence issue, it has not been practically tested in South African schools.

This study focuses on creating a theory on countering strategies to reduce the violence against educators. It is important to examine educators' insights into issues of classroom discipline to form a bigger picture on how they go about effecting disciplinary measures. The following paragraph examines educators' insights into the issues of classroom discipline.

4.2.2.2 Educators' Perceptions on Disciplinary Measures at South African Classrooms

An educator is an important member pertaining to upholding a positive classroom environment at school that supports learning and teaching by protecting learners from harm or danger (Armstrong, 2018). Educators usually achieve this responsibility chiefly through maintaining discipline. According to Chetty (2019), discipline of learners should be directed towards reassuring self-control, accountability, compliance, collaboration, support, and safety. Thus, discipline is seen as a logical way that supports training and developing children to attain competency, self-control, self-discipline, reinforcing the desired behaviours, and as a way for eradicating undesired behaviour (Armstrong, 2018). In the South African schools context, discipline in the classroom is generally regarded a standard practice safeguarding the functionality of learning and teaching in both public and private schools (Serame, 2013; Madikizela-Madiya et al., 2014; Sibisi, 2016).

Available literature points to that, to realize disciplined schools, educators commonly use punitive disciplinary measures in dealing with learner indiscipline (Mncube & Harber, 2013; Armstrong, 2018; Graham, 2018). As a result, while disciplining learners, educators have become victims of violent learners (Serame, 2013; Naidu, 2019).

They are beaten with broomsticks and sometimes pupils slap, stab, threaten and throw chairs at educators and in extreme instances even point guns at educators (Armstrong, 2018; Grobler, 2018).

Other forms of extreme cases include learners from gangster groups that become hazardous to educators and other learners at school (Gina & White, 2014; Graham, 2018). Literature reveals also that, in South African schools, educators are dealing with learners who are broken emotionally, spiritually and physically (Simuforosa, 2015; Segalo & Rambuda, 2018). According to Simuforosa (2015), some learners come from broken families wherein there is no proper rearing; as a result, when such children come to school, the educators find it problematic to discipline or cope with them. In a research that investigated incidences of learner discipline and their effect on educators, it was found that some educators perceive parents as using schools as dumping zones for their spoilt children (Serame, 2013), and there is growing feeling that parents seem to fail in the aspect of training their children right from home (Gina et al., 2014; Grobler, 2018). Some learners are associated with the use of alcohol and drugs such that some are alleged to come to school drunk and begin unruly habits, thus becoming difficult for educators to control such learners (Robarts, 2014; Kingwill, 2016). Although this is not the focus of this study, at a glance, the alleged alcohol intake by learners may also be a huge contributor to the problem of violence against educators in South African schools and may be difficult to curb.

Educators are overloaded, apart from their primary obligation of teaching; they also work as psychologists, social workers, and parents (Segalo et al., 2018). Within the teaching and learning environments, research has identified several factors that are responsible for the educators to take the overload strain negatively (Robarts, 2014). These include teaching factors, administrative and school management factors among others (Robarts, 2014). The most frequently cited source of strain for educators is misbehaviour of learners and learners' lack of respect towards educators (Serame, 2013; Simuforosa, 2015). Educators are expected to teach learners both content and skills (Sibisi, 2016). They are also expected to adjust learners as members of the future community, while simultaneously drilling them in sports and being available to support them whenever a need arise (Robarts, 2014). Whereas educators are not adequately enabled to formulate and articulate, strategies targeted at addressing

challenges of learner behaviour (Reyneke, 2015). Educators are not officially experts in clinical processes or in handling group therapy, nor their teaching responsibilities incorporated with that of psychotherapists or pastoral worker at school (Ogina, 2017).

Educators seem to go through frustration because of work overstrain and the receiving of continual criticism for failing to respond as perceived by education authorities. Educators seemingly do respond broadly to school violent issues but are not coping because they have to deal also, with public pressure for improved academic performance at schools, while coping with the hard-to-teach learners in South African schools. In addition, the overwhelming numbers of learners to manage in classes, lack of self-control among the pupils is a major stress for educators (Robarts, 2014).

For this study, it implies the theory in formulation must incorporate some techniques that will assist educators learning how to take charge of their own stress levels and simultaneously countering the struggles of violence against them by their learners. Educators are insulted, disrespected and belittled in schools (Reyneke, 2015). According to Segalo et al. (2018), young educators and females in particular, are the ones mostly belittled and intimidated. Female educators, particularly the young female educators, are unsafe from the older male learners at school (Singh et al., 2014). For example, according to Ford-Kritzinger (2018), female educators in the Western Cape are the mostly affected and more traumatized than male educators, and learner boys especially, do not respect female educators, as do different cultures treat women contrarily.

Some boys in the schools are not afraid to challenge and undermine female educators (Govender, 2019). Female educators are branded as having no control over learners to the point that they become discouraged and dejected (Armstrong, 2018). According to Chetty (2019), this particular attitude of boys towards female educators makes some of them to be absent from school and/or booked off by a medical doctor for more than 21 days, which may fundamentally declare their classes unattended and disorderly. According to Davids et al. (2016), who agree with Makhasane et al. (2018), educators are nervous, endangered and frightened, and they feel unsafe coming to school for the reason that anything may happen to them, with no one to protect them.

It is common knowledge that some of their learners have relations with particular criminal societal groups and can essentially intimidate a person outside school and/or after school hours. Educators have no knowledge what will subsequently follow a violent confrontation of the learner-on-teacher type. For example, according to Nako et al. (2018), educators feel that learners make them to become easy targets of assault and harassment because their learners know where they stay. For example, there are instances wherein a teacher would be attacked at his or her place of residence; and learners vandalize his/her home with impunity because the learners know that nothing will happen to them; they will come back to school the following day, sit in class as if nothing has happened (Segalo et al., 2018; Ngatane, 2019).

For this study, this implies that the theory in articulation must take into account how to equip educators to deal with learners who are disruptive and in identifying early, those learners who are violent and aggressive. This may help educators to know learners who come from bully home environments and appropriate means to reintegrate such learners into the school community may be applied. In this regard, the researcher agrees with Davids et al., (2016) who emphasize that nobody should be blamed when a learner misbehaves, but rather conducting a review of the implementation of the whole school approach, if it does exist, that supports learner-teacher relations pertaining to the elimination of factors that created the undesired exhibited learner behaviour. By whole school approach, it is meant all the various components making up a school, namely, learners, educators, principals, School Management Teams (SMTs), School Governing Bodies (SGBs), and parents or caregivers (Human-Vogel & Morkel, 2017).

Collectively, these components act together and occur within the larger system of the home and community. Only by managing all features of the system, will violence against educators in the end be reduced and eradicated (Joyce, 2013). This demands for a prudently directed, logical system of programmes and interventions that complement each other rather than duplicate each other, as it is the case in South African schools context currently (Mncube & Netshitangani, 2014). For example, factors such as age of the learner, type of behavioural problem exhibited, as well as the degree of severity of the problem must be considered when dealing with classroom disruptions (Reyneke, 2015).

In this study, the underlying technique that is anticipated to can work is the importance attached to the common sense rule by Davids et al., (2016) that integrating the goals of Classroom Management and effectiveness of the learner-teacher interpersonal relationships is the necessary ingredient for destabilising children's negative behaviour towards educators and their equals alike. To this end, educators perceive communities as having a significant impact on how learners behave at school (Davids et al., 2016; Coetzee, 2017). Thus, understanding communities in relation to the dismantling of hindrances affecting healthy learner-teacher interpersonal relationships is important (Singh et al., 2014). Moreover, schools do not function in vacuity but are rather part of a bigger community (Collet, 2013). It is common knowledge that some learners in the schools grow up in violent communities where most of their family members are also members of gangs, and thus, violence has grown to them, to be a lifestyle. Thus, the need to explore some of the community's violence influences on educators, learners and parents of learners become important.

The following section discusses this impact of community violence.

4.2.3 Community Violence's Influence on the Dilemma of Violence against Educators

Community violence is an inescapable occurrence, which take place the world over including conflict-affected countries and is by nature, multidimensional (Williams, 2020). Educators and learners have no control over it and can do nothing or very little to contain it; and it can potentially create appalling influences on the developmental stages of learners, even more atrocious consequences on educators (Robarts, 2014; Grobler, 2018).

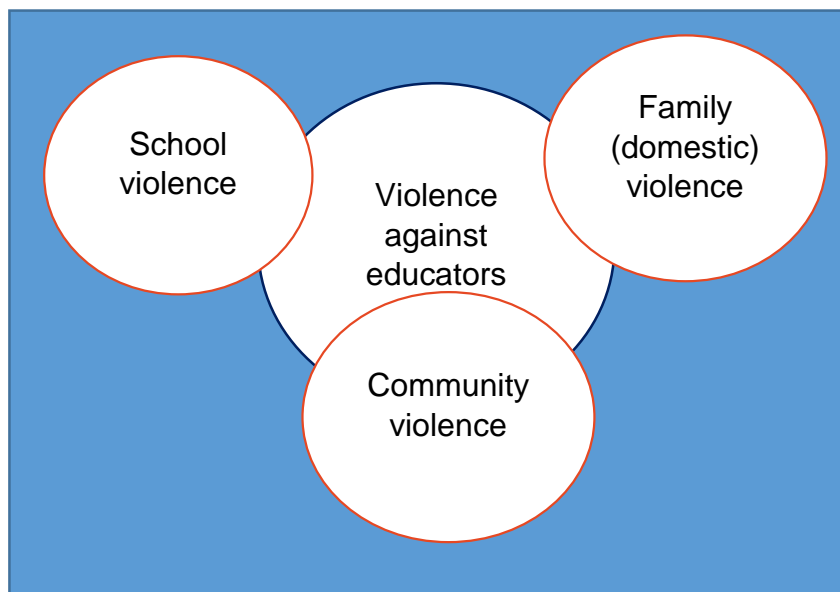
Community violence is usually associated with aggression amongst the youth, particularly those residing in low-income communities (Williams, 2020). However, not all children who experience community violence display violent aggression at school (Opic et al., 2013; Williams, 2020). Magwa and Ngara (2014) found that the factors that link to violence in the communities, such as prevailing poverty, deficiency of resources, and the accessibility to illegal substances, such as drugs and alcohol might have a link to learner-on-learner, and learner-on-teacher violence at schools but not for every child.

For this study, it is crucial to accentuate the need for schools to inaugurate a resilient connection with the broader community in which the schools are situated, as communities make available occasions that relate educational goals to the future work environment of the learner. By resilient connection, it is an envisioned strong positive bond of unity between schools and their communities (Barnes et al., 2012). This relationship can safeguard and ensure that learners are equipped, in the most fitting manner, for effectively functioning within a future entrepreneurial environment and providing protection against effects of violence in that very challenging community context (Mncube & Netshitangani, 2014). Building a resilient sense of school-community relationship and learner-parent understandings can fundamentally afford an environment that opposes forces that perpetrate violence against educators and in contrast generate factors responsible for sustainable community development and stable school environments such as calming and defusing of a violent incident, training on coping skills and improving learner-teacher relationship (Coetzee, 2017; Nako et al., 2018). Opposing forces refer to those factors that help the violence against educators to prevail (Barnes, Brynard & De Wet, 2012), for example, poor parenting of children, substance abuse and poor security measures (Coetzee, 2017).

In this study, addressing these factors infer less or reduced effects of violence against educators. Building resilient school-community relationships can ultimately contribute to retaining good educators in schools because educators would be experiencing harmonious school-community relations; hence this study also anticipates a reduction pertaining to the exodus of educators at schools because of the fear of violence against them.

Furthermore, another view from literature is the concept of the intersection that takes place amongst the three factors, namely, school violence, community violence and family (domestic) violence (Barnes et al., 2012); where these three phenomena are said to seemingly overlap to give rise to the educators' exposure to learner-on-educator violence (Baruth et al., 2016). This overlap summed up as shown in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1: The Overlap between the Critical Phenomena Driving Violence against Educators



Source: Adapted from Coetzee (2017)

In this study, this overlap between the three phenomena intersecting are used at identifying those key reasons, which seemingly are dominant in perpetuating the violence against educators. Those reasons are very important in developing and building strong resilient school-family-community relationships and in better understanding what can be done to foster healthy relations amongst the school, family and communities. The following section discusses exposure of educators to community violence and the various risk factors educators may experience.

4.2.3.1 Community Violence Impact on Educators

Violence against educators may spread beyond the demographic and personality characteristics to management, leadership, organisational and social reasons (Maphalala et al., 2014). Many studies have thoughtlessly disregarded the reality that educators are also affected by violence (Madikizela-Madiya & Mncube, 2014). Magwa et al. (2014), who agree with Segalo et al. (2018), explain that some studies paint a picture that educators are there to deliver curriculum, safeguard Classroom Management, and sustain a formal instructional environment and they are seldom categorized as victims or witnesses of community violence.

Educators residing in communities swamped by community violence recurrently undergo numerous psychological and physical effects (Makhasane & Khanare, 2018). For example, in a study on the effects of community violence on educators, with particular reference to gang-related violence in high crime rate communities, it was identified that community-based violence has negative effects on educators, namely, verbal abuse, stress, fear and trauma as main distresses (Maphalala & Mabunda, 2014). Educators spend most of their time at school; as a result, whatever occurs in their work environment will considerably influence their lives (Armstrong, 2018). Educators' work morale and productivity affect the learning-teaching process (Barnes et al., 2012). According to Chetty (2019), some educators are said to experience recurring nightmares of their work environment that haunts them and the horrors of what they are exposed to at school.

There is evidence that the social climate of the school and the morale of the staff can have a positive effect on learners' attitudes and learning (Burton et al., 2013; Baruth et al., 2016; Coetzee, 2017). This infers that improving school climate and educators' morale enriches teaching more and make it pleasurable. The positive spirit the educators' unveil makes them to looking forward going to work and enthusiastically partake in school functions and committees (Human-Vogel et al., 2017). The willingness to perform comes more naturally and this supports the educators' professionalism (Singh et al., 2014).

In the National study by Burton and Leoschut (2013), it was found that communities do pose a serious threat to schools and are potentially casual reasons to the existing problem of school violence. These reasons include poverty and unemployment, alcohol and drug availability, poor housing, accessibility to recreational facilities and family risk factors (Burton et al., 2013). Pertaining to family risks factors; the causative aspects include neglect, low parental involvement, poor parental disciplinary tactics and single-parent-led families (Burton et al., 2013).

The exposure of children to violence, accessibility to drugs, alcohol and firearms, are high risk factors in relation to educator targeted violence. Thus, this point was emphasized by Mncube et al., (2013) in their findings that drugs, alcohol, school size and location affect stability of schools and has adverse effects on educator responsibilities of effectively delivering the curriculum.

In addition, violence against educators negatively impacts on the institutions of teaching and learning and ultimately resulting in disintegration of the process of teaching and learning; thus, leading to lack of enthusiasm, ridiculing of educators, questioning of their professionalism, poor collegiality and poor parental attitudes (Sibisi, 2016). In the Ncontsa and Shumba (2013), study it was revealed that educators become demoralized and struggle to finish the curriculum key goals.

In addition, a Case Study on effects of school violence on educators in secondary schools found that the over emphasis on learners' rights aggravates the disrespect that educators get from their learners (Sibisi, 2016). Madikizela-Madiya et al., (2014) also found that some educators suggested that there is a demoralizing imbalance between the acknowledgement of learners' rights and the demand for educators to take responsibility, wherein it seems the learners are getting all the attention by the Department of Basic Education whereas educators are being overlooked. Thus, the overemphasis on the learners' rights seems to give an unsympathetic and cold attitude towards the violence against educators and seemingly purporting more delinquently negativity at schools (Grobler, 2018).

4.2.3.2 Community Violence Impact on Learners

Community violence exposure, equally affects learners as do educators, namely, through depression, social isolation, loneliness, anxiety and fear (Kingwill, 2016; Human-Vogel et al., 2017). Youth in South Africa live in communities in which they learn that violent behaviour pays and they learn that violence is a possible way to unravel their issues making them to feel commanding and self-worthy (Burton et al., 2013). Singh et al., (2014) revealed that the familiar challenges linked to school violence might possibly be the known physical, emotional and psychological community violence effects comprising distress, reduced self-confidence, increased risk of dejection and suicidal tendencies, compromised attentiveness, anxiety and a reduced capability of learners to learn.

In addition, law breaking and violence have severe threats to the harmony and economic stability of communities (Singh et al., 2014; Chetty, 2019). According to Baruth et al. (2016), learners who experience community violence may indicate a higher likelihood of being trapped in the critical drivers of violence against educators,

namely, family and school violence by repetitively becoming victims or perpetrators of violence. According to Roman (2019), some of the forms of such ramifications triggered by community violence are, namely:

- School learner dropouts;
- Exodus of educators to safer neighbourhoods;
- teenage pregnancy;
- neglect as a form of abuse;
- poor relationships and disconnectedness in families;
- crime and incarceration;
- sexual offenses such as rape; and
- substance abuse by young people.

In a Case Study by Coetzee (2013) of families in the Western Cape Province on the relationship between family conflict and aggression amongst kids aged 10 to 12 years, she agrees with these ramifications being caused by the community violence and that these are accompanied by the existing associations between family life and the violence in communities. The families in the Coetzee's (2013) study came from urban and rural communities with high rates of violence, crime, gangsterism, poverty, substance abuse, school dropouts and teenage pregnancy (Coetzee, 2013). The findings overall confirmed that families play an important role in child development since the family is where children have their first life experiences and this is what often is reflected in society thus, the family is important in addressing violence prevalent in society (Coetzee, 2013).

For this study, it is the opinion of the researcher that a decrease in the relationship between healthy family life and family satisfaction suggests increased neglect, conflict, violence, substance abuse, poor relationships and disconnectedness in families. This view is supported by research that there may be dire consequences resulting from community violence spilling over to society, particularly affecting educators and children as learners at schools (Coetzee, 2013; Singiswa, 2019).

Thus, this study seeks at formulating coping and adaptive ways to help educators deal with the incidents of violence against them as erupting from communities.

4.2.3.3 Community Violence Impact on Parents of Learners

Though parents may be one of the main influences on children's development, communities may be responsible for risk or protection factors that add to not only children's development, but also to parents' capabilities to participate in effective parenting (Shareefah, Sycarah, Malone, McGee & Toldson, 2015). For example, urban communities afflicted with community violence may negatively affect parents, the family atmosphere and children as well (Williams, 2020).

According to a study on exploring the impact of proximal and distal risk factors on parenting behaviour, it was found that parents also suffer extreme parental psychological wellbeing that affects children's socio-emotional competence (Lachman, Cluver, Ward, Hutchings, Mlotshwa & Wessels, 2017). Parents who experienced maltreatment as children are most likely to maltreat and abuse their own children, which then predict learners' poor educational performance, juvenile delinquency, and criminal activity, which are outcomes of violence from home environments which educators are exposed to at schools (Shareefah et al., 2015). According to Lachman et al. (2017), adults living in South Africa often experience particularly high levels of cruelty with lifespan occurrence rates of 56% for physical abuse and 36.1% for emotional abuse. Such victimization is blamed on community violence and has been declared to compromise adults' ability to adjust and control their emotions (Shareefah et al., 2015). While experiencing or witnessing community violence may lead to depression and increased anxiety since parents also feel unsafe and unworthy of protection (Lachman et al., 2017). Thus, in a South African sense, parents exposure to community violence threaten their ability to fulfil their parenting role and it constantly instil fear and vulnerability in parents which spills over to their children and finally to educators at schools affecting the stability of schools.

In this study, community violence influences are used to explain experiences of exposure to violence, which leads to the constant state of fear and danger, and ultimately affecting attendance of learners at school, their behaviour and school outcomes. Furthermore, community violence understanding helps the researcher to unpack the meaning educators attach to being part of a community and establishing what they perceive as violence in their community that affects their teaching practice. The researcher then uses educators' understanding of violence against them to articulate how their understanding reflects Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model as

explained in Chapter 2 of this study. This helps the researcher to frame the Grounded Theory under construction within the Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model on the perception that, belonging to a community must protect and promote 'neighbourhoodness', friendship, attachment and helping of one another.

4.2.4 Summary

In this section, a broad policy approach to violence against educators in South Africa was presented. The South African schools as sites of violence against educators were discussed and the educators' perceptions on disciplinary measures with respect to classroom activity were described. The community violence's influence on the predicament of violence against educators pertaining to impact on educators, learners and parents of learners was alluded to and consequently, understanding community violence has helped the researcher to unpack the meaning educators attach to being part of a community. The exposure of children to violence, accessibility to drugs, alcohol and firearms, were highlighted as main high risk factors in relation to educator targeted violence. This guided the researcher in the formulation of a practical applicable theory that could be useful to solving the existing dilemma from the point of view of a grounded study.

In the following section, the South African teacher-training framework and its implications to violence against educators is presented.

4.3 South African Teacher-Training Framework and Its Implications to Violence against Educators

4.3.1 Introduction

Education is central to indicating a new social order, and educators ordinarily function as mediators of this 'social order' and change in their classrooms (Zulu, 2017). The democratic South African government has been able to develop a human rights-based school curriculum but unsuccessful in providing support to educators to implement it (Jita & Mokhele, 2014). Characteristics of this insufficiency include the failure to properly consider the process of re-skilling the huge component of the teacher population under the new dispensation of democracy pertaining to new methods of classroom teaching and instruction (Wray, 2017). This mainly pertains to equipping educators to undertake their critical task of teaching and particularly to cope with the learner-on-teacher violence at schools. Increasingly, literature on teacher training and development indicates a rising concern pertaining to teacher-training models that are often too short; cascade not so relevant information that combat violence against educators; or provide insufficient classroom support for educators to deal with violence at schools (Magwa & Ngara, 2014).

According to Mokhele (2014), a teacher-training model that seems to be popularly used in South Africa to prepare educators for implementation of curriculum is the Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Mokhele (2014) explains that this model of Continuing Professional Development promotes a skill-based technocratic understanding of teaching where educators are given an opportunity to bring up-to-date their skills so that they validate and show their proficiency. The framework was first introduced through a government Gazette in 2007 and it outlined strategies for recruitment, retention, and professional development of educators in South Africa (DBE, 2015). According to the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2015), the following are the specific purposes of the teacher-training framework as drawn from the 2007 DBE policy framework which states that educators must be:

- properly equipped to undertake their essential and demanding task;
- Able to continually enhance their professional competence and performance;

- Appropriately qualified to fill in all school vacancies and that there is a dynamic balance between demand and supply of educators;
- A community of competent educators dedicated to providing education of high quality with high levels of performance as well as ethical and professional standards of conduct; and must be
- Deservedly held in high esteem by the people of South Africa.

However, this training framework mentioned seemingly does not assist educators to face the challenges of today's learners at schools; as a result, the Department of Basic Education has charged the South African Council for Educators (SACE) to come up with a Handbook on Educators' Rights, Responsibilities and Safety (DBE, 2017). The new *Educators' Handbook* draft awaits approval and yet to be tested across the country (SACE, 2019).

There are interesting features of the new *Educators' Handbook* such as equipping educators with non-violent and conflict resolution skills in schools, holding workshops and counselling sessions and designing of programmes that educate and protect educators from violence (SACE, 2019). This study reviews the contents of the *Educators' Handbook* in relation to formulating a workable model of the combating the violence against educators at schools.

4.3.2 Implications Pertaining to Educators' Innovativeness in Creating Safe Classroom Environments

South Africa requires cutting-edge innovations pertaining to learner-on-teacher violence. What is presently taking place in South African classrooms is unprecedented and seemingly not manageable (Ngatane, 2019). The Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2015) is focusing on the significance of creating safe schools that encourage respect for human rights but doing so in a not so friendly environment. Educators are encouraged to adhere to code of ethics and professional development for all educators as promoted by SACE but this is happening in an atmosphere of fear and danger. According to Sibisi (2016), an atmosphere of fear interferes with a educators' ability to teach and is accompanied by an increase of teacher absenteeism, sickness such as

depression, resignation or early retirement and hating the teaching profession altogether.

There is plenty of literature addressing the educators' violence problem indicating decent innovations for teaching in safe and secure environments but what is decent on paper may not automatically be accomplished (Mncube & Netshitangani, 2014; Nako et al., 2018). The Department of Basic Education has provided a framework for a whole-school approach for principals, educators, which is believed, provides answers to the school safety problem, and schools through educators being required to develop and maintain safe, friendly, violence-free learning environments in their schools (DBE, 2015). The whole-school approach must take place within the school demographics entrapped in violent communities where, for example, some schools are located near taverns (pubs) where alcohol and drugs are easily accessible. Thus, the rationale of schools ensuring that learners are taught the social principles of respect, self-control and patience in an educational environment characterized by chaotic and disruptive acts of violence is utopia if the approach remains the same as 15 years ago.

According to an overview of school-based violence in South Africa (SACE, 2020), to achieve safe and secure environments, educators depend solely on the constitution, legislation, school rules and policies. To support and contend against the learner-on-teacher violence, Zulu (2017) reiterates that, apart from the mentioned official documents and statutes, the following educators' rights must verbally be encouraged and clearly pronounced; that educators must:

- be respected in class by learners;
- teach in a conducive environment;
- not to be discriminated against by race or gender;
- have their human dignity protected ;
- have a voice and an opinion to be heard at schools and be taken seriously;
- be empowered and made conscious of their rights;
- be supported concerning the promotion of their rights;
- know the remedy when their rights have been violated;
- not to be victimised; and
- teach what they know, and what they trained for.

In relation to the mentioned educators' rights, Wray (2017) argues that these rights do not conclusively provide justification and prioritization of the violence against educators in relation to implications of what currently is taking place in classrooms at schools. Thus, over and above verbally encouraging these rights, understanding what perpetuates the acts of violence against educators is crucial. Improving teacher safety will present ways in which everyone, including learners, express the concept of working together in promoting non-violent learning environments (Opic et al., 2013). In the end, sustained collaboration will emerge being strengthened by the concept of 'community'. In this case, 'community' refers to educators and learners who share the same set of concerns, problems and interests in a particular matter (Zulu, 2017). According to Lachman et al. (2017), once a shared vision and sense of purpose consistently takes root between the subjects of focus, negotiating the plan of doing things together; sharing of power and decision making and dealing with the foreseeable tensions between learners and educators through a collective purpose will become a common way of life.

In the South African context, a shared vision will mean focusing on safeguarding learning for pupils and regard for a high quality teaching for educators (DBE, 2015). In this study, it means both educators and learners taking ownership of the value system they attach to their community (in this, the school). Therefore, a shared value provides a framework for all shared and collective ethical decisions based on the understanding of the needs of others (Lachman et al., 2017). In addition, in this study, the researcher lays emphasis on emerging relationships characterised by openness, trust, support and collaboration amongst educators and learners. In Mokhele's (2014) findings, it was revealed that difficulties associated with development of hostile relations arise mainly from the lack of culture of collaboration between parties in contrast.

In this study, learners and educators are expected and anticipated to learn as they engage in different interactions, for example, educators communicating with learners in class and sharing new ideas launching an empowering environment that is free of violence where learning is not affected.

4.3.3 Teacher Self-Efficacy in the South African School-Violence Context

The education process informally begins at home and formally sustained at schools (Ogina, 2010). In schools, the educators implement the assignment of nurturing community members and if children are to be taught, the 'inspirational beliefs' of the educators who conduct the teaching and learning process become important (Wood, 2014). According to Wray (2017), 'inspirational beliefs' refers to the awareness of the significance of an assignment or task anticipated to be achieved, some knowledge or proficiency to be attained or having an emotional readiness and confidence, that one can perform the assignment or task. In this respect, the researcher believes that teacher self-efficacy has some resilient influence in successfully combating the violence against educators at school.

The idea of teacher self-efficacy developed out of the framework of Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2012). And to a more significant importance, the concept of self-efficacy upholds and embraces an individual's belief concerning their ability to influence events that affect them and their power to exercise control over those events (Bandura, 2012). Self-efficacy should not be confused with the concept of self-esteem in that self-esteem differs since it is more orientated on an individual's general feelings of self-worth and self-value (Sharma, Loreman & Forlin, 2012).

According to Walton (2011), when interpreting the characteristics of the South African model of teacher self-efficacy, it is essential to highlight that these characteristics are examined against a background that, South Africa is regarded as a developing country with numerous contending demands on its economic and human resources such as well-trained educators. In most cases, South African school classrooms are often overcrowded and under-resourced, and in some cases requiring necessities such as clean water and electricity (Walton, 2011).

Thus when dealing with creating effective learning and teaching environments in a South African context, such should be viewed in relation to these unique socio-economic necessities (Sharma et al., 2012). Teacher self-efficacy is unique to each context, for example, an educator may believe they can teach the school curriculum, but they may not believe they can manage the classroom behaviour (Walton, Nel, Hugo & Muller, 2009).

On the other hand, an educator may feel optimistic about their capability to work with a specific group of learners and less confident in their capability with a different group of learners (Walton, 2011). Thus, teacher efficacy beliefs have broad implications for the school community, specifically pertaining to school climate and to educators' vulnerability to violence against them. According to Walton et al. (2009), teacher self-efficacy is assessed observing how educators feel about the helpfulness of their school leadership; their relationships with learners and staff in the school; family and community associations; safety and security of the school environment, and the generally helpfulness of the educational environment. Sustained achievement in the classroom easily translates into improved teacher self-efficacy beliefs equally affecting teacher's interpersonal relationships and professional practices (Bandura, 2012).

In this study, the researcher uses teacher self-efficacy in the South African schools context as set out in relation to contending demands on its economic and human resources. According to Walton (2011), careful consideration of contexts is crucial in order to unquestionably identify counter-productive experiences and retaining useful experiences pertaining to educators' perceived positive influences on their learners' ability to thrive at school and achieve other goals as well. In this study, by other goals, it is inferred the ability of educators and learners being empowered to achieve contexts regarded as non-violent as driven by teacher self-efficacy. The researcher's opinion is that, when educators see their learners doing well on a task engaged on during a classroom activity, it will encourage consistency and quicker understanding of the content presented in class by the educator. Ultimately, educators succeeding in achieving additional goals outside of the school curriculum that have an impact in controlling violence against them. Educators are likely to conclude that they are effective, acknowledging and crediting these into their permanent positive experiences (Walton et al., 2009; Bandura, 2012).

In turn, this may lead to increased fruitfulness pertaining to healthy 'school-community' relations reducing learner-on-teacher violence (Park, Dimitrov, Das & Gichuru, 2016). According to Park et al. (2016), educators who experience an amplified sense of self-efficacy are remarkably more organized and effective, with a high likelihood to participate in dynamic classroom planning and preparation. Thus, highly effective educators transfer higher expectations for themselves and their learners (Walton,

2011). In contrast to a case where a diminished sense of self-efficacy, this increasingly develops negativity in educators who find their instructional performances to be hopeless and despairing (Park et al., 2016).

The next section discusses South Africa's response to the violence against educators.

4.3.4 Summary

In this section, some interesting features that pertain to the training framework of educators in South Africa in equipping educators with non-violent and conflict resolution skills in schools were discussed. These skills seem to encourage educators to resort to collective ethical decisions characterised by trust, support and collaboration. Teacher-self efficacy was discussed as a process that sustains emotional readiness and confidence for educators. For this study, it is important to credit the positive experiences produced by increased teacher-self-efficacy in the drive to control violence against educators in schools.

The next section discusses the responses by the Department of Basic Education in South Africa.

4.4 South Africa's Response to Violence against Educators

4.4.1 Introduction

If the Department of Basic Education does not consider it imperious, the fact that violence against educators is a severe status quo, then there is a higher likelihood of an upsurge in the rate of educator exhaustion, educator truancy, and poor academic outcomes because of stress and lack of educator motivation (Coetzee, 2017). Hence, the Department of Basic Education is responding to the high levels of learner-on-teacher violence but doing so in isolation to the experiences of educators (Chetty, 2019).

In this section, the researcher first takes a broad view of the differentiated levels of prevention and follows with a discussion of the various responses on the prevention and intervention to violence against educators. Normally intervention takes place because an incident has just happened (Mncube, 2014). Thus, in this section, prevention is discussed first, then a discussion on intervention strategies against learner-on-teacher violence.

4.4.2 Prevention Approaches to Learner-on-Teacher Violence

Literature review shows that efforts targeted at dealing with school violence are in place, which include growing basic levels of good management, school efficiency and teacher professionalism (Mncube, 2014; SACE, 2017; Makhasane et al., 2018). While the government through the Department of Basic Education (DBE) is actually prioritising the issue of school violence, but there is inadequate and narrow data to do so, especially on the levels and extent of violence against educators (Ngidi, 2017; Kgosimore, 2018).

According to Botha, Myburgh and Poggenpoe (2013), for effective prevention programmes to work, careful internal school organisation must take place; and a systematic, continuous management and supervision of the programmes must be integrated with organisational capacity of schools such as understanding the interconnectedness of policy execution pertaining to educator tasks. 'Organizational capacity' refers to the level of the organization's capability of schools to deliver services and products that not only fulfil current parents' expectations, but also constantly raise futuristic hopes and occasions for an improved school environment (Barnes et al., 2012). Mncube (2014) argues that, it is important to be mindful of the fact that a working prevention strategy begins at individual level, through influencing behaviour that creates order; and a more efficient workplace culture that influences teamwork, collaboration and promoting a sense of a true educational community.

'Workplace culture' refers to the mutual shared values, belief systems, attitudes and the set of assumptions that people in an organization share, being shaped by individual upbringing, social and cultural context (Mncube, 2014). For example, in the case of the school as a workplace, the relationships that exist between educators, learners, general staff and the School Governing Bodies is governed by the principles of workplace culture. Thus, anything that transpires within the school environment may influence the entire school community positively or negatively depending on the event occurring (Mncube, 2014; Grobler, 2018). Human-Vogel et al., (2017) elucidate that a working prevention strategy understands victim educators as adults and learner perpetrators as children requiring equal attention and support. This suggests that the involvement of the School Principal is inevitable, especially in the expectation of guaranteeing that support and recuperation plans are respectively available for the

both the victim and the perpetrator. This then infers that the school-level support plans should work interchangeably with external specialised support services such as social work services, police and social justice departments and psychological support services (Segalo et al., 2018).

Prevention is classified under three categories, namely, primary prevention, secondary prevention and tertiary prevention (Brough, O'Driscoll, Kalliath, Cooper & Poelmans, 2009). The three categories of prevention are fundamentally founded upon the Occupational Health and Safety Act No. 85 of 1993 and are applied on the premises of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration principles with six most important elements as, namely, management; commitment; employee involvement; hazard assessment; prevention and control; and safety and health training and post incidence responses (OHS, 1993). Occupational Health and Safety Act, Act No. 85 of 1993 is a place of work legal tool that standardizes the protection of all classifications of workers against threats that pose a danger to their health and safety at workplace (Kgosimore, 2018).

Although the Act classifies and grades hazards according to levels, however, violence is not on the list. Thus, the Act does not identify violence as a workplace health and safety hazard (Kgosimore, 2018). As a result, this has a negative impact in that any strategy and procedures that organizations are obliged to implement in making their workplaces safe for employees in compliance to the Act, would not apply to violence and matters related to violent incidents. Given such a background, it is important to unpack the three prevention categories. The following section discusses each of the prevention categories.

4.4.2.1 Primary Prevention

Primary prevention of an occurrence involves the screening of a person and introducing strategies such as rewards to create a positive working environment in an organization ahead of any event overtaking the organization's preparedness (OHS, 2016). For example, when an educator joins a new school, vetting against indicators of a violent or aggressive nature might be conducted; and that educator may undergo attitudinal tests and checks (Baruth et al., 2016). According to Brough et al., (2009), such screening may give a fair background of the educator against the use of substances such as drugs or alcohol.

An advanced level of the primary prevention is the vetting of characteristics such as integrity, personality and psychological screening (Brough et al., 2009). Schools that support their educators expedite productivity and increase the school's commitment to care, good health and job satisfaction (Chetty, 2019).

In this study, the researcher uses the Primary Prevention Strategy (PPS) to provide a coping mechanism for schools when dealing with violence at school level through the management of educators' stress and fatigue levels. The strategy may work well if it is integrated with the programme of supervision, background screening, demographics and history of the educator in relation to the use of intoxicating substances such as alcohol and drugs (Brough et al., 2009). Thus, School Principals play a major role in dealing with supporting individual educators at the school in terms of their orientation to the norms of the school (Davids et al., 2016).

4.4.2.2 Secondary Prevention

According to Brough et al. (2009), 'Secondary Prevention Strategy' (SPS) refers to deeper issues of managing employee stress levels and making them aware of the training (instructional tasks in the case of a school) and the organization's most important activities (curriculum issues), which must be understood in relation to their duties at the school. This may help educators to stay prepared way in advance of anything that could hinder their daily school processes (Baruth et al., 2016). For example, the School Principal may have developed a learner-on-teacher violence prevention plan, make it known to new educators who joins the school and train them on the practical aspects of the prevention plan (Coetzee, 2017). Thus preventing a possible educator exposure to violence by learners at the school. Brough et al. (2009) further explain that the most beneficial activity for employees in an organization is training on the product package and/or services of the organization, which impact on the person's perception of control, particularly when they are exposed to a violent situation at work. Thus, an employee joining an organization for the time must undergo training on issues such as values of the organization, methods of reporting (*modus operandi*) and the organization's policies (Coetzee, 2017).

An ongoing sustained training should follow soon after so that a continuous awareness of the workplace environment is mastered (Gina et al., 2014). The researcher's opinion is that, this may empower both schools as organizations and educators as employees, by enhancing a feeling of involvement of understanding conflict management, providing the educator with skills to respond to any violent situations pro-actively and thus preventing possible violent aggression.

According to Brough and Biggs (2015), Secondary Prevention Strategies (SPS) can gradually polarise negative situations in the process promoting communication, negotiations and effectiveness of methods designed to counteract strain and emotional abuse. Furthermore, Brough et al., (2015) argue that SPS takes place through a stage-by-stage way of dismantling negative inferences. For example, when relationships are threatened, mediation could immediately be advised to counteract the negative effects while the incident is still fresh and not so corrosive. This deterrence action reduces the impact of the threatening situation to have chances of being implanted permanently across the organization (Ramachandiran & Dhanapal, 2018).

In this study, the researcher adopts dismantling techniques that enhance educators' wellbeing and provide decreased stress and victimization levels. For example, educators will be empowered through the Grounded Theory to acquire those counteractive skills and apply them across any threatening situations, such as actions to be taken when dealing physical violence.

4.4.2.3 Tertiary Prevention

The Tertiary Prevention Strategy (TPS) is defined as a technique used to deal with employees affected by a violent occurrence at the workstation with its main significance as at helping during recovery and recuperation (Brough et al., 2009). The TPS process involves counselling done by an expert, who, through the organization protocols, may be attached to the organization or out-sourced from external expertise to specifically perform that specific counselling task (Brough et al., 2015). According to Brough et al. (2009), an investigation must be conducted for assessing all symptoms that led to the impairment of the employee. Thoughtfulness is focused on how the incident has been instigated; and facilitation of therapy to counter the disruptive

behaviour or incident is completed (Ramachandiran et al., 2018). Brough et al. (2015) continue to explain that the therapy process embraces different steps. The steps include removing victim from the stressful environment, calming down the victim, understanding of the factors that contributed to the occurrence, taking action, applying distancing, and coping techniques (Brough et al., 2015). Preventive strategies are not every time effective unaccompanied by discouraging violent incidents and thus, collaboration of different techniques is required.

The Department of Basic Education has presented some intervention strategies where need arises. These various intervention strategies are implemented through school-level support plans (DBE, 2015). The intervention strategies that work in the South African school-violence problem are discussed in the following section.

4.4.3 Department of Basic Education's Intervention Approaches to the School Violence

Intervention strategies are imperious to the transformation of what educators face in their classrooms (Govender, 2015). Thus, a significant task of South Africa's Department of Basic Education (DBE) is the obligation to respond speedily to the learner-on-teacher violence and to make available robust and accessible services to educators as victims who are continuously exposed to violence against them (Ngidi, 2018). The *National School Safety Framework* can be acknowledged as just one-step in the right direction and it is confirming the DBE's commitment to the rights of all educators in South Africa. When the NSSF is fully operational, it could offer recourse to all those in the school community, of realising the vision set out in the National Development Plan, and to ensuring safe and equitable access to quality education for children throughout South Africa.

Some support structures to assist victims of violence are indicated in the *National School Safety Framework* developed in 2015 as intervention strategies (DBE, 2015). These are applicable to the handling of problems of violence that may be encountered while at school (DBE, 2019). The *National School Safety Framework* guides the educators on the steps to take in case of a violent occurrence against learners at school and assist educators when reporting the incidents of violence but leaves them out as victims of violence by learners (NSSF, 2015). The following section discusses these intervention strategies in relation to school violence.

4.4.3.1 The Four Level Ecological Approach – A Broader Approach to School Safety

The Department of Education has developed their intervention strategy using the four-level Ecological Risk Model by Bronfenbrenner in which they provided the framework within which to address and understand the violence and its complex relationships (NSSF, 2015). The framework's significance rotates around the fact that it distinguishes that there is interrelationship amongst various individual, relational, community and societal factors (NSSF, 2015). The Ecological Systems Theory was introduced and dealt-with in Chapter 2 of this study.

School violence is regarded as the outcome of a build-up of risk factors that function on these various levels (NSSF, 2015). The amalgamation of risk and protective factors are affected by the external environment and influences on how any person acclimatizes to their environment (Ngidi, 2018). The intervention strategy use the four-level Ecological Model as a framework to safeguard that the various factors, which put people at risk of either becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence are attended to systematically (NSSF, 2015). Although the presented framework addresses mainly risk and protective factors with respect to violence against learners at school it is helpful and a step in the right direction. The risk factors include at *individual level* biological vulnerability, low self-esteem and participation in behaviours that endanger health; at the *relationship level*, it includes overcrowding, poverty, access to weapons, family violence; at the *community level*, it includes size of school, absenteeism, and suspensions; and at a *social level* it includes, unemployment rate by neighbourhoods and social isolation.

On the other hand, the protective factors include *individual level* factors, namely, social skills, perceived importance of parents and positive self-esteem. At the *relationship level*, the factors include fewer family siblings or small space for children at home, family unity and parents' democratic teaching style while the *community level* factors include better academic performance, period spent in the same school and school policies. Lastly, the *social level* factors embrace access to and use of health-care services, adult employment rates and positive support systems (NSSF, 2015).

This study concerns counteractive strategies to violence against educators. Thus, the next section discusses the application of the protective factors through the path of counselling and life skills education at schools, which are more relevant to the current study.

4.4.3.2 Protective Factors through the Path of Counselling and Life Skills Education

According to Govender (2015), protective factors comprise constructive educator-learner relations, academic driven creativeness and success, safe school environment, discipline and clear rules, behaving friends and peers in the proximity of learners and participation in organized community events. Strategic, organized and consistent extracurricular activities are necessary in all schools in order to empower learners develop positive attitudes and decrease their exposure to gangsterism, violence or criminality (Graham, 2018). This is important in reducing the learner-on-educator violence and controlling the effects of school violence in general.

In a recent study, it was revealed that assisting learners returning to homes and families where they encounter violence is important to nourishing, protecting and supporting them in a more dependable approach through the intervention strategies targeting the home environments that are often unfriendly and harmful towards children (Masinga, 2019). In Chapter 3, global experiences confirmed that combined interventions by social and welfare departments working in collaboration with education departments are amongst the highly successful in averting misbehaving and violence in children (Reddy et al., 2018; Berg & Cornell, 2016).

Thus, policy makers ought to emphasize the development and implementation of preventative and rehabilitative programmes that make use of social learning variables to transform children behaviour towards a positive pathway (Burton et al., 2013). For example, programmes governed by social learning principles include mentoring, behavioural modification, delinquency prevention, peer counselling and gang interventions (Govender, 2015; Grobler, 2018). The notion behind life skills education and counselling is that it creates positive experiences and role modelling for children functioning to engage them in predicting norms and values that could reduce imminent antisocial or criminality behaviour (Human-Vogel et al., 2017).

In addition, to encourage a healthy and constructive environment require identifying and addressing rehabilitation and preventative measures more accurately (Grobler, 2018). Mokhele (2014) mentions that executing impactful classroom instructional and regulatory guidelines permit the educator to have direct control at teacher level safeguarding that the educator is in control of the classroom situation. As a result, learners' academic commitment can enforce a protective factor countering the engagement to risky behaviours.

In this study, accurately understanding the school environment holistically in relation to psychological problems, and how educators engage learners in life skills education is important, for example, to designing theory driven and evidence-based prevention or intervention programmes which will turn a new leaf in the learner-on-teacher violence. The next section discusses the impact of school-level policies and their usage in combating learner-on-educator violence.

4.4.3.3 School Policies and Learner-on-Teacher Violence

School policies guarantee the effective working of the schools (Davids et al., 2016). If educators, School Management Teams, and learners do not cogitate on policies earnestly then it defeats their utility and practicality. According to Burton et al. (2013), discipline policies should always be implemented and not downplayed to benefit the circumstances which would then create an atmosphere to educators that breeds despair in the system and compelling learners to take advantage of the absence of support by school management.

Primarily, combating of violence against educators' demands for schools and school staff members to instil in their learners a demonstrated culture of respect, responsibility, and discipline regardless whether it is in the schoolrooms, passageways or school canteens (Khaled, 2014). This can be achieved through their school policies and Codes of Conduct. The law states that through governing bodies of schools a Code of Conduct for the learners must be adopted, after consultation with the educators, learners and parents of learners at the school (DBE, 2015). In addition, a specific violence prevention policy could be created and articulated and be consistently effected (DBE, 2015).

In addition, schools through the violence prevention policy can formalize clear guidelines and plans for responding to learner behavioural challenges that influence their academic performance (Ngidi, 2018).

For schools to respond and further entrench a culture of non-violence not only against educators School Governing Bodies' members and community leaders should collaborate and use their influence to engage young people in positive ways, such as community-led campaigns that positively influence children (Kgosimore, 2018). Various researchers have stated the need for robust management and administrative skills to make positive and violent free environments at schools (Govender, 2015; Ngidi, 2018; Masinga, 2019). Thus emphasizing the implication that schools must show a comprehensive and collective intervention strategy, which build schools and schoolroom climates that stimulate social and academic progress for both educators and learners (Grobler, 2018).

According to Human-Vogel et al. (2017), strategic interventions must produce the culture inside schools, which respect individuals, create certainty and reverence for educators and demonstrate reasonable and sensible behaviour towards educators, learners and everyone at schools. According to Shareefah et al. (2015), school-level policy focused interventions should make available room for waking up and bringing learner consciousness that, violence and maltreatment of others is not an acceptable norm and it is intolerable and inexcusable. Zulu (2017) agrees with the notion and emphasize that School Management Teams and educators must work together to minimize the rates of violence because educators have a clear mandate to enforce rules and influence positive behaviour of learners in classrooms.

Through school policies, School Principals could provide in-school professional development and in-school training programmes that support educators to learning strategies that could diffuse conflicts preventing escalation of violence against them (Mncube, 2014). For example, according to Mncube and Harber (2013), schools could train educators on clearly stating rules, being always consistent, modelling and rewarding positive behaviour, showing their learners that they care about them, and identifying any discrepancies in learners' temperament or behaviour that impede endeavours which address violence at school. As argued by Masinga (2019), many educators are not necessarily well prepared with the skills to cope in their classrooms; therefore, in-school professional development should be a priority that ensures educators are proficiently trained on how to de-escalate classroom conflicts.

One of the recommendations in a study on reducing school violence is that Educator Preparation programmes must provide the next generation of educators with better skillsets that support the management of conflicts before they worsen (Ngidi, 2018).

4.4.3 Trade Unions and the Violence against Educators

In South Africa, educators are by far the biggest group of civil servants (Zengele, 2009). This makes education a highly contested sector and different from the other sectors of public admin and a business of great importance, namely, in the context of quality education (Sibanda, 2015). Many educators are formal members to one or more of the Educator Unions South Africa has. Educator Unions in South Africa are broadly varying from the perspective of the way they operate as organizations; they do not make up one identical group (Ramokgotswa, 2016). This is due to locality and interests reasons of their potential members but also due to the category of educators, they represent (Davids, 2018). According to Zengele (2009), there are three prominent unions in South African educational landscape, namely, South African Educators Union (SATU), the South African Democratic Educators Union (SADTU), and the National Professional Educators Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA). In any country, the government single-handedly, cannot succeed in executing changes particularly in the arena of education without the support of other stakeholders (Cowen et al., 2014).

The support coming from stakeholders and individual members of society interested in educational issues, such as teacher unions, is thus pertinent and valuable. According to Mafisa (2017), a Trade Union is a support structure and a means of middle-power exchange in the undertakings of addressing the imbalance of power in a workplace between employees and an employer. 'Middle-power exchange' refers to the conversations held during negotiations between Teacher Unions and employees when educators are represented in matters pertaining to their welfare at the workplace (Sibanda, 2015). Thus, the history of teacher Trade Unionism in South Africa dates back to periods preceding the 1994 democratic transition and the consensus from scholars is that a community of school-union partnerships are an essential sector that plays a major role in democratising education evident by the power of the voice of Trade Unions in South Africa (Cowen et al., 2014).

According to Khuzwayo (2019), a partnership is an important aspect of the relationship of equality between organizations as partners centred upon mutual respect and accountability where the mutual values, tenacity, aims and objectives are clear, and identifies autonomy of the partners.

South Africa follows the route by many other countries of including teacher unions as major stakeholders in decision making as stated by the South African Schools Act of 1996 (SASA, 1996). It has been confirmed in many instances that if unions collaborate with government and schools, they can certainly diminish the complexity of school violence, which influence negatively on achieving perfect and sustainable school environments (Zengele, 2009; Sibanda, 2015; Coetzee, 2017). For example, as Teacher Unions represent educators and their focus is on the educators` welfare, factors characterising collaboration and support emerge, and these could be used to solve the solvable problems without having to wait for the Department of Education to take action (Cowen et al., 2014). Through their union voice, their personal experiences, opinions, insights and feedback, educator unions` contribution to education could be significant in many ways, namely, with regard to the professionalism of educators, their motivation and with respect to the enhancement of the culture of teaching and learning (Mafisa, 2017). Educator Unions represent the collective of educators as employees (Ngidi, 2018). Thus, they have strong legitimacy amongst educators and can play a fundamental role in setting of the standards, Codes of Conduct and Practice, and employment terms of educators (Mncube, 2014).

They can also play a strategic role in preventing and responding to violence against educators. There are no local quantitative studies of the role of teacher unions on the learner-on-teacher violence. However, the recent few studies that have explored teacher union activities suggest conflicting interpretations on the role of the teacher unions in the improvement of the standard of quality education. They are often unclear or provide little data with no concrete coping strategies for educators to use in combating the violence against them by learners (Cowen et al., 2014; Mafisa, 2017). In comparison, Educators Unions across the globe are often seen as part of the problem in public schooling systems and their role, particularly in educational reform, is highly argued (Cowen et al., 2014). Educator Unions are continually viewed as conformist and hostile to educational reform and in the pursuit of quality education at schools (Sibanda, 2015). Some scholars have further argued that unions increase the cost of education and are described as making it more challenging for principals to

cope and manage in their schools and that the existence of unions at schools has led to more conflictual relations in educational establishments which often compromise educational quality (Zengele, 2009; Mafisa, 2017; Khuzwayo, 2019).

To this end, for the purpose of this study, the researcher extracted the following affluences as the visible identifiable positive contributions, which are associated to Educator Union activities pertaining to combating violence against educators and in addressing the school-violence problem in general.

4.4.3.1 Educator Unions' Role in the Curriculum Reforms and Advocating for Safety at Schools

Educator Unions have been instrumental in the processes of curriculum reforms in South Africa in almost all government consultations and forums (Zengele, 2009; Mafisa, 2017). Their participation has in a way, stabilized the education system both academically and administratively (Mafisa, 2017). The instability in the education system may have been responsible for the harm to the DBEs image in the sense that, the DBEs inability to develop a stable working model for schools in the delivery of education in South Africa could have compromised the delivery of quality education (Mafisa, 2017). According to Khuzwayo (2019), the frequent changes that currently are happening across the South African National Curriculum creates instability in the educational system.

The frequent changes swells additional workload to educators who are already overwhelmed by many other tasks, such as calming down the effects of the school-violence problem, learner discipline; and the same time delivering on their normal classroom teaching loads. According to Cowen et al. (2014), the additional workload could lead to a sense of insecurity, which may manifest itself through physical symptoms such as anger, tension headaches, despondency and psychological problems. These symptoms have been linked to the triggers of violent incidents at schools (Botha et al., 2013). According to Mafisa (2017), Educator Unions have been successful in dealing with such situations. For example, through calming down and committing their educator members to upholding acceptable conduct, tolerance and professionalism in their practice.

This ultimately introduces a reduction effect to the already hostile situation, which could have suggested and led to an extremely distressing violent school environment (Mafisa, 2017).

Thus for this study, It is important to reflect on the *modus operandi* of Educator Unions in order to ascertain the formal channels guaranteeing union participation in the formulation and assessment of education policies that speak to the curbing of violence at schools. Union-government relationships are often hostile (Zengele, 2009). This infers that, during the fieldwork, it was important for the researcher to determine union participation in policy formulation. This helped the researcher to establish whether the relationship between government and unions is conjointly supportive; or the relation is confrontational, unreceptive or compliant; and all this depended on the premises of their philosophical orientations in view of the problem of school violence. In such a case, the researcher evaluates educators' attitudes, pointing to their collective influence over the choice and content of public policy concerning school violence and, particularly, violence against them.

4. 4. 3. 2 Educator Unions' Reactions to Sexual Relationships between Educators and Learners

There is evidence to the fact that Educator Unions engage their members through school union shop-steward teams that provide face-to-face counselling for both learners and educators who might have been abused or physically attacked (SADTU, 2018; Ntantala, 2020). Furthermore, teacher unions hold annual general conferences where sensitization of educators takes place on issues such as sexual harassment, teacher conduct at schools and acceptable moral values in the teaching profession (NAPTOSA, 2019). For instance, the South African Democratic Educators' Union (SADTU), which is one of the largest teacher unions in South Africa, reported that some 32 educators had been struck out of the teaching profession in the preceding three years, mainly for having sexual relations with learners (SADTU, 2018). The South African Council for Educators (SACE) revealed the most recent cases of educators who had had relationships with learners from Grades 10 to 12 that, although it is very often the case that a consensual relationship existed, however, the South African Council for Educators maintains that it does not tolerate that kind of behaviour even if there is consent (SACE, 2017).

Whilst the relationship between the educator and the learner may be voluntary, it boils down to the educator exploiting his or her position because educators have positions of power (SACE, 2017). As part of collaborating with other stakeholders, the Educator Unions safeguard that an educator who has been dismissed on the basis of sexual relationship with a learner or sexually abusing a learner would be deregistered as an educator and may not be appointed as an educator by any provider, including private providers (NAPTOSA, 2019; SADTU, 2018). This type of action emancipates schools from possible harm, creating a place where the school community members enjoy less or no intimidation, harassment, humiliation or violence. According to Chawane (2018), Educator Unions support efforts to expose criminal elements in the teaching fraternity because people implicated or engaging in sexual abuse of learners are criminals and the law must punitively deal with them.

In this study, the role of the Educator Unions is assumed to productively create and improve safe school environments by insisting on the devotion of time on the professionalization of the teaching profession through upskilling educators' knowledge about the environment where teaching takes place. In this regard, the researcher incorporates, in the Grounded Theory, teacher professionalism that eliminates perceptions beyond unionism. Walton (2011) argues that educators must highly rate their profession as vital with an attitude and ethos to others that infer linking their traits to the culture of teaching and learning. This will safeguard that educators' act in accordance with their professional calling in ensuring that there is meaningful learning, teaching, and the promotion of teacher interests and safety at all times.

4.4.4 The School as a 'Social Vaccine' Against School Violence through Social Mobilization

Social vaccine is a concept defined as an allegory for a sequence of social and behavioural procedures that could be used to raise and promote public consciousness pertaining to a harmful situation, which may be completed realistically through social mobilization (Rogers, Goldstein & Fox, 2018). According to Rogers et al., (2018), 'social mobilization' refers specifically to principles that could be used to influence a large number of individuals to participate in an activity. For example, educators at schools could be influenced to take part in activities constructed to elicit negative attitude among learners towards educators; for instance, an event wherein male educators play a soccer match with boys at the school in order to allow the learner

boys and male educators to know each other at a more socially advanced orientated level. In such an activity, the set of goals to be achieved are constructed and well known in advance (Rogers et al., 2018). In this case, the main aim could be the eradication of hostile relations between male educators and male learners and replacing these with receptive and open-minded interactions (Schultz, 2014). The motivational force of social mobilization is made better by the fact that others profit from the promoted behaviours, and its overall influence is enriched by the fact that people are entrenched within social networks (Gehlbach, Brinkworth, King, Hsu, McIntyre & Rogers, 2016).

Social vaccine when used together with social mobilization could enable people to counter unhealthy tendencies, increase resilience, and nurture activism for transformation (Gehlbach et al., 2016). This can ultimately initiate the pledge to take actions that are in the interests of everyone with a new social order emergent (Miller & Prentice, 2016). Social vaccine addresses barriers, facilitates, and creates room for behavioural changes such as attitudinal, social and cultural behaviours (Rogers et al., 2018). While strategic use of the common communication approaches may be effective in reducing school violence, the level and magnitude of spreading and acceptance of accurate information regarding specific changes in knowledge, attitudes, norms, beliefs and behaviours determine the usefulness of a social vaccine (Gehlbach et al., 2016). Hence, social vaccine can shape societal immunity against shattering effects of future reappearance of plagues by applying the scholarly lessons gained in previous empirical outcomes and responses to an existing problem (Miller et al., 2016).

In this study, a basic psychological purpose encompassing the fundamental 'social vaccine' principle is that people essentially want to belong or feel socially attached to others (Rogers et al., 2018). Human beings have a natural propensity to pursue and uphold social connectedness (Schultz, 2014). The yearning for social appreciation, some academics contend, is the root of the concept self-esteem (Gehlbach et al., 2016; Rogers et al., 2018). Self-esteem works as a means to show and accomplish one's social belonging (Miller et al., 2016).

Thus, literature reveals that self-esteem through social vaccine has evolved to safeguard that individuals put forth determination to uphold or advance their social standing (Rogers et al., 2018). In line with this point of view is the contention of the importance of social belonging and the threat of social rejection as aversive (Sharma et al., 2012). Furthermore, it is argued that social belonging may cause a neural response parallel to that manifested in educators' physical pain from violence by learners (Sharma et al., 2012). Some educators keep quiet and do not report the acts of violence against them (Gehlbach et al., 2016). Succinctly, people have an important need to feel that they are socially attached with others (Schultz, 2014). In this regard, the researcher's opinion is that approaches that tie together social values to trigger and elicit other-beneficial behaviours can particularly be captivating in the formulation of the Grounded Theory under construction.

4.4.5 Summary

In this section, a discussion of the prevention approaches to learner-on-teacher violence were presented in line with the Occupational Health and Safety Act; Act No. 85 of 1993. Using the framework of this legal tool, an analysis of how the standardization process aimed at the protection of all classifications of workers, is used in the prevention of threats that pose a danger to workers' health and safety at workplaces. Some intervention strategies by the Department of Basic Education were discussed with reference to the National School Safety Framework and the direct commitment by the South African education Directorate. The amalgamation of risk and protective factors were also discussed. A broad perspective of the role of unions in the fight against learner-on-educator violence was discussed noting teacher unions as pertinent and valuable pertaining to educators' welfare at the workplaces. The school as a 'social vaccine' against school violence through social mobilization was analysed and its significance in this study.

4.5 Conclusion

Chapter 4 began with a descriptive exploration of the violence against educators that predominantly seems to be a phenomenon that is on the increase and disturbingly stressful in the South African schools. A chronology of some of the documented media reports profiling the severity of the violence problem was stated. It was revealed that school violence in South Africa is higher than that experienced by schools in other continents such as Europe. As such, a resilient and adaptively beneficial approach in dealing with the quandary of violence against educators is required, as the current approaches seem to be unsuccessful. The DBE charges educators, to implement the curriculum within the limitations of the hostile and violent environments, yet educators unequipped to do so. A scrutiny of educators' perceptions on disciplinary measures used in South African classrooms context, against its negative influences on educators, learners and parents of learners was explained. Crucial connections were made that accentuate the need for schools to inaugurate a resilient connection with the broader community in which schools are located.

Furthermore, characteristics of the insufficiency of the teacher-training model were discussed pertaining to the process of re-skilling educators with relevant information that could combat violence against them or provide sufficient classroom support for them to deal with violence at schools. Inspirational beliefs such as teacher self-efficacy were reflected upon with an orientation that ultimately encourages educators in succeeding to achieve additional goals outside the school curriculum. The effective prevention programmes that work to compel schools as organisations to work systematically were explored with the view of assuming a prevention route rather than intervention.

Lastly, it was shown that regimes could not succeed in executing changes alone without the support of other stakeholders such as Educator Unions. As such, an overview of a South African perspective of teacher unionism and its contribution to fighting the violence against educators was alluded to.

The next chapter presents the Research Design and methodology as employed throughout this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY FOR THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive explanation of the Research Design and methodology that were used to achieve the objectives of this study. The study is focused on how educators as victims of school violence manage and understand learner-on-educator violence within the school environment. In Chapters Three and Four, perspectives of the learner-on-educator violence, both internationally and within a South African context were discussed. In these two chapters, the main objective was a discussion to establish what has been done on the issue of violence against educators pertaining to counteracting techniques at an international landscape, namely, in Europe, North America, Middle East and Asia and with respect to the local South African context relating to prevention and intervention strategies.

It is imperative that Chapter Five outlines and explains clear reasons for the Research Design and methodology that were used for gathering data to achieve the objectives of the study. The Research Design was intended to give a clearly constructed blueprint and strategy, which sought to explore and ascertain answers to the research question to emerge from the virtual interviews held and the observations made. To fulfil and accomplish this objective of the study; the researcher selected a qualitative research approach that sought to generate knowledge based on a Grounded Theory approach and to collect data through in-depth one-on-one interviews of purposefully selected participants; and which subsequently helped to answer the questions posed by the research. The rationale for choosing the qualitative research approach based on a Grounded Theory were stated in Chapter Two of this study. Four multiple-site Case Studies were used and to be exact, four schools were involved in this study.

The next section explains the underlying assumptions pertaining to the qualitative research paradigms, research approach and Research Design.

5.2 Underlying Assumptions Concerning Qualitative Research Paradigms, Research Approach and Research Design

5.2.1 Introduction

As a novice, the researcher has critically reviewed from selected literature, how Grounded Theorists select, mirror and reflect reality in an effort to derive rationality of the learner-on-educator violence. The rationality behind the critical review was to locate possible downsides, good practices and the theory that gave the best path to follow for this study. In this regard, the researcher firstly discusses below the research paradigms used in educational research in general and those that underpin studies based on Grounded Theory approach. Secondly, the researcher discusses the research approach and, lastly, the Research Design.

5.2.2 Research Paradigm

The term 'paradigm' originates from a Greek derivative meaning 'pattern' (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Durrheim (2009) defines a paradigm as that which organizes how the researcher understands reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge, the relationship between the knower and what is to be known (epistemology), how the knower obtains the knowledge (methodology) and consequently what is perceived as ethical behaviour (axiology). A paradigm is thus used to support the researcher in selecting the utmost applicable technique and path when exploring a phenomenon (Durrheim, 2009). According to Bassey (2012), the belief system is the preliminary premise that decides what the researcher is exploring and how the research must be conducted. Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2013) describe a paradigm as a model or design comprising a set of authentic assumptions and a pattern for gathering and interpreting data. While Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) define it as a framework which functions as a map that directs to a scientific enquiry, determining a community's main problem or concern for its members to address and defining suitable models, elucidations, methods, and procedures to unravel the identified challenges. Similarly, Creswell (2009) defines it as an approach for observing at the natural world, embracing certain philosophical assumptions that lead, and focuses thinking and action to a specific phenomenon's solutions.

Thus, in this study it is essential to reflect on the paradigms as they influence the answer to the main research question.

Whereas many philosophical and theoretical perspectives are presented in educational research, Durrheim (2009) groups them according to the following four main paradigms:

- Positivism/Post-Positivism (which is linked to experimental, quasi-experimental, quantitative research);
- Constructivism (which is also referred to as *Interpretivism*, and is linked to naturalistic, phenomenological, ethnographic and broad qualitative research processes);
- The Transformative Paradigm (which is also referred to as *emancipatory* and linked to viewpoint theories, for example, Critical Theories and Disability theory, which targets at supporting participants through the research, for instance, in Participatory Action Research); and
- The Pragmatic Research Paradigm (which embraces mixed representations and mixed approaches to research).

In this study, the researcher adopted the Constructivist Research Paradigm also referred to as the Interpretivism Paradigm (Creswell, 2014). In the next section, the researcher dwells more on the Constructivist Research Paradigm as it is the lens through which the researcher explores and specifically analyse the study phenomenon.

5.2.2.1 Constructivist Research Paradigm

The construction of meaning is at the heart of qualitative research and it comes as no astonishment that most qualitative researchers embrace a Constructivist perspective (Willig, 2016). According to Antwi and Hamza (2015), the Constructivism Research Paradigm is defined as an approach that views persons as constructing their own understanding of knowledge of the world as being concluded by experiencing things and pondering on those experiences. It is established and embodied on the analogy that persons form or construct much of what they learn through experience (Gray, 2014). Thus, according to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), constructing meaning is knowledge and they argue that there is no other meaningful technique in construing information.

The Constructivism Research Paradigm depicts the notion that knowledge does not just happen, as predicted by the traditional way of knowledge assimilation (Olsen, Higgs & Maher, 2015). To the Constructivist, learning happens purely when the person learning ascertains the knowledge through the channel of experimentation and exploiting by moving back and forth in the pursuit of extracting meaning (Olsen et al., 2015). For example, in a practical instance where educators spoon-feed their learners with knowledge as a mother does during the weaning of a child, learners involved in that learning process will incessantly be underdeveloped, without the ardent capabilities to create constructive point of views pertaining to their challenges at hand and the portrayal of alternative inferences to their circumstances (Gray, 2014). This subsequently makes them fail to recall and apply what they were taught in class (Antwi et al., 2015). However, if they are involved and eyewitness the implementation of a phenomenon, they may recall through the sensual action of remembrance and successfully find their way out of challenges (Miles et al., 2013). In this example, it means a negative implication to educators could be; learners could exhibit undesirable behaviour because the learners have failed to recall and apply what they were taught in class, which ultimately affect the learner-teacher relationship.

For this empirical study, the Constructivist Research Paradigm was identified as one of the popular paradigms used in qualitative research (Durrheim, 2009), and this paradigm was thus employed for reasons that are described below, which also pertains to the ontological, epistemological and methods used by the researcher.

5.2.2.1.1 The researcher's Ontological Orientation

Ontology advances questions about what exists, what kind of things exist and what it means for something to exist (Kotzee, 2018). There are two distinct directions in ontology (Creswell, 2014). First, it is objectivism (Creswell, 2014). This orientation stresses that social phenomena do have a meaning and existence independent of the people associated with it (Creswell, 2014). For example, a school is established upon structural components that hierarchically indicate roles and responsibilities, rules and regulations; and the extent to which these components are present differs; but thinking in these components indicates the use of objectivism.

Thus the assumption that the school does not only exist but is meaningfully independent of other social entities (Cohen et al., 2011). The school therefore epitomizes a social order and values to which individuals conform to and follow (Kotzee, 2018).

Second, it is Constructivism or Constructionism (Creswell, 2016). This orientation asserts that social actors are continually attaining social phenomena and their meanings through social interaction and are in a state of constant change or revision (Creswell, 2014). For example, in this orientation, a school is more like a negotiated order, which is continuously driven by the individuals within the school's environment. Thus, the ethos and beliefs are seen as emergent reality in constant construction and reconstruction, suggesting no set of understandings can provide a perfectly applicable solution to any problem (Kivunja et al., 2017). Constructionists admit that a situation cannot be pushed to the extreme, but constructionists will lean more towards questioning, whether there is truth that could be voiced about the phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In short, ontology determines the researcher's position and provide guidance to how research questions are formulated and how the research methods are likely to be employed (Guba & Lincoln, 2010). Research questions formulated from an objectivist's standpoint are apt to stressing formality (or structuralism) dimension of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2014); while research questions formulated from a Constructivist's standpoint emphasize the active participation of individuals in reality construction (Creswell, 2014).

In this study, the researcher purposefully picked the Constructivist Ontological Orientation for reasons that; beyond needful to understand educators as victims of school violence, how they manage and understand the violence against them. Ultimately, the researcher also aimed at developing a model for countering violence against educators at school. The researcher also sought to focus on developing strategies that educators can adopt to cope with and manage learner-on-educator violence within school environments. The researcher believes that empowering educators on coping techniques against learner-on-educator violence should be the primary and ultimate goal of each South African school. Thus, the Ontological Orientation of the researcher is of vital importance in answering the research question to the utmost applicability in real-life situations.

According to Charmaz (2014), qualitative researchers applying the Grounded Theory approach may generally hold one or two research paradigm perspectives; in the case of this study, the researcher held to one paradigm, namely, the Constructivist Paradigm. The Constructivist Paradigm prescribes for the researcher to create understanding out of the meaning constructed by the interviewees during the interviews. This aspect specified that the researcher understood the implication of activities at schools as fashioned and explained by the interviewee's point of view and interpreted as making sense of his own meaning. In this way, meaning is constructed and conveyed on a social interaction basis (Collins, 2011). For the researcher to understand the learner-on-educator violence he needed to initially derive sense of the problem by scrutinizing the explanations given by interviewees and express them in terms of own understanding in relation to the research question. Schmitt (2017) echoes that the act of probing commences with trepidations of participants through interface, analysis and criticism, which ultimately compels and directs the researcher to a multiple case of immediate outcomes. The researcher elected the participants in the study, intermingled with them through one-on-one virtual interviews and analytically explored the data then construed data to come up with the outcome of the research. The researcher was able form and make sense of the expressive outcomes that conveyed significances to the research. As suggested by Creswell (2014), the researcher's ontological position embraces inferences for what he perceives to hold value as real knowledge in the world, and hence profiles his view of the social order on the design of Constructivist Research Paradigm and his analysis of findings are thus founded on the social world meanings. More details on data collection strategies and data analysis are given under sections 5.8 and 5.10 below.

5.2.2.1.2 The researcher's Epistemological Orientation

Epistemology is defined as the theory of knowledge, particularly with regard to its methods, validity, scope, and the distinction between justified belief and opinion (Schmitt, 2017). Creswell (2014) defines epistemology as the philosophy of knowledge that seeks to answer the questions such as "*What is knowledge?*" and "*How is knowledge acquired?*" Thus, epistemology is referred to as the study of the theory of knowledge, and is different from ontology, which is the study of existence; in that, conclusively epistemology is the belief of how researchers may come to know the world or existence (Lichtman, 2011; Schmitt, 2017).

Constructivist researchers hold the view to human knowledge, which contrasts strikingly to an objectivist epistemology (Guba & Lincoln, 2010). An objectivist stand would assert that meaningful reality exists autonomously from the knower (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). *Objectivism* takes the position that there is a single version of what is real regardless of the researcher's perspective; the only way to find this truth and 'credible' data is to measure or observe the world with as little intervention from the researcher and other factors as far as possible (Miller, 2016; Ryan, 2018). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), a Constructivist view dismisses as absurd this view of human knowledge, affirming that meaning is created and constructed through the conscious and alert interaction of persons with their world.

In contrast, there is *subjectivism*, a perspective which takes into consideration the manifold and various perspectives of what may be reality (Ryan, 2018). For example, is what people see and feel reality; or are there other ways reality can be extracted out of that is seen? Subjectivism emphasizes that reality embraces researcher's perceptions, experiences and feelings (Guba & Lincoln, 2010). Thus, the significance of epistemology in research is the interaction with reality in establishing what is true or what is not true (Kotzee, 2018).

According to Cohen et al. (2011), there are three distinctive directions one can adopt epistemologically: *First, it is Positivism*, which has its historical roots in strict adherence to the testimony of observation and experience being guided by objectivism and has further three dimensions, namely,

- Phenomenalism meaning only the measurable facts in research count or the truth can only be recorded by senses.
- Deductivism meaning theory generates hypothesis for testing and;
- Inductivism, which means gathering of facts, makes basis for laws and thus gives rise to knowledge.

Thus, Positivism asserts that a statement is only true knowledge if it can be explained and be confirmed by quantitative data (Durrheim, 2009). Hence, the notion that Positivism is considered as the epistemology of natural sciences because of its stance in relation to the methodological procedures of natural sciences that can be applied to social phenomena in creating a science of society (Antwi et al., 2015). Leedy et al., (2010) elucidates that positivism has a connection with the concept of reductionism,

which views all complex systems as should be understood through interactions of its constituent parts. An interpretation of a complex system can be reduced to interpretations of individual elements that give rise to causality relationships consequently explaining a directional relationship between one event (cause) and another (effect) having a consequence (result) on the first (Creswell, 2014).

Second, it is Interpretivism. Like Positivism, Interpretivism has its historical roots in anthropology being guided by subjectivism (Schmitt, 2017). However, it is in contrast to Positivism, which is why at times it is referred to as anti-positivism because of its stance pertaining to the construction of truth and knowledge (Willig, 2016). Interpretivism contends that truth and knowledge are subjective, as well as culturally and historically positioned, constructed upon people's experiences and their understanding of them (Miller, 2016; Ryan, 2018). On no occasion can researchers be entirely detached or isolated from their own values and beliefs, so these inexorably dictate the means by which they collect, interpret and analyse data (Kraus, 2019). Interpretivism has four main approaches (Kraus (2019)). The four are given in the next section. These are:

- Hermeneutics, which is generally related to interpreting and understanding texts or documents and the deeper meaning in them (Kotzee, 2018). For example, gabbling or mumbling of learners in class could be viewed as a form of text, waiting for the teacher to interpret and understand them; and
- The Verstehen approach, where 'verstehen' is a German word meaning to '*understand in a deep way subjectively*' that also refers to an approach within sociology that intended to drive the researcher into the frame of mind of an insider, rather than an outside observer (MacAllister, 2012).

According to MacAllister (2012), who agrees with Kraus (2019), the Verstehen approach focuses on the exploration of understanding, discernment and sensitivity to the points of view of research participants, pertaining to understanding why a phenomenon exists or why the participants behave the way they do. The Verstehen approach anticipates to better understand the meaning of phenomenon within a culture rather than supposing that any one set of laws and values could relate across all of human experience (Schmitt, 2017; Miller, 2016).

- Symbolic Interactionism is defined as viewing society as composed of symbols that people use to establish meaning, develop views about the world, and communicate with one another (Miller, 2016). According to McCall (2013), Symbolic Interactionism is a micro-level theory that focuses on the relationships among individuals within a society using communication, namely, the exchange of meaning through language and symbols which is believed to be the way in which people make sense of their social worlds. Symbolic Interactionism has three primary principles (Lee, 2014):
 - An individual's behaviour is grounded on his or her own meanings;
 - Meanings are created from social interactions; and
 - Individuals may adjust meanings, built on their perceptions of situations or their experiences of them.

According to Ryan (2018), Symbolic Interactionism perceives meaning as a social product that arises in the process of interaction amongst individuals. To appreciate the implication of this theory in the context of this study, the researcher applied it during the observation of learner-educator interaction in the schools chosen as research sites. Schools are social places where actions and reactions pertaining to ideas and meanings assigned to differing situations within and about the school, are believably established on the symbols that role players hold for things in that learning-teaching environment. In this regard, educators were able to open up about their experiences pertaining to what they perceive offensive or hazardous to them at schools.

- Phenomenological inquiry is a research approach interpretive in nature and focuses on describing the common meaning for numerous persons of their lived experience of a phenomenon (Leedy et al., 2010; Creswell, 2014).

In interpretive phenomenology, the researcher considers the meaning others make of objects or experiences as important (Creswell, 2014). This fundamental Constructivist component has substantial inferences, where the research participants' embeddedness in cultural, political and historical contexts are seen as essential elements of the enquiry. Overlooking these

features could give an outcome that is distorted and decontextualized constructs, rather than contextually rich findings (Lichtman, 2011). However, an even more grave repercussion is the nature of reality assertions a researcher may create (Kraus, 2019). The predominantly subjective and qualitative character of phenomenological research has steered some researchers to designate any example, particularly interpretive in qualitative research, as phenomenological (Miller, 2016; Ryan, 2018). And some researchers are tempted to erect phenomenology into a stand-alone research paradigm (Willig, 2016; Schmitt, 2017). Literature has indicated a sloppy use of the word 'phenomenology' in the field of education management and leadership, where it typically refers to an approach that signifies a reaction to scientific, inflexible, and rigid theories in research (Merriam et al., 2016).

Third, and last, epistemologically direction one can adopt is Critical theory, which is a direction that seeks out to challenge worldviews and the primary power structures that create them (Bronner, 2011). According to Aldiabat and LeNavenec (2013), critical theorists today are required to look backward to move forward pertaining to meta-narratives. According to Schmitt (2017), meta-narrative in critical theory particularly in Postmodernism are narratives concerning descriptions of historical meaning, experience, or knowledge that proposes a society's legitimation through the anticipated completion of an unrealized master (or dominant) idea pertaining to a solution for a given phenomenon.

In this study, some elements holding the meaning from a critical point of view were employed to express the dominant idea that brings a broad consensus on the educators' abilities to cope with managing the learner-on-educator violence within school environments.

These dominant idea(s) are discussed later in the next chapter, i.e., Chapter 6, on the research findings. Thus, in the South African context of critical theory, it is critical to entrench the approach on providing a reflective assessment and critical view of society against educators, and the culture that defines teaching and learning in a typical South African school. The review of these epistemological directions was important in order to reveal and ground data in the real sense of a Grounded Theory, which helped to understand the learner-on-educator violence problem at schools (Modiba, 2016).

As a novice, the researcher associates more with the Constructivist researchers' perspective of reality, hence the view of knowledge (or the epistemological positioning of the researcher) suits more closely within a Constructivist understanding. The researcher situated himself in the study within a Constructivist view of what knowledge is (Creswell, 2014). Thus, the researcher acknowledged that a researcher may formulate own meaning and making sense of meaning through participants' experiences in the research process, as an essential and fundamental part of the research process.

This study is not situated on the supposition that, there was existence of some independency in relation to the truth that could be learned objectively. It was orientated on the presupposition and perception of subjectivity within the Constructivist Paradigm, implying it was orientated on a subjective meaning of constructive engagements between the researcher and the participants (Miles et al., 2013).

Finally, sections above on ontological and epistemological positions were given much attention and detail. This was deemed necessary because of the suggestion by Charmaz (2015), pertaining to what the researcher needed to understand and achieve, especially that which counted as real knowledge in the world. Thus, it was deemed crucial in helping and shaping the researcher's view of the social world, the design of the study and the methods of analysis of the findings in the social world setting. The researcher argues that this built-in level of logical dependability and suitability of the Grounded Theory would work expeditiously to exhibit the desired countering theory to avert the impasse of the learner-on-educator violence.

The next section is a description of the research approach that was chosen for this study.

5.2.3 Research Approach

This study used a qualitative research approach primarily located within Grounded Theory. Grounded Theory approach is an inductive technique of research in which a researcher methodically creates and advances a theory from the process of data collection and analysis (Khanyi, 2013). In this study, the researcher used the Charmaz's Constructivist Approach to Grounded Theory because of its nature of placing importance on the views, principles, beliefs, emotional state and norms of participants as these elements strengthen the technique of inquiry (Charmaz, 2014).

The Grounded Theory approach accommodated the multiple realities that are socially constructed, namely, by educators pertaining to the violence against them; thus, Grounded Theory approach as a qualitative research approach was used to locate the researcher's focus on a naturalistic way of data creation (Creswell, 2014). The researcher envisioned gaining multiple realities on the phenomenon of learner-on-educator violence hence the Grounded Theory approach offered the researcher with the opportunity of developing a new and innovative theory that could do this (Miller, 2016). Thus, the Grounded Theory approach was applied to address educators on coping and managing strategies in combating the challenge of the violence against them through solutions that emerged from the data (Charmaz, 2014). As a tried and tested method, the Grounded Theory approach's strengths, application and reasons for its choice were alluded to in details in Chapter 2 of this study.

5.2.4 Research Design

In order to answer the research questions, the researcher used a qualitative research using Grounded Theory design. According to Maxwell and Chimiel (2014), 'Research Design' refers to all the decisions that the researcher employs when planning his or her empirical investigation. Merriam et al. (2016), define Research Design as a set of trivial, determined formulations from which the researcher can select and develop a research plan or blueprint for their envisioned research objectives. While Creswell (2014) defines it as the whole process of research from conceptualizing a problem to developing research questions, designing data collection strategies, data analysis, data interpretation and writing the final research report.

Different Research Designs were identified which are frequently used and could be used to design a qualitative research blueprint (Creswell, 2014). According to Creswell and Poth (2016), there are five Research Designs that a researcher may choose from to use in conducting an interpretive qualitative research, namely, the Narrative Research, Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, Ethnography and Case Study. These different types of Research Designs differ depending on the aim of the research, research questions, skills and resources available to a researcher (Evans & Lewis, 2018).

The Narrative Research Design has various forms (Evans et al., 2018). It makes use of diverse systematic procedures and is entrenched in different social and humanities disciplines (Creswell et al., 2016). The narrative research deals with writing of reports and documenting individuals' life stories, history or experiences (Evans et al., 2018). Given its complicated processes and the characteristics, the narrative Research Design is a challenging approach to use (Creswell et al., 2016). The researcher is required to collect extensive evidence about participants, and is obligatory to have a concise consideration of the context of each individual participant's life (Gray, 2014). According to Lichtman (2011), it takes a special profound judgement to identify from the source material collected of the unique stories investigated that define the individual's unique experiences.

Phenomenological Research Design refers to the several meanings individuals assign to their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon (Creswell et al., 2016). It focuses on describing what all participants have mutually, as they experience a phenomenon. For example, the educators have induced fear because of gangster activities at schools. The primary purpose of phenomenology is to decrease individual experiences of a phenomenon to a description of the worldview principle, for example, understanding the nature of and effects of school violence (Modiba, 2016). Thus, qualitative researchers identify a phenomenon as a thing or something informing human experience. This human experience may be phenomena such as anxiety because of learner fear at school, resentment, misery and undergoing learner physical abuse (Neuendorf, 2016).

Grounded Theory Research Design moves over and above the explaining of the human experience to *generating or discovering a theory* that gives rise to a theoretical analytical representation of a process that addresses the phenomenon under exploration (Olsen et al., 2015). In this regard, participants in the study would all have experienced the process, and the advancement of the theory could benefit in explaining a practice or providing a framework for further research (Willig, 2016). For example, in this study, the considered conception was that the theory advancement would not originate outside a special place but rather would be generated and be grounded in the data provided by participants who have experienced the process of learner-on-teacher violence as challenge (Charmaz, 2014).

Hence, Grounded Theory is a qualitative Research Design in which the inquirer creates a general description or theory of the process, action, or dealings shaped by the interpretations of a number of participants (Charmaz, 2014). As a substitute of embracing studying a single process or primary classification of a phenomenon as in the Strauss and Corbin approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Charmaz promoted a Social Constructivist perception that put weight on various local worlds, multiple realities, and the complexities of specific worlds, opinions, and engagements (Charmaz, 2014). The usefulness of Grounded Theory and approach was explained in details in Chapter 2 of this study.

An *ethnography* focuses on an entire culture-sharing group (Cohen et al., 2011). Occasionally this cultural group may be small, for example, a few educators; but typically, it is large, if including several individuals who intermingle over time, for example, educators in the whole school (Evans et al., 2018). In short, ethnography is a qualitative design in which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned forms of values, behaviours, beliefs, and the language of the culture-sharing group (Kraus, 2019). Thus, ethnography is a way of studying a culture-sharing group and the final written product of that research (McCall, 2013). As a process, ethnography embroils protracted annotations of the group, most often through participant observation in which the researcher is absorbed with on the day-to-day lives of the individuals, and the researcher notes, discerns and interviews the group participants (Kraus, 2019).

Thus, concisely, ethnographers study the significance of the behaviour, the language, and the relations among members of the culture-sharing group.

Lastly, researchers can implement in their studies *Case Study as a Research Design*. According to Merriam et al. (2016), a Case Study is regarded as an exploration and deep analysis of a circumscribed system that could be bound by time or place over a given period. More explanation on multi Case Studies is given under section 5.3. Underneath is the breakdown of the Research Design in a diagrammatical layout:

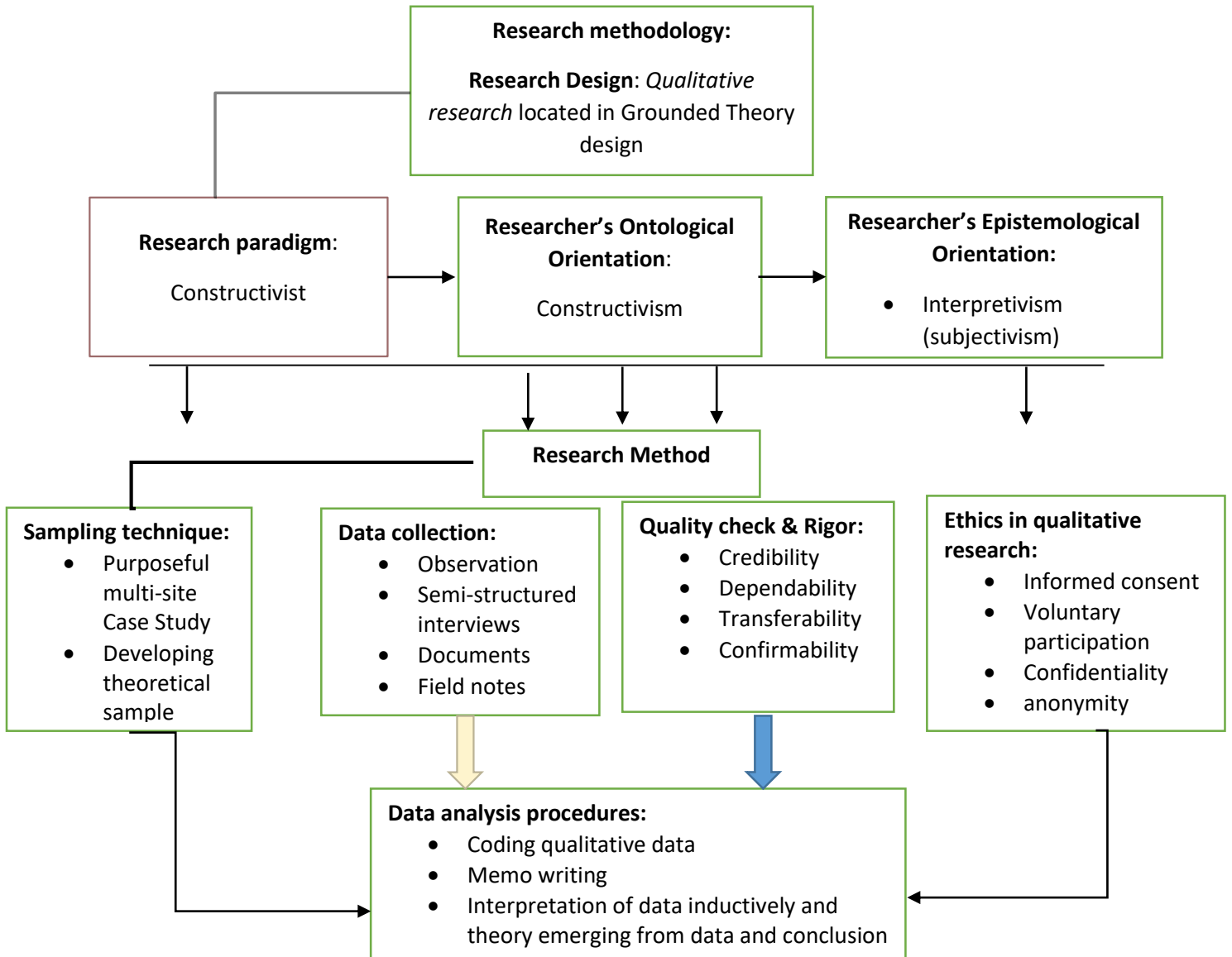


Figure 5.1: Research Design Breakdown

5.2.5 Summary

In this section, the researcher firstly discussed the research paradigms as used in educational research in general and that which underpinned this study based on the Grounded Theory approach. The term ‘paradigm’ was defined as that which organizes how the researcher understands reality (i.e., ontology), the nature of knowledge, the relationship between the knower and what is to be known (i.e., epistemology). A brief discussion of the Constructivist Research Paradigm was presented. This paradigm was identified as that which correctly frames and relates precisely to this study. Lastly, a brief discussion Research Design was described.

The next section discusses the use and significance of multiple site Case Studies particularly pertaining to this study.

5. 3 Multi-Site Case Studies in Empirical Investigation

5.3.1 Introduction

Case Study Research Design embraces the study of a problem explored through one or more cases within a restricted system or context (McCall, 2013). According to Creswell et al. (2016), Case Study research is a qualitative Research Design in which a researcher explores a bounded system or case or multiple-bounded systems or cases over a period of time, which gets concluded through exhaustive, in-depth data collection strategy that includes multiple sources of information, for example, observations, interviews, audio-visual material, documents, reports, case description and case-built themes.

Although this study employed the Grounded Theory design, it borrowed some of the multi-site Case Study principles for data collection in order to have an exhaustive bounded context explored pertaining to the numerous challenging violent encounters educators' experience. This required a multi-site Case Study context in order to understand the origins of the violent encounters, their severity and influence from a point of view of a larger number of participants. This technique is opposed to a single common challenge that could be understood and be studied within a single site (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013; Maxwell et al., 2014). Case Study research has a long, illustrious history across various fields (Creswell et al., 2016). For example, Case Study approach is used by social scientists because of its reputational attribute in psychology (Merriam et al., 2016). Miller (2016) agrees with Merriam et al., (2016) that medicine uses Case Studies mostly in the case of analysis of a problem. It could also be applied in law, especially pertaining to case law, and in political science in relation to case reports (Creswell et al., 2016). There are various types of Case Study Research Designs (Creswell et al., 2016). These various types are demarcated through identifying the size of the restricted or bounded case (Miller, 2016). For example, the researcher must establish whether the case implicates one person, a number of people, a group, or an entire activity (Creswell et al., 2016).

In this study, a number of individual educators in different schools were involved hence the researcher employed the multi-site Case Study for data collection. Case Study types could also be delineated in relation to the researcher's purpose of the case analysis (Merriam et al., 2016). Three distinct Case Study types could be used depending on the intent of the researcher. These are, namely, the single instrumental Case Study, the collective or multiple Case Study, and the intrinsic Case Study (Merriam et al., 2016). According to Miller (2016), in the single instrumental Case Study, the inquirer focuses on a problem or concern, and then chooses one bounded case to explain this issue. In a collective Case Study (or multiple Case Study), the researcher selects one problem or concern, but employs selected multiple Case Studies to elucidate the issue at hand (Creswell et al., 2016). The researcher could choose to study issues from various research sites or multiple issues within a single site. Often times researchers purposefully selects multiple cases to illustrate various perceptions on the issue (Merriam et al., 2016).

The next section explains the significance of employing the multiple site Case Study for this study.

5.3.2 The Significance of Multiple Site Case Studies for this Study

This study was a Grounded Theory Research Design, however, the researcher used an exploratory multiple-site Case Study of four schools in order to compensate for the saturation point requirements of Grounded Theory studies (Merriam et al., 2016). The exploration of educators' experiences of how violence affects them was conducted in order to develop a model pertaining to the coping and management of the problem of violence against educators at school, which ultimately was envisioned to offer countering strategies to the learner-on-educator negative behaviours that have adverse effects on educators' lives.

The study used a multiple-site Case Study as opposed to a single-site Case Study because the multiple-site Case Study has the ability to allow the researcher to acquire a better and deep understanding of the social concern under exploration (Merriam et al., 2016). The main purpose of the research was never to oversimplify the answers to the research questions but to explore deeper understanding of the influence of learner-on-educator violence on educators' teaching practices based on multiple realities (Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

For this study, a multi-site Case Study is one technique, which was able to provide such realities. Furthermore, Case Studies allow researchers to pose probing and penetrative questions during information gathering (Creswell et al., 2016). In this study, this led to a better understanding and enhanced discernment of participants' perceptions regarding the challenges they face in the wake of their violent encounters.

Thus, Ryan (2018) posits that qualitative researchers are concerned about the meaning participants provide to their life experiences, how they construct their worlds and what importance they ascribe to their experiences. According to Schmitt (2017), Constructivist researchers plunge themselves deep in the activities of the participants in order to acquire and interpret an intimate acquaintance with their social worlds and to gaze at patterns formed in the participants' lives, which includes words they speak and their entire undertakings within the context of their involvements in the construction of knowledge. In addition, the researcher believed using the multiple-site Case Study would better represent the racial demographics of the Gert Sibande Region in Mpumalanga where all of the research sites are situated. This pertained to a careful consideration of the interpretive nature of the exploration and positioning the study within the political, social and cultural context of the research aims, the participants and particularly the readers of the study (Evans et al., 2018).

5.4 Using Grounded Theory Approach Strategies for Theory Construction

5.4.1 Introduction

As alluded to in the earlier sections of this chapter that the researcher used the Charmaz's Constructivist Approach to Grounded Theory for reasons that the approach offered attractive features such as being flexible in its organization (Charmaz, 2014). The researcher relied on the Charmaz's procedure because of its systematic approach, which was helpful in relation to learning about, and applying Grounded Theory research in this study (Charmaz, 2014; Charmaz, 2015). According to Charmaz (2015), Grounded Theory can be integrated flexibly with existing theories but completely keeping in mind with the spirit of Grounded Theory. This means every researcher must adapt the approach to suit his or her specific research purpose. This infers also that every researcher generates his or her own version of Grounded Theory methodology in the process of conducting a study (Brannan, Dumsha & Yens, 2013).

Engward (2013) argues that constructing a theory concerning multidimensional social circumstances involves at least two things from the researcher. First, it needs a clear picture of the interactions of persons, both at the level of interaction and of what motivated the interaction. Thus, that picture can surface only through the application of close observational procedures.

Second, it needs that the theoretical work explains why the individuals' interactions yield the forms that are observed during the application of the procedures (Engward, 2013). Pertaining to the first task, the researcher arranged to capture participants' views along with rich information of a locally bound location (Brannan et al., 2013). For this study, pertaining to the second aspect, the researcher looked at patterns through the various data gathering sites and data types in order to explore deeper meaning rather than merely describing everything narratively (Brannan et al., 2013). According to Charmaz (2014), at this stage the researcher is permitted to follow intuitions or deductions established from themes resultant from the data; and at other times the researcher could be permissible to openly adopt alerting concepts or if not, just consider evidences from an existing theory (Gray, 2014: Charmaz, 2014).

The strain elaborate in the form of such theoretical work outweighs pertinently the themes resultant from the data and seasoned Grounded Theorists, who at a similar stage, might progressively draw on existing theories to help them understand the multidimensional social situation the researcher is exploring (Brannan et al., 2013; Charmaz, 2015). For this study, the researcher was able to employ this wisdom during this stage of forming concepts for educators' coping mechanisms.

Grounded Theory is a respectable Research Design to use, especially when a theory does not exist to explain a process (Charmaz et al., 2016). There is currently no theory, which clearly explains to educators how to cope with and manage the learner-on-educator violence against them. Although the Department of Basic Education has initiated a framework to be used in schools by educators, at the time of conducting this study, the framework was incomplete and awaiting approval because it was still in a draft format and yet to proceed to public comments. The researcher acknowledge the establishment of such a framework, which addresses educators on handling the learner-on-educator violence. However, as revealed in Chapter 4 of this study, the framework in relation to supporting the plight of educators in coping with and managing

the violence against them is a step in the right direction in countering learner-on-educator violence.

5.4.2 Grounded Theory Principles in Conducting this Research

This study intended to understand experiences and perceptions of educators on the learner-on-educator violence and evaluating the influence of learner-on-educator violence on educators' teaching practices. Grounded Theory facilitated the exploration of the strategies educators employ to cope with and manage the learner-on-educator violence and how these unique set of coping skills could be used to counter the violence against them at school. The Grounded Theory design particularly permitted the researcher to understand and explain the phenomenon through the theoretical development processes leading to the creation of a new emerging theory that could be useful to educators at schools. The research questions, which the researcher asked the participants, were focused on understanding how educators experience learner-on-educator violence at schools.

The researcher carefully reflected upon the experiences of educators who had had an incident or encounter of a violent nature. According to Collins (2011), experiences following an incident are the most important basis in the formulation of a suitable theory offering a countering effect. Thus, the researcher focused on involvements immediately following an incident using probing questions, which included, for example, what was your experience, what do you think caused it, what was its major consequence in your mental/physical state? What strategy did you apply to manage and cope with the situation? The researcher further looked for a specified interaction concern, emerging from the main situation, which influenced the response strategy of the educator. Thus, the researcher wanted to be consistent with the key Grounded Theory principle, which necessitated that specifying theoretical orientation must be generated from first-hand accounts of the theoretical participants (Charmaz, 2014), which meant that, in this case, other than to understand how the educators interacted and responded to the incident, focus be on the application of the coping strategy.

5.4.3 Summary

To this end, the researcher used Grounded Theory principles and developed a theory that explained in details how educators' experience the learner-on-educator violence within school environments. Furthermore, this section explained how the researcher applied the Grounded Theory techniques in order to extract from educators' experiences what can reduce or alleviate the problem of learners who react violently against educators. Further explanations are presented in details in Chapter 6 of this study.

5.5 The Role of the Researcher in Qualitative Research

The researcher is the leading and significant thespian in qualitative research located in Grounded Theory approach (Merriam et al., 2016). Thus, the realization of the research aims, the abilities and the knowledge of the researcher cannot be overemphasized (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the researcher recognized the growing concern of the learner-on-educator violence and explored the response of researchers to this issue both locally and internationally from a literature review standpoint. A gap in literature was identified that there was no theory that explained and directly addressed the learner-on-educator violence in South Africa. To this end, a proposal to investigate the problem was drawn.

The overall purpose was to determine and construct a theory to either raise responsiveness or arouse a need for further research that addressed the problem of violence against educators at schools. The researcher was thus viewed as both initiator and author because of the role he played in gathering and analysing data (Corbin et al., 2014). Charmaz (2014) agrees that as much as the researcher is perceived an initiator and author in a research study, it is imperative that the researcher simultaneously collects and analyses data through the pursuit of emergent themes in early data analysis. Thus, the researcher must ascertain the basic social processes within the data and inductively construct abstract categories that explain and make sense of these processes (Charmaz, 2014). Furthermore, in the Grounded Theory approach, the researcher must give a sample that refines the categories through comparative processes; and integrates categories into a theoretical framework that postulates situational settings and consequences of the processes being explored.

In this study, the researcher assumes an active agent role through the interaction with participants in the collection of data (Willig, 2016). If the researcher's skills and ability to collect data were lacking, the information would have misled readers and interested stakeholders to this study. Thus, the researcher was intact with the research participants. The researcher, as an initiator and author, had to learn how to be well organized, take criticism and being a subjective Constructivist through the obtained data (Kraus, 2019). This necessitated that the researcher showed good personal ethics, belief systems and values to safeguard that the study was conducted with integrity (Kotzee, 2018). The researcher provided the guiding principles as suggested by Charmaz (2014), to make sure those ethical considerations were well observed, as systematically as possible.

5.6 Research sites and participants

5.6.1 Introduction

This study was about understanding experiences and perceptions of educators on the learner-on-educator violence and evaluating the influence of the learner-on-educator violence challenge on educators' teaching practices. To achieve this aim of the study, the population for the study had to be carefully considered.

The sections that follow describe the process of locating the research pertaining to the selection of research sites, the background of participants and process of participant participation and the sampling procedure used in this study.

5.6.2 Selection of research sites

This study was carried out at Gert Sibande District in the Mpumalanga Province. The province is divided into four *political* demarcated administrative districts, which are, namely, Gert Sibande, Ehlanzeni, Nkangala and Bohlabela. For educational matters and administration, similar demarcated administrative districts are used by the Department of Education. As a former teacher, the researcher identified four prospective schools where the study could be carried out using his knowledge of the schools in the Gert Sibande District. Pre-selection meetings were held under strict requirements of the Covid-19 regulations and the researcher obtained endorsements from the principals of the four schools through direct consultation with them.

In the pre-selection meetings, the researcher disclosed to each principal the intended aims and objectives of the study and appraised the appropriateness of their schools as suitable research sites for the study. The participating schools were located within a radius of ± 23 km from the lodge where the researcher lived for the duration of the research sites visits. For research sites selection, the researcher used the pre-selection criteria guideline indicated on Section 1.6.2 of Chapter 1. The four schools met all of the researcher's criteria; three of the schools were thus classified as low-income schools while one school was categorized as a middle-income school.

The entire process involved the researcher presenting the research proposal; answering questions posed during the pre-selection meetings; providing copies of an Information Sheet that gave background of the research aims and objectives; as well as addressing the research ethical issues. The distributing out of an Information Sheet that highlighted the importance of the study and Consent Form for voluntary participation, helped in building the groundwork of trust, confidence and sense of expectation with the schools. During the initial consultation with School Principals, the researcher made an effort to launch a bond of trust although the focus was mainly on aspects of mutual individuality, such as the researcher's role, educator roles and the role of the principal. This helped the researcher in preparing the entire groundwork pertaining to acquiring appropriate data for the study. Due to the difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, this process was repeated once more during the virtual interview sessions held with the research participants.

5.6.3 Background and selection of participants for this study

This study is a qualitative research located within a Grounded Theory approach. It sought to generate a theory on addressing the learner-on-educator violence through providing coping and management strategies that could reduce this school-violence issue. All participants were qualified educators and were educators at their particular schools. In the South Africa context, a qualified educator is a person who has completed and passed Matric or Grade 12, obtained a three-year teaching diploma at a recognized college or university and is registered officially so with the South African Council for Educators (DBE, 2015).

The Employment of Educators Act of 1998 defines an educator as any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional educational services, including professional therapy and education psychological services at any public school or Further Education and Training institution, departmental office or Adult Basic Education Centre (DBE, 2015). Such a person must have been appointed in a post on any educator establishment under the same Act (DBE, 2015).

Thus, for this study, all participating educators and principals were considered qualified in their respective subject areas and thus eligible to participate in this study according to the criteria of participation as set out by the researcher in section 1.6.2 of Chapter 1.

According to Trotter (2012), a research participant is defined as an individual who is articulate, coherent, and reflective and is willing to share information with the interviewer. Newington and Metcalfe (2014) maintain that novice Grounded Theorists should keep participant selection in mind as this could decide the quality of a research and provision of an information rich research process. The 'willing' participants must be willing to be interviewed (Creswell et al., 2016). In this study, the participants and the interviewer worked collaboratively and participants were willing to be interviewed; furthermore, the interviewer treated them with integrity (Trotter, 2012). Participants were permitted to select the time and location of the interview and were sometimes allowed during the interviews, to lead the conversation to make them feel they were part of the study solutions (Newington et al., 2014).

5.6.4 Inclusion of participants in the study

In this study, educators who are victims of different forms of violence by learners were approached to be included as research participants and were interviewed. The participants were those who had been exposed to different incidents of school violence either at school or in the vicinity of the school during their teaching career. Participants selected were educators with at least five years of teaching experience, and had served at least three years or more at their specific schools. Experienced educators were envisaged to have accrued some effective strategies of coping with the violence directed at them by learners at school. Furthermore, owing to their veteran thought patterns and attitudes, their experience allowed the researcher to construct an appropriate counteracting model to violence against educators.

Thus, educators interviewed were teaching at schools where different forms of violence had previously occurred and have been experienced by these educators.

5.7. Population and sampling for the study

According to Qureshi (2018), sampling is the process where the researcher acquires data from a smaller group or subgroup of the entire population so that the knowledge acquired become demonstrative of the population studied. In this study, the researcher employed Purposive Sampling in selecting the research participants. Creswell (2014) assert that Purposive Sampling is one of the forms of Non-Probability Sampling or qualitative sample that depend completely on the subjective decisions and conclusions of the researcher for the reason that such a sample represents behaviours and characteristics of the population. The use of Purposive Sampling in studying how educators' experienced learner-on-educator violence at the selected schools was mostly informed by the context that the researcher perceived these educators in those schools as rich-information sources for the study (Newington & Metcalfe, 2014). Furthermore, "One cannot inquire the universe and everything, at every place, all the time" (Qureshi, 2018).

To uphold focus, qualitative researchers design a sampling model at the commencement of their research study channelled by their research questions in order to address aspects such as selection of participants and where to find them (Tracy, 2013). Merriam et al., (2016) define a sampling model as an outline within which the sampling take place, including the number and types of sampling outlines and the sample size. Qualitative researchers propose the sampling blueprint in advance so that the sampling guideline and the abstractly designated population are synchronized to each other moving towards efficacious conclusions of research (Qureshi, 2018). While Grounded Theorists do not require a sampling model to be organized upfront rather they employ theoretical sampling which leads them towards theoretical saturation thus a successful conclusion of sampling phase is accomplished (Trotter, 2012). However, with novice Grounded Theorists it is required for them to plan-ahead a sampling model in order to keep in their mind focus concerning the steps they are required to proceed to, that guide them towards theoretical saturation (Chun Tie, Birks & Francis, 2019). Thus, in this study, the researcher purposively picked participants who fell within the 30-60-year age range. The researcher considered the retirement age for educators in South Africa (i.e., 60 years).

Thus, the given ultimate age range of participants were found appropriate for inclusion in the sample with the at-least-30-year age restriction pertaining to the assumption that, the age of 30 would provide enough experience to comment on the phenomenon of study. The findings were generalised based on the conceptual power of the representative sample (Trotter, 2012). Descriptions that appeared to be true and real-life reflection were reflected upon and given priority pertaining to formation of themes. During the initial stage of this study, 20 educators participated in the study where five educators (one School Principal and four post level one educators), were selected from each of the four schools. In a Grounded Theory study, the sample size ranges from 6 to 35 participants (Boddy, 2016). Charmaz (2014) also maintained that a very small sample can yield a study of lasting impact and the aspects that have influence on this would be the quality of the interviews and the deepness of the analysis. Thus, the total number of participants who took part in this study was finally 17 (n=17) owing to three of the research participants passing away during the course of the study. The School Principals were highly involved and helpful during the identification phase of the participants who participated in the study.

5.8 Data collection Instruments

5.8.1 Introduction

According to Newington et al. (2014), data collection is viewed as a process of building a body of knowledge which aims at bridging the knowledge gap and to improve practice. In this study, the researcher developed a Broad Conceptual Framework during the initial stage of data gathering which showed the key questions posed by the study and their inter-relationships pertaining to answering the main research question. Either a conceptual framework maps out graphically or in description ways, the key aspects to be explored by specifying the researcher's map of the environmental territory being probed (McCall, 2013). Thus, in this study the environmental territory being probed were the daily interactions of educators with members of the school community, especially their interaction with the learners they teach.

Hence, for this study, it meant that the conceptual framework represented a general guide of framing and primarily identifying boundaries of the study, while giving the researcher some level of flexibility pertaining to the data collection strategy (Charmaz, 2014; Kraus, 2019). Demarcations were made in relation to data sets as indicated on the Diagram 5.2 below.

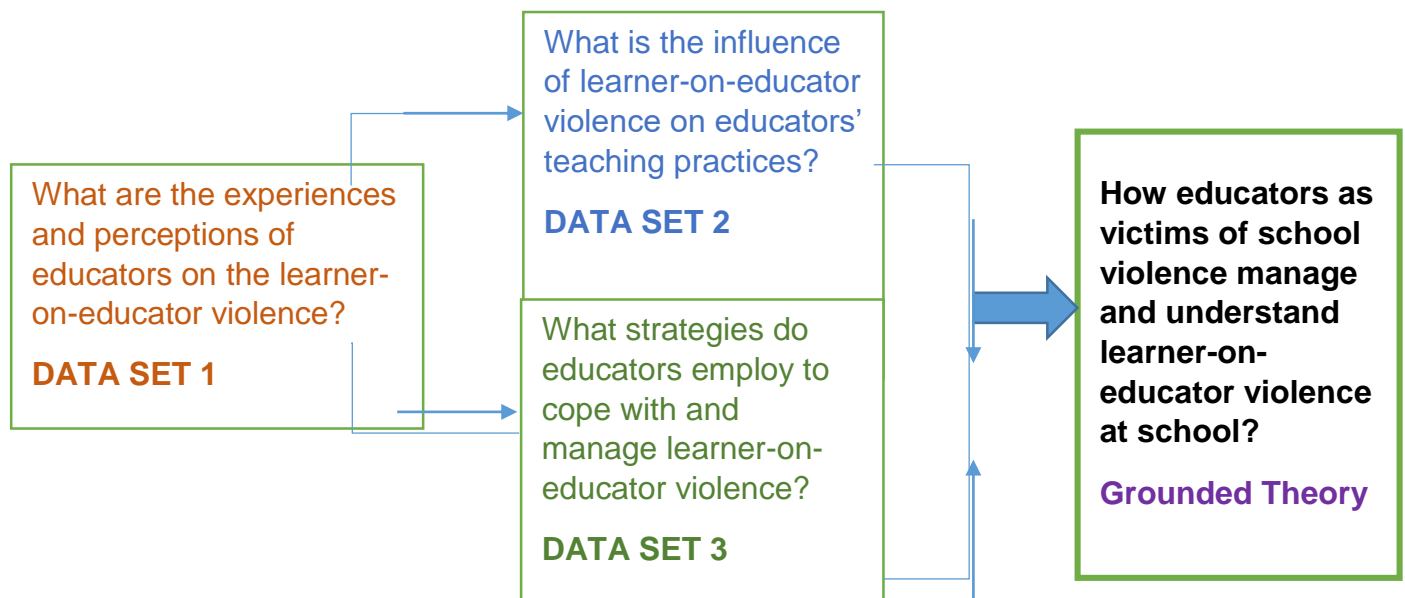


Figure 5.2: Broad Conceptual Framework (*adapted from Collet, 2013*)

The researcher's prior knowledge and literature review of Chapters Three and Four reinforced the researcher's data generation strategies during the construction stages of the study's theoretical sensitivity (Maxwell & Chimiel, 2014). Thus, this proved acceptable and fitted well with a Grounded Theory approach, which assert that, the ability to capture meaning in new understandings of a foreseeable process and patterns of behaviour improved the quality of a research (Charmaz et al., 2016). As indicated in Diagram 5.2 above, the data sets linked fruitfully to the common categories of analysis that were used for creating the Grounded Theory, and these focused on experiences and perceptions (Data Set 1), the influence of learner-on-educator violence (Data Set 2) and strategies educators employ to cope with and manage learner-on-educator violence (Data Set 3).

In this study, the researcher's search for understanding of the participants' subjective viewpoints on their daily routine lived experiences with the phenomenon decided the specific selection of the data collection techniques, namely, the semi-structured interviews and observations as the main data gathering techniques used. The researcher also employed document analysis and made use of field notes as supplementary data collection methods. The main data collection methods (semi-structured interviews and observations) helped the researcher to intermingle with educators at their individual schools in enquiring how they understood and attached

meaning to their experiences that influenced their responses to learner-on-educator violence at school.

5.8.2 Carrying out a qualitative research under lockdown Guidelines: A practical and ethical consideration

The Covid-19 catastrophe had caused a great deal of upset for researchers; and every researcher around the world was learning how to work more effectively distantly (Moises, 2020). Covid-19 had also affected the means by which conducting the research process may be carried out proficiently. For example, some researchers even opted to suspend data collection or re-designed their data collection strategy to take into consideration their countries' national Covid-19 protocols, which included social distancing, sanitising and wearing of protective masks (Dodds & Hess, 2020). On the other hand, most qualitative research methodology naturally depends on face-to-face interaction for data collection through interviews, focus groups and fieldwork (Azzari & Baker, 2020).

However, there are numerous techniques researchers could adopt for data collection, for example, qualitative data online, virtual face-to-face interviews through Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Skype. More broadly, these techniques are categorized into data generation techniques, wherein the researcher generates data himself/herself and data sampling techniques, in which the researcher collects texts that are already available (Batat, 2020).

In this study, for data generation, the researcher had to make some modifications in instances where a participant was difficult to reach because of self-isolation in following doctor's orders of quarantine (self-isolation) requirements for individuals who had contacted the Coronavirus. The researcher employed the commonly used video calling app Zoom and the use of text-based instant messaging, namely, WhatsApp, and these were mainly used as the closest impersonation of the face-to-face interview virtually.

A few glitches, such as participants not being able to use the technology or having a poor WIFI connection, were experienced. In this case, the researcher then resorted to the WhatsApp video calling technique as a close substitute to the Zoom video-calling interviewing process and this allowed data to be collected minus the social distancing issues that ensured the Covid-19 protocols are kept and fully observed.

In addition, participants were encouraged to type their responses pertaining to open-ended questions as a means of providing more and deeper information on aspects not revealed by the direct interview process. Participants were given the freedom to do that even after the interview was long completed. This helped in furnishing any information left out during the virtual interview with the participant.

In the next sections, the researcher discusses the methods of data generation, namely, semi-structured interviews, observations, documents review and field notes.

5.8.3 Virtual semi-structured Interviews

For this study, virtual in-depth semi-structured interviews were used to collect descriptive data in the participants' specific own words (Creswell, 2014). Evans et al., (2018) assert that interviews are a very flexible instrument providing an extensive choice pertaining to their usage. Interviews may provide a richer and broader information than other techniques of data collection (Roulston, 2016). Furthermore, interviews are specifically suitable when qualitative data are needed (Trotter, 2012). Interviews could also be employed for topics of both broad and explicit nature in the provision of a truthful groundwork for very delicate research areas (Boddy 2016).

The researcher believed that the violence against educators by their learners at schools was a delicate matter and thus for this study, semi-structured interviews were virtually employed to collect data of a sensitive nature. The researcher spent between 4 to 6 days at each research site. This gave the researcher the advantage of simultaneously spending some time for to make important observations and conducting interviews. The interviews were spread between day 1 (Monday) and day 6 (Saturday). Saturdays were commonly used for participants who requested to be interviewed at the private comfort of their homes because of the Covid-19 restrictions. To do so, the researcher would arrange in advance with those participants. The in-depth semi-structure interviews exposed practices and skills by which educators handled the persistent problem of learner-on-educator violence, and how these skills and techniques could be transferred to everyday positive behaviours in creating the opportunity to address meaningfully the concern of educator vulnerability to the learners they teach. These techniques and skills are discussed in Chapter 6.

The semi-structured interviews were also employed virtually with the School Principals of the four schools in order to be consistent in data creation. The researcher noted that even though the virtual interviews were time consuming, required vigilance and firm groundwork, occasions for profound and exhaustive probing were created. Pertaining to this study, virtual interviews permitted the researcher to experience a different insightful interaction with educators who faced and coped with the problems of learner-on-educator violence, particularly at an individual level. An opportunity to question educators on their perceptions and experiences about the learner-on-educator violence wrought the most important component of the interviews that, unlike questionnaires, virtual interviews permitted immediate follow-up questions, which prompted interesting participants' responses, affirming what Creswell et al., (2016) expressed about the benefit of interview adaptableness.

The researcher had arranged a common interview schedule that safeguarded constancy in the main questions and the way these were asked the interviewees. On average, each interview continued and lasted for about forty-five minutes. The researcher made use of Zoom-conversation voice recorder and the permission to do so was sought from the participants during the initial stage of establishing rapport. The Zoom-conversation voice recorder was a means for the interviewer to sort out the interviewees' wording against the actual meaning of their statements made during the virtual interview. Evans et al. (2018), who agree with Roulston (2016), submit that audio recording of interviews safeguards covering the totality of the verbal communication through provision of information dependability checks.

The researcher pointed out and guaranteed the participants that the recordings were merely for the researcher's simplicity of backup processes, and that these would be held in safety at the University of South Africa researcher's repository, and would be demolished after a period of five years.

The participants were assured of strict confidentiality and anonymity during and after the writing process. For some sites, second rounds of virtual interviews were held by the researcher with participants to authenticate the accuracy of the initial virtual interview. The researcher transcribed information from interviews straightaway afterward once the interviews were completed, and the interviewees' views were

checked through reading the transcriptions for accuracy and meticulousness of matters discussed.

5.8.4 Observations

Biaett (2018) posits that 'observation' is a great data gathering technique that is critical for the detailed collection of data for rebuilding and renewal efforts in the process of bringing order, whereas Lambert (2019) explains that 'participant observation' is defined as having an essential role to all research approaches. According to Fathi-Najafi and Latifnejad-Roudsari (2020), 'observation' is a data collection method wherein the researcher participates in the task of observing an individual or institution. Thus, Grounded Theory is a unique research method that could be employed to embed theory creation from observations (Lambert, 2019).

In this study, the researcher came to know more about the use of 'observations' in Grounded Theory research approach when attending the University of South Africa's Online Accelerated Postgraduate Support Programme, particularly its use in observing participants. The explanation received from the facilitators of the programme appealed to the researcher hence the choice of using observation as one of the data gathering strategies for this study.

Observations normally entail meticulous symbolization of particular human actions or behaviours, including reactions to their physical settings; actual happenings; and the contexts surrounding the happenings and the notable reactions, thus observation includes the process of witnessing and discerning a person's behaviour (Rahmani & Leifels, 2018). In observations, a researcher never probes individuals on their understandings, their feelings or attitudes but attentively note what participants do and pay attention to what they speak (Roulston, 2016). When observing, a researcher may decide to become a *participant observer*, which implies being part of the study sceneries (Lambert, 2019). Otherwise, the researcher could become a *non-participant observer*, entailing that the researcher does not become part of the study sceneries. Qureshi (2018) asserts that *non-participant observers* investigate from a distance the individuals' doings under exploration.

In this study, the researcher assumed a *non-participant observer* status. This necessitated that the researcher does not interfere or disrupt the study sceneries as far as possible, but ensuring that data gathering was as accurate as possible. Due the Covid-19 pandemic, the researcher had to do modifications with observations under strict Covid-19 rules. Inside the school premises, the researcher was required to practice social distancing, wearing of a mask and making sure there was little or no direct contact with any of the participant educators. In assuming the non-participant observer status, the researcher clearly explained to the research participants that they ought to disregard his being there at the schools as far as possibly can. The researcher had already established friendly working relations with the participants during pre-selection meetings, and they were cooperative throughout the study (Qureshi, 2018). Merriam et al., (2016) also agree that, as a non-participant observer it is important that the researcher does not interfere or disturb the study settings in cases of the investigation of issues that those participants could be unwilling to have a dialogue over.

The researcher understood from the start that it could be difficult, particularly for the School Principals as participants in finding it easy to generously deliberate on concerns of violence at their schools. The researcher anticipated that such reactions from School Principals could distract the study aims in some way because of fears concerning their school's public image concerns.

The researcher was aware that they might attempt to depict their schools as having manageable levels of violence and having everything under control. Indeed, some School Principals went on to interpret their situations as manageable as anticipated by the researcher. However, with close observations the situation proved otherwise. It was useful to the researcher for determining whether what was verbally conveyed illustrated a relationship with the observed practical situation at the schools.

Observations therefore allowed the researcher to succeed in gathering data on non-verbal gestures and messages. Thus, observations allowed the researcher to acquire some first-hand experiences with the participants (Roulet, Gill, Stenger & Gill, 2017).

In this study, the researcher attended one meeting instead of two, of the School Safety and Security Committee for each of the four schools. The reduction in the originally planned number of meetings came as a direct result of the strict Covid-19 rules.

The length of the researcher's observations time spent at each site was determined by the time agreed upon with the School Principal and members of the School Safety and Security Committee. The researcher chose to be in the meetings for the whole duration that was set for that particular day. This was done to take advantage of fully observing and be able to correctly read how such meetings were held in relation to how the members of the School Safety and Security Committee come to resolve issues. The researcher paid attention to participants' verbal articulations and also observed what participants were doing. Extensive notes on what was verbally articulated by participants were written, stating detailed accounts of who said what, and the duration of the deliberations. The researcher also took note of the meeting-seating plans of the different School Safety and Security Committees, their language tone when speaking in turns and the contributions made by each member during the meeting. The researcher found this as an essential aspect pertaining to power relations amongst the meeting participants.

In addition, the researcher noted and observed the following aspects: involvement of stakeholder-members individually, predominance of violence discussions during those meetings, carefully spotting the instigators (with regard to educators or learners) and the predominant violence types and what encouraged those and how the situation was managed and/or controlled and also noting who implemented such a control or management method.

For this study, the main defect of the observation technique that was noticeable was that, it became problematical to reproduce what was signalled by the participants' non-verbal gestures and messages in a written form, especially because of the wearing of masks, which made it difficult to clearly see the facial expressions or mood swings. In addition, it was time-consuming to engage in such a process.

Hence, the researcher noticed that observations could essentially been employed as a supportive or supplementary technique to gather data rather than the main means to do so. To control this challenge, as suggested by Batat (2020), the researcher simultaneously made observations, interpreted and wrote out participants' non-verbal gestures as observed from the visible communicated messages as understood from the point of view of the researcher.

This action helped the researcher to lessen the possibility of neglecting critical information if the process transcribing was to be carried out long afterwards.

5.8.5 Qualitative document analysis

Qualitative Document Analysis provides an orderly practical process for stimulating meaning from written textual evidence (Coffey, 2014). A 'document' is defined as a written narrative, visual, and physical material that reveal the complexities of people's lives as individuals and societies (Franco, 2016). Thus, documents make available evidence of the manner in which organisations represent and organise themselves; hence, documents disclose how institutions strive to make sense of their past in order to inform their future (Bowen, 2009). Documents are categorized into two types, namely, primary sources and secondary sources (Wood, Sebar & Vecchio, 2020). 'Primary sources' refers to original written manuscripts of an author's own experiences and observations, whereby 'secondary sources' refers to texts or manuscripts that originated elsewhere outside the primary sources or have been derivative from the original sources (Owen, 2014).

In this study, the role of the researcher depended much on the ways in which educators engaged in social practices that influence their responses to issues of violence against them. The researcher had to engage the educators' social practices against any documented evidence. As a result, the researcher engaged all documents relevant to this study in relation to what educators do and say, and how these are resolved whenever there are violence related conflicts. The documents looked at included minutes of learner disciplinary matters, notes on school Disciplinary Committee meetings, the schools' policies of Code of Conduct for Learners, school policies on the control of disruptive behaviour and violence, bullying, harassment, punishment and disciplinary records, records of violence cases, handling of grievances procedures and log books.

In addition, the schools' communications with the external organizations, for example, the South African Police Services (SAPS) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) such as the South African Security Agency (SASA) and other private establishments related to the focus of the researcher's study were scrutinized. These documents, gave the researcher prospects of shedding light on the context within

which educators as research participants' conduct their business, taking into account understanding how they have changed historically over time (Wood et al., 2020).

Furthermore, documents provided also a check on particular selective perceptions and illuminated much on blind spots pertaining to violence issues in a systematic way (Franco, 2016). The role of the documents for this study was thus huge, and it became clear that the constructionist approach was consistent with the view that documents functioning as 'content containers' were relevant to understanding the uncommunicated experiences during interviews and observations and constantly shed light on educators' practices in response to the violence by their learners against them (Owen, 2014). In addition, filtering through the voluminous documents provided the researcher with a useful way of thinking pertaining to generating, as well as reflecting on the social reality by means of new facts or perceptions that appeared and emerged from the documents (Coffey, 2014). Generally, these bulky documents provided a rich and diverse source of material to inform a deeper understanding of the context in which the participants live and operate their businesses (Bowen, 2009), and contributed largely pertaining to the importance of understanding this social mayhem and coping strategies as coming out from documented educators' interactions with their learners. Thus, Document Analysis gave much insight into the social phenomenon studied.

5.8.6 Field notes

Field notes generally have been a crucial element of qualitative research from the early 1900s, emerging from the field of ethnographic anthropology (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). At their initial usage, field notes were researchers' secretive, personal opinions, notions, and interrogations pertaining to their research observation and interview processes (Attia & Edge, 2017). Field notes were initially not taken to be a valuable source in the data collection or analysis process, and thus stayed a reserved researcher's secret (Cruz, 2015). But later, researchers started employing field notes as a supplementary layer of data collection, to be construed and explored, using the style applied in ethnographic methodology (Phillippi et al., 2018). The practice of using field notes in qualitative research continued and spread over to other research approaches such as in quantitative research fields (Phillippi et al., 2018). Currently, qualitative field notes have become a needed constituent of a rigorous qualitative research process (Rossman & Rallis, 2016).

Thus, a majority of qualitative research methodology encourage researchers to make use of field notes to improve data collection and so make available rich contexts for data analysis (Cruz, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2017). According to Attia and Edge (2017), collection of field notes is so commonly considered as important that some standardized criteria for qualitative research reporting has stimulated a number of researchers to use field notes in their studies. According to Phillippi et al. (2018), the following are the most important aspects of field notes that motivates every qualitative researcher consider note taking during fieldwork.

Field notes:

- Prompt researcher(s) to diligently observe the research environment and interactions of research participants;
- Enhance language-focused data;
- Document sights, smells, sounds of physical environment, and researcher impressions while they occur;
- Increase researcher reflection pertaining to identification of bias;
- Expedite initial coding shortly after each observation or interview session;
- Increase rigor and trustworthiness; and
- Make available contexts which inform data analysis.

In this study, the recorded field notes during informal conversations and during the observations, were combined and used as single field-notes. The field notes were taken unnoticeably, since the educators were likely to act differently had they noticed the researcher was capturing what they were saying or doing. Audio recordings proved useful; and were later listened to in order to either endorse or discard the initial field notes. The personal experiences of the researcher contributed pertaining to explaining what was recorded. By being part of the research process, the researcher had the field experience of what had happened to each educator participant, as well as what thoughts the educator had pertaining to what happened (Creswell et al., 2017). It became easy to verify observations and interviews by merely comparing these with filed notes. Table 1 below summarizes the data generation tools as used during the data collection stage.

Table 5.1: Diagrammatical Representation of Data Generating Tools and Sampling

<i>SCHOOL</i>	DATA GENERATING TOOLS			
	Semi-structured interviews (with Post Level 1 educators)	Semi-structured interviews (with School Principals)	Observations (of meetings with members of the School Safety and Security Committee where matters of violence and discipline were deliberated)	Qualitative Document Analysis (records of violence cases, policies of Code of Conduct for Learners, school Disciplinary Committee meetings, handling of grievances procedures and log books)
<i>SCHOOL P</i>	ED1-ED4	PR1	1	1
<i>SCHOOL Q</i>	ED5-ED8	PR2	1	1
<i>SCHOOL R</i>	ED9-ED11	PR3	1	1
<i>SCHOOL S</i>	ED12-ED13	PR4	1	1
TOTAL (n=17)	13	4	4	4

Key: ED= Educator; PR= Principal

5.8.7 Summary

In this section, the researcher described the environmental territory of the educators' daily interactions mainly through interviews and observations. A conceptual framework that represented a general guideline into identifying boundaries of the study was explained. A brief discussion of how the researcher proceeded even under the strict regulations of the national lockdown because of Covid-19 was given. The data collected were triangulated against Document Analysis with field notes and observations ensuring a clear data capturing process. Audio recordings proved useful for comparing the researcher's field notes, observations and impressions extracted from documents.

5.9 The Place of triangulation in research

Triangulation is an essential concept pertaining to data analysis for an empirical study (Denzin, 2012). According to Nie (2017), 'triangulation' is defined as a validity technique, which researchers use for searching convergence among multiple and various sources of information to form themes or categories in a study. Triangulation is also defined as an enhancer of depth and richness of the collected data (Heale & Forbes, 2013).

Rich data then improve the relationship that links triangulation and data saturation (Fielding, 2012). Data saturation occurs when gathering fresh data no longer triggers new theoretical insights nor discloses new properties of main theoretical categories in Grounded Theory (Nie, 2017). Such a link is particularly essential in this qualitative study, because the researcher employed multiple data collection techniques in the quest of discovering the meaning educators attach in framing their world pertaining to the learner-on-educator violence (Wilson, 2014). In qualitative research, researchers admit that they are unable to detach themselves from the research process thus researchers often bring their personal experiences, values, and views (Denzin, 2012). In short, qualitative researchers bring their bias to the research process, share their bias to the reader, and attempt to mitigate their personal prejudice to safeguard against inaccurately interpreting the participant (Fusch, Fusch & Ness, 2018). For that reason, triangulation must be implemented to mitigate such biasness and partiality through applying multiple sources of data (Gorissen, Van Bruggen & Jochems, 2013). According to Denzin (2012), four types of triangulation are available to qualitative researchers, which could be used to improve objectivity, truth and validity (dependability and credibility) of social research. These types are, namely, data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and methodological triangulation (Denzin, 2012).

For the purpose of this study, data triangulation, theory triangulation and methodological triangulation were used to increase the validity of the findings thus, only these three types of triangulation as used in this study are discussed. Data triangulation was employed through the different sources of data (Fusch et al., 2018). This took into account the different times for data collection, different sites from where data were collected, and the different individuals who were involved in the study.

The different sources of data involved semi-structured interviews, observations, Document Analysis and field notes. The participants in this study were those the researcher had initially selected purposively and systematically.

Theory triangulation tests different theories against similar frames of data (Wilson, 2014). For example, in this study, the researcher fuses the Grounded Theory by merging it with Ecological Systems Theory for interpreting and generating countering strategies to the learner-on-educator violence, which was achieved through the Charmaz's Constructivist Approach, concluded through the practice of Constant Comparative Method (viz., Symbolic Interactionism). These theoretical lenses fundamentally proved useful to explain the social phenomenon of violence against educators in the different school environments.

Methodological triangulation can be classified into two, namely, within-method triangulation and between-method triangulation (Fielding, 2012). According to Wilson (2014), the within-method triangulation takes one method, for example, a survey, and uses multiple strategies within that method to examine the data. On the other hand, between-method triangulation (also known as across-method triangulation) works well on different methods with different sets of data concerning the same object of study (Fusch et al., 2018). This study used the within method triangulation because multiple sources of data were employed within one design, namely, the multiple Case Study of four schools. For example, in this study, the triangulation of the data came from multiple data collection methods, namely, semi-structured interviews, observations, Document Analysis and field notes. Data sets linking common categories of analysis were used for creating the Grounded Theory and hence the methodological triangulation technique came into effect pertaining to the experiences, influences and strategies of educators' coping with the learner-on-educator violence at schools. Methodological triangulation requires that multiple methods be used in every exploratory study; thus, the researcher selected different data collection techniques to safeguard that adequate information was collected for this study (Gorissen et al., 2013). O'reilly and Parker (2013) elucidate the significance of triangulation centred on the basis that no solo method can sufficiently unravels the challenge of opposing causative aspects.

Since each method exposes dissimilar factors of first-hand reality, various techniques of observation must thus be engaged, as it was the case for this study (Denzin, 2012).

5.10 Data analysis and data presentation

5.10.1 Introduction

As soon as the data were collected and available, it was at once systematically organized and the initial analysis process commenced. Rossman and Rallis (2016) describe data analysis as the process of systematically sorting out and organizing interview transcripts, observations and/or field notes, which helped the researcher to acquire a better understanding into the phenomenon being studied. Evans and Lewis (2018) describe data analysis as an attempt to organise, account for and providing explanations of data so that sense may be derived in terms of participants' meanings of their circumstances, observation patterns, themes, categories and consistencies through the data. According to Nie (2017), data analysis involves working out data, organising data and arranging them into practicable and manageable parts (or codes), which can be formed so that patterns are searched for and identified. Analysing data helps the researcher ascertain what is significant and benefits him/her in taking informed decisions pertaining to what is creditable to present to readers of his or her scholarly writing (Franco, 2016).

In this study, data analysis enabled the researcher to present an organised account of participants' insights by giving detailed interpretations of participants meaningfully. For the data analysis process, the researcher used the Constant Comparative Method as recommended by Charmaz (2014); and the coding process was employed to identify categories. The process of theory generation is one of de-construction and re-construction of the data, and thus the major strategy for undertaking this was the Constant Comparative Method of data analysis (Charmaz, 2014). For this study, the initial phases of analysis and the coding process were mostly descriptive. The Constant Comparative Method safeguarded that the coding process was easily maintainable by moving back and forth concerning the identification of connections and dissimilarities between emerging categories (Charmaz, 2014; Biaett, 2018). Hence, data were then systematically analysed first with open coding, then axial coding, and finally selective coding.

Finally, data were grouped according to dominant responses and then according to categories, themes, afterwards quotes for presentation were used to support the final themes as discovered from the data.

5.10.2 Open coding

The first stage of the coding process is called open coding (Charmaz, 2014); and is defined as the analytic process by which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions discovered in the data (Biaett, 2018). Open coding means breaking down the data into smaller parts. It also involves marking these parts (or concepts) by scrutinizing and matching them and then aligning them further down to a more abstract concept known as a category (Charmaz, 2014). These categories are further explored by discovering their properties and dimensions. In the Grounded Theory approach, the coding process of the interviews starts simultaneously with the continual data collection process (Chun-Tie, 2019). The main goal of the coding process is finding direct connections between the raw data and the final conceptual categories (Charmaz, 2014).

In this study, questions were asked across the four school cases in order to determine how violence against educators affected them and to what degree. Cross-examining and asking questions across the participants of the four school allowed the researcher to link categories systematically and keeping check of the researcher's biases, and moreover, to interchange from the initial descriptive analysis technique to conceptual analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). In observance of Charmaz's recommendations, the researcher used action words to echo and capture the correct version of the original text and the transcripts were carefully coded using the line-by-line coding (Charmaz, 2014). The initial coding process was challenging, particularly because of the researcher's inexperience of using the Grounded Theory approach. However, after the first four interview transcriptions and coding, a better picture of the analysis process began to form on the researcher's mind and categories began to emerge. Themes and categories were further abridged into those most commonly arising and were classified according to their frequency of happening.

The researcher was careful and thoughtful of the problems related to what was happening in the data and from whose point of view (Charmaz, 2014). Charmaz (2014) suggested to first working rapidly through the early coding process, which for this study the researcher did. However, the researcher encountered the problem of circumventing labelling data, but nonetheless managed to focus on coding and linking occurrences, while probing problems related to what was happening to the data.

The researcher also experienced the challenge of replicating codes in an effort not to disregard any data deemed important from the core data, more particularly circumstances that clarified and revealed elements of coping and managing the learner-on-educator violence displayed by educators. The researcher then introduced the use of the NVivo computer software to facilitate open coding of a more structured process. The use of software provided an effective system for storing, locating and accessing voluminous data quantities easily (Maxwell & Chimiel, 2014).

This process was combined with reading and re-reading all the relevant transcripts and documents (Chun-Tie, 2019). The computer-aided data analysis technique proved expedient to consolidate the open coding phase of data analysis. However, when the researcher began conceptual linking of concepts and categories, it became more difficult to use the software because it proved distracting and thus the researcher chosen to use the traditional technique of data analysis and the computer-aided technique as a result was withdrawn. To be precise, it was difficult to assign participants codes of feelings using the NVivo computer programme hence its withdrawal at this stage. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) support the use of computer-aided techniques while warning that it may lead to chaotic coding, particularly for novice researchers if poorly managed. Thus, they suggest, early coding of transcripts manually which the researcher did (Merriam et al., 2016). The researcher printed out transcripts and *highlighter-markers* were used to highlight data with codes assigned and transcribed at the margin of printouts.

5.10.3 Axial coding

After open coding followed axial coding. This phase of coding included construction of categories focused on the primary phenomenon of how educators as victims of school violence manage and understand learner-on-educator violence. As suggested by Charmaz (2014), at this phase, the researcher organized, classified, re-categorized, and condensed data that emerged from the open coding phase by linking categories and subcategories.

Creswell and Poth (2017) explained the key elements of the axial coding process as follows:

- The researcher takes the categories of open coding identified as dominant from data, and discover what triggered them to occur;
- The researcher establishes what strategies or actions the actors used in response to occurrence;
- The researcher identifies what specific context and intervening conditions (broad contexts) influence the strategies; and lastly;
- The researcher then isolates the consequences that resulted from these strategies.

Thus, largely, the process is one that involves connecting categories of information that are fundamental to the main category (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). To achieve this, the researcher employed Charmaz's (2014) recommendation of going back and forth through the data linking participants' responses to construct theoretical categories. The researcher then coupled the categories and related concepts from participants' quotes in order to find categorical themes that summed up educators and principals perceptions and experiences. In addition, during axial coding, the researcher shaped a theoretical model that determined if sufficient data supports the study's interests. According to Creswell et al. (2017), portraying a coding model is important in describing the primary phenomenon, casual conditions, context, strategies, intervening conditions and consequences in a painterly diagram but also noting that that the process is not a linear one.

Hence, categories emerged; portrayed and described the primary characteristics of how educators as victims of school violence manage and understand learner-on-educator violence as depicted from the data. These are explained further in Chapter 6.

5.10.4 Selective coding

The last coding phase engaged was selective coding. This phase is described as the process that requires sifting through voluminous amounts of data in order to give indicators appropriate for emerging theoretical framework (Charmaz, 2014). According to Franco (2016), this continuing construction from such a substantial quantity of data leads to the task of sorting and ordering data under bigger conceptual categories in order to facilitate theoretical development. Thus, selective coding is sometimes called focused coding and is deemed the final coding phase because at this phase the researcher considers the primary phenomenon and systematically relate it to key conceptual categories through validation of the relationships and improving categories that require further modification and improvement (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

For this study, some storylines of principals' as well as educators were dug out and coded and these were pertaining to experiences, perceptions, and resources needed to address the violence against educators at schools. To give these storylines from participants a deserved credibility, the researcher had to make them easily articulated in order to give a theoretically complete picture of educators' experiences and coping strategies. An account of sub-themes discovered from data, which directly related to main categories were also articulated. During this phase the researcher discovered both interesting and alarming representation of participants' storylines of their impressions and of what they thought. These are presented in details as a theoretical discussion of the conceptual categories with their properties clearly outlined in Chapter 6.

5.10.5 Theoretical sampling

Theoretical sampling means checking emerging theory against reality by sampling cases that may challenge or elaborate its developing claims (Charmaz, 2014). According to McCall (2013), theoretical sampling defines the process in which the researcher simultaneously collects, codes and evaluates the data, and elects which data to collect next and where to find these data that will potentially develop the theory as it emerges. Thus, theoretical sampling must be employed as a way to test, elaborate, and refine a category and/or to test the validity of a category (Maxwell et al., 2014; Charmaz, 2015). Creswell and Poth (2017) point out that this process entails a researcher selecting a sample of individuals in the study based on their contribution to the development of theory.

For this study, the researcher's important task was making emerging categories more conclusive and valuable through the selected sample of individuals whose contribution was seen as valuable according to the researcher's observations.

Thus, the researcher carried out theoretical sampling by returning to the field notes and virtual interview transcripts, since it was difficult to return to the actual sites because of the Coronavirus issues. This action was completed in order to fill in gaps of identified categories that needed to be refined. Hence, the purpose of this sampling was to refine ideas, not to increase the size of the original sample (Miles et al., 2013). For the duration of the process of theoretical coding, the researcher sought to identify main categories that he thought were crucial to understanding the phenomenon of how educators experience and interpret violence against them, and what strategies do educators adopt to cope with and manage learner-on-educator violence. Collectively, these main categories would condense the categories generated during selective coding and uncover links between them (Miller, 2016). According to Charmaz (2014), this process of connecting categories is the analytical equivalent of placing cement between the building blocks of a house.

The major challenge of the theoretical coding process was the construction of an all-encompassing, concrete concept formulation strategy on which a thesis of this nature of a widespread phenomenon could be stated for presentation to its readers. The researcher was aware that the nature and scope of the study required a deep thoughtfulness as it had implications beyond the boundaries of the investigation itself.

Thus, the theoretical coding phase compelled the researcher to frequently re-examine data in order to search for confirmation of the factors and links that were underpinning the educators' experiences and interpretations of violence against them.

5.10.6 Theoretical saturation

The theoretical coding process is finished when theoretical saturation has been achieved (Qureshi, 2018). Categories are saturated when collecting new data no longer sparks any fresh theoretical understandings, and when no new revelations or properties on core theoretical categories are prompted (Charmaz, 2014).

Thus, reaching theoretical saturation should not result in perceiving everything there is to discern pertaining to a problem; rather, saturation of data is described as the finest that has been accomplished at a specific time (Durrheim, 2009). Identifying saturation can be challenging and a major concern of knowing when to stop gathering data (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Nie, 2017).

In this study, the researcher concluded 17 interviews out of the 20 planned interviews. Three participants fell out of the study because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Having realized that data saturation was reached, the researcher did not bother replacing the participants who fell out of the study. The saturation occurred around the time of the researcher's 11th and 12th virtual interview. Interviews led afterwards subsequently confirmed this awareness. The researcher had collected and analysed voluminous quantity of data and had reached at a point where no new information emerged.

5.10.7 Memo-writing

'Memo writing', also referred to as 'memoing', is described as the most essential feature of the Grounded Theory method (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Memoing serves to track the theory development, and thus the theory would be captured in the memos if the process has been done correctly (Attia & Edge, 2017). Memo writing aids to connect and close the gap between theoretical coding and theoretical saturation (Charmaz, 2015). Memos are thus meant to illuminate the relationship or potential relationships between given codes and their relationships with other codes (Glaser, 2014). Meanwhile, coding entails constant comparison of data with other data, data with codes, codes with codes, codes with categories, and categories with other categories; memo writing assist to record these comparative processes correctly

(Charmaz, 2015). Thus, memo writing helps the researcher to write down thoughts as they arise in the mind (Glaser, 2014).

Charmaz (2015) identified the following steps in the development of memo writing:

- Codes are demarcated by essential empirical properties in order to handle them analytically.
- Researchers investigate the conditions of these empirical properties.
- Codes are alternatively handled as categories.
- Memo writing help to understand the association between codes and categories.
- Researchers scrutinize their own assumptions and implicit meanings through their memos.
- Memos sharpen and narrow down the analysis process, as well as facilitating the researcher to correct problems, such as making sweeping generalizations and leaving his/her assertions unchecked.

For this study, the researcher only fully realized during the physical process of data analysis that memo writing is so significant to the overall process of data analysis. Thus, memo writing epitomized the researcher's other challenge of coherently putting together ideas and relationships identified during the data analysis.

The process of initial coding formed various separate memos particularizing the researcher's emerging views on the reality of the consequences of violence against educators at schools. Whereas memo writing was comparatively unstructured during early coding, the researcher realized that it had developed progressively, organized and fruitful during selective coding and theoretical coding. To be specific, the choice to compose memos on a category-by-category layout imposed on the researcher to explain each category, discover connections between codes within the given category, ascertain the place that category belonged to in the broad picture of phenomenon, and helped in pinpointing gaps and obvious ambiguities contained by that category (Charmaz, 2015; Phillippi et al., 2018). Memo writing of such manner became the critical opening stage in generating a deep and reflective chapter of the data analysis process. According to the researcher's viewpoint, a colossal of conceptual understandings proceed simultaneously during the memoing process. For example,

interrogations which track imminent obscurities in interviews emerge, as well as assumptions on relationships in the data internally become clear, the researcher is able to put together data representations accurately, theoretical concepts that appear become builders of the visualized theory being created, as well as ideas on the study's progress are elaborated and impressed on the researcher's mind.

5.10.8 Summary

In this section, the researcher described the systematic data analysis process, which involved sorting out, and organizing the data. The analysis process also included the description of the themes, how they emerged and were identified from the virtual interviews and researcher's observations, recorded and finally categorized. The researcher also explained the selection of words as used by participants for articulating their views as these were valuable indicators to their attitudes, perceptions and frame of mind.

5.11 Trustworthiness in qualitative research

Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to consistency and the quality of investigations that affirm research findings usable, valid and remarkable to audiences (Smith & McGannon, 2018). In establishing trustworthiness, Lincoln and Guba (2010) created four rigorous criteria for qualitative researchers, recognized as credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability.

Credibility refers to the authentication process where the researcher offers assertion of appropriateness between the respondents and the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 2010). Credibility ensures the study measures what it is intended and is a true reflection of the social reality of the participants (Maher, Hadfield, Hutchings & de Eyto, 2018). Many strategies to address credibility are available and they include prolonged engagement and member checks (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). According to Charmaz (2015), credibility establishes the truthfulness of results from the viewpoint of the participants whether they are credible and believable.

For this study, the researcher spent an average of one week per site in order to fully engage with the educators and principals. In addition, during that week, the researcher attended one meeting at each site. In the course of the researcher's stay at each site, interviews were simultaneous with observations where possible.

For each field session, records of field notes were immediately consolidated soon after the session and these were kept in order to complement the interviews and observations. Regular debriefing sessions were also conducted in order to make the research findings robust and credible.

Dependability safeguards that the research process becomes sufficient with relevant details that can facilitate research by another researcher interested to repeat the same work (Maher et al., 2018). Thus, dependability ensures that findings of the qualitative research process are repeatable if the inquiry happened within the same cohort participants and context (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). For this study, the researcher developed a detailed record of accomplishments of the entire research process, with particular attention on the accurate coding of data, which guaranteed increased dependability of the research.

The researcher did so through the application of the NVivo computer software programme. There are more details to this fact in section 5.10.2 of this chapter.

Confirmability is comparable to objectivity in quantitative studies (Nie, 2017). According to Phillippi et al. (2018), at this point, the aim is to diminish researcher's bias by acknowledging researcher predilections. Adhering to the strategy of reflexivity helped in supporting a rigorous research process (Guba & Lincoln, 2010). 'Reflexivity' commonly refers to the scrutiny of one's own beliefs, decisions and practices during the research process and checking how these may have prejudiced the research itself (Smith & McGannon, 2018). Fundamentally, reflexivity entails paying attention to the researcher in contrast to putting him/her aside and pretending the researcher did not impose any influence during the research process (Maher et al., 2018). The researcher is required to be open and honest, and truthfully accept that he/she is part of the research (Smith & McGannon, 2018).

For this study, the researcher implemented reflexive techniques through holding weekly *researcher-participants'* meetings. The participants involved in such meetings, are those whose contribution had gone an extra mile with the researcher in providing sound data; and had previously shown deeper interest in the study better than other participants had. Such participants would persist in requesting a weekly progress report of the study. Weekly meetings helped in reducing and keeping the researcher

in check against bias tendencies. Furthermore, the researcher used triangulation techniques as outlined in section 5.9 of this chapter.

Transferability in qualitative research relates to the ability of the findings being transferable or generalized to other contexts or settings (Guba & Lincoln, 2010). Since qualitative research is specific to a particular context, it is important to have a thick description of the specific research context (Smith & McGannon, 2018). This is to allow the reader to independently assess whether the findings are indeed transferable to their situation or not (Maher et al., 2018). For this study, the researcher used Purposive Sampling in selecting participant educators' who had experienced learner-on-educator violence at the selected schools. The researcher perceived these educators in those schools, as rich-information sources for the study.

Thus, researcher perceived them would provide that thick description which would provide results that could be generalized in other contexts.

5.12 Ethics in qualitative research

5.12.1 Introduction

'Ethics' refers to moral values and guidelines of conduct pertaining to respecting and protecting the dignity and rights of all parties that are involved as objects of study (Creswell et al., 2017). In the Social Sciences, ethics are defined as a concern of justly honouring sensitivity to the rights of others (Collins, 2011). According to Corbin and Strauss (2014), ethical issues take into consideration aspects such as informed consent, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality.

To the researcher, the most important aspect of this study was conducting it in the most ethical way possible. Thus, it was clear to the researcher that to do this, it involved much more than just being granted official approval by the Ethics Review Committee. As a result, to conduct this study, protocol was followed pertaining to the named aspects since various schools were involved. Thus, the researcher ensured that all ethical principles were observed and, as such, the researcher had long established a close relationship with both educators and principals of the four schools. Following are some ethical aspects, which led the research process and the researcher's sensitivity towards protecting the dignity and rights of all parties that were involved in the study.

5.12.2 The participants' role, informed consent and anonymity

Informed consent is a general practice by which researchers notify participants of their right to exercise their choice to participate in a study once they have received information on aspects that could possibly affect their participation throughout the research study (Smith & McGannon, 2018). In this study, participants were engaged quite lengthily on their role in the study during pre-interview calls and were afforded the occasion to reflect and understand their role of partaking in the interviews and observations. Thus, informed consent letters were emailed to participants, and they committed themselves through appending their signatures on the letters and sent them back to the researcher.

Participants were also guaranteed of their anonymity and that they were allowed to pull out from the study at any stage. In addition, any bits and portions researched that participants did not want included in the study were omitted.

5.12.3 Confidentiality

According to Korstjens and Moser (2017), data gathered from participants must be retained, protected and lock them up on a secured place. Moreover, data given by the participants under no circumstances should it be linked with the participant' name or slightest way of recognition or association with participant (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This study intended to delve on educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence. This suggested that the researcher should not in any way, expose to harm the educators or principals of the four schools. The researcher upheld confidentiality and the privacy of all participants. He did this by getting rid of all recognizable markers from the storylines and descriptions of participants and by securing the transcripts on a secret code-secured computer. The researcher securely warehoused all hard copies and audio records at the University of South Africa's safety storage as recommended by the Ethics Review Committee and these were only accessible to the researcher and supervisor.

The researcher is required to safeguard that participants are protected and that no harm happens to them as a direct or indirect consequence of participation in the study (Cruz, 2015). This study was of a slightly sensitive nature that could have caused agonizing and/or uncomfortable recollections; the researcher ensured to safeguard the wellbeing, dignity and rights of all the participants as extremely safe as possible.

According to Dodds and Hess (2020), a risk is considered to be minimal where the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, in and of themselves, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examination or tests. In this study, the researcher stipulates specific procedures that were to be followed should a participant experience an adverse emotional reaction or discomfort during the virtual interviews. To achieve this, the researcher was guided by Draucker, Martsof and Poole's Distress Interview Protocol (Draucker, Martsof & Poole, 2009) as indicated in the attached Appendix M.

5.12.4 Procurement of permissions

In line with the University of South Africa's Research Ethics Policy, before engaging on the study, the Research Ethical Clearance unit of the University was approached in order to obtain official permission and approval to pursue the study. Following this, it was obtaining permission to access the four public schools. Creswell, (2014) advises researchers not to suppose access to an organisation or institution as an issue of a right, but they have to prove that they are earnest human beings and unpretentious researchers, and creditable to be permitted the facilities necessary to do their research study. Thus, pertaining to access and acceptance by the four public schools, permission to do so was sought with the Mpumalanga Department of Education's research unit through the office of the Head of Department of the Gert Sibande District. The researcher then organized pre-interview face-to-face meetings with the School Principals, in which the outline of the purpose of study and a brief description of the methods, which were to be used, were explained. Thus, permission letters to School Principals were handed in person. One advantage of the researcher was that, the four schools already had a respectable rapport with the University of South Africa because the University used them for Teaching Practice purposes.

As pointed out earlier in this chapter, the researcher ensured the respective personnel at schools pertaining to participants' anonymity issues were safeguarded. No information that identified the schools involved in the study would be reachable. In addition, the researcher gave assurance to the principals that, all Covid-19 protocols would be followed and that the safety of all participants pertaining to coronavirus infection was assured. The researcher also solicited access pertaining to the times of engagement at the school sites right at the commencement of the study.

This arrangement mainly pertained to researcher's attendance of Safety Committee meetings. From all of the four public schools, the researcher obtained permission to work with the educators during school break periods and after school hours. The researcher dressed reasonably acceptable since prior information received during meetings with principals' revealed that, this side of the rural set-up put much emphasis on dress code, representation and appearance. The researcher therefore, displayed a decent attitude that ensured attachment to the school management, educators and learners. The researcher presented and composed himself such that it was not easy to see that he was not part of the institution.

This then permitted and gave the participants a feeling of comfort to communicate and talking to the researcher, minus anxieties, which would have made it difficult to exchange crucial information.

5.13 The contribution of this study

The study was undoubtedly helpful pertaining to applicability to circumstances involving the theory and practice of the education management discipline and the subject of violence against or targeted at educators, particularly within the South African schools' context. Charmaz (2014) describes the principle of applicability as the degree to which the research study expedites a portrayal and representation of interpretations to the reader that may have relevance in his or her own situation. The researcher's purpose of developing a Grounded Theory to counter the learner-on-educator violence was to advise and provide guidance pertaining to improvement and practice. The researcher is convinced that the Grounded Theory developed through this study, embraced applicability in other research contexts, especially those studying school environments. The researcher considered the findings of this study and the Grounded Theory developed, to have made a meaningful contribution to instruct research and inform practice in the area of educational management and leadership and in promoting educators' wellbeing.

Finally, this study offered an opportunity to sharpen and represent the researcher's own interactive, communication and research participation skills. The study personally assisted towards the development of an authenticated Grounded Theory that counters the impasse of the learner-on-educator violence at schools.

5.14 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher presented a detailed discussion of the research methodology used, and stating the role of the researcher and the rationale behind using Grounded Theory approach for the theory construction of this study. The qualitative research process using Grounded Theory design was discussed and the reason for opting for this design outlined. The procedures used for data collection in this study were explored and their benefits reflected upon. Data were mainly gathered through virtual semi-structured interviews and observations with Document Analysis and field notes supplementing the data collection process. Techniques followed when using both interviews, observations were explained, and the implications for conducting research under the Covid-19 pandemic. The data analysis process was described. This chapter also emphasized the trepidations of rigor in qualitative research, namely, pertaining to credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability of the research findings. Ethical issues were also carefully addressed.

The next chapter focuses on the presentation of research findings of this empirical investigation as concluded from data obtained through virtual interviewing, observations and Document Analysis.

CHAPTER SIX

DATA PRESENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter flows from the previous Chapter 5 that discussed the research methodology and design of this empirical investigation. This current chapter extensively presents and analyses the data obtained from the participants during the empirical stage of the study via the virtual semi-structured interviews and observations. The data were comprehensively analysed, interpreted, discussed and presented to answer the main research question: ***How can the violence against educators be countered in South African schools?***

As specified by Drisko (2016), data of a qualitative origin is more exposed to obscurity. Thus, this necessitates establishing the main categories and themes for accurately interpretation and presentation. However, there is a view that supports for a process of presenting and analysing data through a holistic approach orientation (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Whereas Creswell and Poth (2017) sponsor the idea that data analysis should reflect the main research question, which include the data linking the previous research results with the current as well as perceptions originating from the literature review. This study has integrated some of the ideas of Creswell and Poth (2017) and in addition to that, this investigation embraced more of Charmaz's approach for analysing, interpreting and presenting the data (Charmaz, 2015). The details of the Charmaz's approach to data analysis was well explained in the previous Chapter 5. At this stage, it is important to recap for the reader the objectives of the study and the main critical questions. This will assist the reader to maintain focus on the main concerns of this empirical investigation (Franco, 2016).

The sub-questions to the primary question were as follows:

- What are the experiences and perceptions of educators on learner-on-educator violence?
- What is the influence of learner-on-educator violence on educators' teaching practices?

- What strategies do educators employ to cope with and manage learner-on-educator violence?

Thus, out of these questions, the process of data analysis for the Grounded Theory as put forth by Charmaz (2015), involved arrangement and classification of Data Sets, reducing these into dominant categories and the main concepts emerged completely using the process of data coding, and last of all the researcher then presented the final version of the results through discussions.

In this study, deciding on main categories and subsequent themes that emerged from dominant concepts of the data were complicated. Thus, their finalization was completed through crosschecking against the literature review of Chapters 3 and 4. While key final theoretical categories that went into the Grounded Theory were captured via concise brief explanations in adherence to the primary research question. Direct participant excerpts are used to support each of the emerging categories and their subsequent themes. The same approach was applied to support the results from observations made.

6.2 Biographical data of participants

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 respectively represent the biographical data of the educator and School Principals study participants who were interviewed during the virtual semi-structured interviews for this study. In order to recognize and respect all ethical requirements and confidentiality for this empirical investigation, participants were given codes and schools were identified using pseudonyms. Sixteen educators (n=16) were drawn from the four Case Study schools with each school represented by four educators. Educator participants were referred to as follows:

- ED1 to ED4 who belonged to School P,
- ED5 to ED8 who belonged to School Q
- ED9 to ED12 who belonged to School R
- Lastly, ED13 to ED16 belonged to School S.

Table 6.1: Summary of Codes for Schools and Educator Study Participants

n=16	AGE	GENDER	TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN YEARS	QUALIFICATIONS	POSITION OR OFFICIAL COMMITTEE	TYPE OF SCHOOL	SCHOOL BAND	QUINTILE
EDUCATORS : SCHOOL P								
ED1	59	Female	33	STD/FDE: Accounting Diploma & Bed: Hons	SSSC/CPDC	Rural	GET/FET	1
ED2	42	Female	15	STD/ACE/Bed Hons	DC	Rural	GET/FET	1
ED3	48	Female	17	STD/ACE	UNF	Rural	GET/FET	1
ED4	46	Male	16	STD/ACE/Bed Hons	BRV	Rural	GET/FET	1
EDUCATORS : SCHOOL Q								
ED5	51	Male	20	STD/BA/MA	UNF	Rural	GET/FET	2
ED6	43	Male	14	STD/ACE/Bed	DC	Rural	GET/FET	2
ED7	38	Female	8	STD/ACE/Bed Hons	SSSC	Rural	GET/FET	2
ED8	47	Male	15	STD/ACE/Bed Hons	SSSC	Rural	GET/FET	2
EDUCATORS : SCHOOL R								
ED9	37	Female	10	STD/ACE/Bed Hons	DSSC	Rural	GET/FET	1
ED10	45	Male	12	STD/ACE/Bed Hons	DC	Rural	GET/FET	1
ED11	42	Female	11	STD/ACE/Bed Hons	UNF	Rural	GET/FET	1
ED12	50	Male	24	STD/ACE/Bed Hons	ATHL	Rural	GET/FET	1
EDUCATORS : SCHOOL S								
ED13	53	Male	26	STD/ACE/Bed Hons/MA	SSSC	Rural	GET/FET	2
ED14	51	Male	23	STD/ACE/Bed Hons	DC	Rural	GET/FET	2
ED15	49	Female	16	STD/ACE/Bed Hons	BRV	Rural	GET/FET	2
ED16	47	Female	15	STD/ACE/Bed Hons/MA	ATHL	Rural	GET/FET	2

Key: SSSC = School Safety and Security Committee; DC = Disciplinary Committee; UNF = Uniform Committee; BRV = Bereavement Committee; ATHL = Athletics Committee; CPDC = Continuous Professional Development Committee.

School Principals (n=4) were also coded as represented in the Table 6.2 below as follows:

- PR1 from School P
- PR2 from School Q
- PR3 from School R
- PR4 from School S

Table 6. 2: Summary of codes for schools and educator study participants

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL CODES	PR1	PR2	PR3	PR4
SCHOOL CODE	P	Q	R	S
PRINCIPALS PROFILES				
Age	52	57	50	51
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Male
Experience in education	27 years	29 years	26	24
Experience with in the Principal position	8 years	13 years	10 years	12
Qualifications	PTD FDE B.Ed. (Hons) PDM	STD FDE ACE B.Ed. (Hons) PDM	PTD FDE B.Ed. (Hons)	STD FDE ACE B.Ed. (Hons) PDM
Types of schools	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural
Schools bands	FET & GET	FET & GET	FET & GET	FET & GET
Quintile	1	2	1	2

Finally, in order to derive sense and understanding of the educators and principals' academic accomplishments from the different schools, the Table 6.3 below was presented.

Table 6.3: Qualifications key for participants interviewed

Acronyms for qualifications	Names for qualifications
ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
BA	Bachelor of Arts
ECD	Early Childhood Diploma
FDE	Further Diploma in Education
HED	Higher Education Diploma
Hons	Honours degree
M.Ed.	Master of Education
PDM	Post Graduate Diploma in Management
PTD	Primary Educators Diploma
STD	Secondary Educators Diploma

6.3 Presentation of findings from interviews

The results from the interview process were presented using Data Sets. As a result, three Data Sets were created in order to present the data systematically. The Data Sets were given headings using categories derived from sub-questions. For clarity and understanding, the data sets may be construed as follows:

- The first part of Data Set 1 represented educators' experiences as emerging from interviews while the second part of the same Data Set represented the experiences of the School Principals;
- The first part of Data Set 2 represents the examined assertions of educators pertaining to the learner-on-educator violence as encountered at schools, while the second part of Data Set 2 indicates what influences School Principals on their management task concerning the learner-on-educator violence at schools; and
- Lastly, Data Set 3 represents the strategies educators and principals employ on their respective roles in the schools in handling the violence against them by their learners.

6.4 Discussion of participants' perceptions and experiences from virtual and/or face-to-face interviews

The sections below represent perceptions and experiences of educators and school principals of the participating four public schools in which the direct participants' excerpts are in italics for simplicity of identification. To analytically and systematically present the data, it was vital to rank higher certain data above the others, subsequently to derive thorough meaningfulness, by excluding any data that was insignificant (Chun et al., 2019).

In this study, data were derived from 16 educator-participants and 4 School Principal-participants established from one-on-one virtual semi-structured interviews. The interview process for both educators and principals consisted of three unique aspects that were being probed, namely, experiences and perceptions; influences of the learner-on-educator violence on the management and/or teaching practices; and, as a final point, strategies employed to cope with and manage the learner-on-educator violence.

The responses of educators to questions were always placed as Part 1 of each identified dominant concept, while the responses of School Principals were placed as Part 2 of each identified dominant concept.

The next sections are discussed according to the three Data Sets mentioned above.

6.5 Data Set 1: Participants experiences and perceptions

The next sections illuminate on each of the two-part segment of the interviews held with both educators and School Principals. Part 1 discusses educators' perceptions, while Part 2 discusses responses to interviews held with principals.

6.5.1 Part 1: Experiences and perceptions from interviewing educators

This section examined the proclamations emerging from the virtual semi-structured interview discussions as the first inception of the empirical investigation and dealt with a summary of the results of educators' views and perceptions pertaining to the learner-on educator violence occurrence.

The participants' answers were grounded on the experiences and comments of the participating educators from the four public schools who took part in the study. These experiences and views were identified, and grouped according to dominant concepts, properties and dimensions as discovered from the data. The distinctive concepts were later filtered into theoretical categories and their subsequent themes that later formed the Grounded Theory. With regard to experiences and perceptions, the first sub-question that was posed to all participant-educators in the four Case Study schools was; **what are your experiences and perceptions of you as an educator on the issue of learner-on-educator violence at your school?** Their responses to this question were grouped under Part one of Data Set 1.

6.5.1.1 Disempowering learners' disrespectfulness and their being difficult to control

In all four Case Study public schools, it emerged that educators commonly described their learners as exhibiting disempowering attitudes that lacked respect, thus making them difficult to manage and control. Such views were advanced by ED1, ED2, ED4,

ED6, ED8, ED10 and ED12. Some of their illustrative excerpts supporting this view were presented as follows below:

ED1: *I want to refer to what happened back in 2018, where in our school; we had a group of boys who were in Grade 12 in that year. These boys were very rebellious to the point of making it so difficult for an educator to teach or at times even to enter in their classroom. Whenever one went to that classroom, one would be so humiliated and absolutely be hurt.*

ED2: *This type of violence has a great negative impact on us as educators because you can imagine being disrespected by a child or a learner you are teaching. First, you lose your self-esteem as an adult. Educators are insulted and humiliated, this include my colleagues and myself, which the perpetrators do in front of other learners.*

ED10: *In our school in 2020, a boy in matric (Grade 12) was extremely rebellious to the extent that even the principal feared that boy. He was so disrespectful that even his father when called to the school could not control him.*

In the same manner, the educators from the four schools unanimously agreed that there was insufficiency pertaining to consequence action towards learners who are culprits of learner-on-educator violence. Their sentiments are presented below:

ED2: *The children we have in our schools today know and are aware that nothing will ever be done unto them because law protects them. They are aware that they can only be suspended and thereafter will be allowed back to school and to the very same classroom and face the very same educator, they mistreated.*

ED4: *The fact is, learners are protected by all the policies created by the Department of Education. There are no consequences for learner actions. That is why learners keep doing the same thing repeatedly.*

Similarly, educators stated the challenge of experiencing emotional abuse as perpetrated by the learners they teach. Educators' feelings of helplessness pertaining to learner discipline and control, namely, disrespectful behaviour of learners towards them, was mentioned as negatively affecting their teaching performance in relation to delivering quality lessons, and this ultimately impact on their emotional wellbeing.

ED10: *Educators find themselves being violated emotionally, physically and verbally by the learners who are supposed to be protected by the very same educators they harass. Imagine that one is put in 'loco parentis', where you are supposed to be a parent to someone and that particular someone is becoming unruly on you.*

ED1: *Educators are so vulnerable, and yes, they are vulnerable.... In addition, no one is thinking anything to protect the wellbeing of educators.... Many educators are not mentally well not to mention their school performance.*

Educators also indicated feelings of being unacknowledged and unappreciated by the Department of Basic Education on the bravery displayed during their role of teaching violent learners at schools.

ED3: *The teaching profession needs a very strong personality. Teaching today is not for the weak; however, it is an unfortunate situation that the Department of Education does not recognize educators 'sweats'.*

ED7: *A simple thank you goes a long way either from my principal or from any official, for example, the Circuit Manager; I feel no one recognizes the work that we are doing as educators.*

Generally, from the analysis of educators responses on their perceptions and experiences were diversified feelings of misery, despair and depression. The level of fear seemed to be high and there was, largely, a sense of frustration, uncertainty and neglect by the Department of Education.

6.5.1.2 The School is a Toxic Workplace Environment Depicting a Negative Picture about Schools as Centres of Teaching

Pertaining to their schools as toxic workplace sites, educators echoed a common view mentioning their schools as being under-resourced with inadequate teaching equipment and materials. Educators from Schools P and R respectively echoed the following sentiment:

ED3: *Any school emulates and represents a community. Thus, the school must replicate and echo the type of community it represents, and the learners in our school are a replica of this community. This school services and is located in an extremely poor side of South Africa, where poverty is rife and violence easily erupt even with petty issues. Our school cannot break free from such negative societal influence.*

ED11: *Our principal and the SMT (School Management Team) raise unrealistic hopes plucked by impractical working conditions, and there is shortage of resources that badly affect the spirit of educators in the school as we are expected to perform miracles given the limited school resources.*

Likewise, in a meeting that the researcher attended at School R, an educator (ED9) who was also a member of the Disciplinary and Safety Committee at the same school resonated the same idea that there was a connection between the aggressiveness of their learners in the school and level of the violence in the community. She lamented sharply on the state of their school fence and buildings. She explained:

ED9: *In our school, look at our school fence. Look at the buildings; these things are dilapidated. Violence is a daily thing. We cannot run away from it and it is getting worse each day. I actually do not see it getting better anytime soon. I think we must think of better ways to live with it.*

ED9: *The corruption issues weaken this community's leadership itself. Is there anything visible you see happening in improving the violence status of our school? Nothing. What is happening is very scary.*

The educators also pointed out overcrowded teaching rooms as interrupting the process of teaching and learning. This impasse was declared to abruptly increase the incidents of violence, namely, towards educators who also claimed that, they have been trying to manage the situation under the given circumstances. An educator ED8 from School Q said:

ED8: *Overcrowded classrooms hugely impede us from giving learners individual attention. However, I always prefer to call the learner perpetrator aside to give advice, but the issue of large classes does not allow for individual courtesy. When you have 63 learners in one small classroom, there is practically no time to guide them and leave the other learners unsupervised. This is just a recipe for disaster.*

Remarkably so, an educator ED2 from School P also stated a similar opinion that even the small number of decent learners in their school were easily influenced by presence of the misbehaving learners. They also ultimately posed disciplinary challenges. He reiterated:

ED2: *Regrettably, in the place of assisting these learners improve their behaviour for better school marks or support them in a positive manner, the few that are decent also join this fashion and thereafter completely new disorders result, all this happen in the name of wanting to fitting in. We are locked up in these quagmire of an unending challenge.*

In all of the four Case Study schools, educators lamented that, besides the overcrowded classrooms, they were faced with the workload issues that appeared to disrupt most of their teaching plans and the achievement of the curriculum requirements.

ED5: *I must say that my workload is overwhelmingly huge. One can hardly rest. I always take work home. I do not have even time for my children anymore.*

ED7: *I think we need more educators in my school. The work that I do really is too much. I teach Grades 8, 9, 10 and 12. In all my classes, I have an average of 50 learners in the class, but at the end of the year, I am expected to perform and produce good results with my Grade 12 learners. I do not know what to do.*

Furthermore, educators acknowledged and attributed the prevalence of learner-on-educator violence on their lack of necessary skills to implement the curriculum effectively, which ultimately result in educators' being demotivated and frustrated that some educators cast their frustration on learners with others even opting to resign.

ED6: *In most cases, I experience a lot in terms of exchange of words with learners. I think I need help of skills in handling them; I have developed a tendency of being too harsh.*

ED1: *The pressure is too much. No one is coming to our rescue. Yes, we have these trainings from the Department of Education but these focuses on results generation. I think we have been placed in the deep end. We cannot cope. These learners can frustrate you to a point of leaving the profession.*

6.5.1.3 Creeping distrust towards schools' administrators relating to quality leadership and poor decision-making

Educators lack confidence in some senior administrators' ability to provide well-founded leadership qualities and in some cases even consider them as not knowledgeable. In support of this statement, educator ED6 from School Q agreeing with educator ED2 from School P stated;

ED6: *I have always voiced out my concern about the school-management leadership qualities. The Department of Education must consider timeously training our school leaders (referring to principals) to handle the ever-changing school environments. They seem to lack direction when it comes to protecting the teaching component, I mean educators. I am aware they also have pressure as well of maintaining excellent school results.*

ED2: *Principals forget that, they are working with the human component in educators. Principals must be raised to the level that matchup the daily school challenges of violent learners.*

Management styles at some sites appear to be top-down and autocratic. Some statements of participants indicated educators choosing to keep a low profile in order to remain unaffected but dying internal silently. The following statements attest to this:

ED12: *In our school, we take what we are told. If you talk out, you are labelled and given names. I have decided to just keep quiet and do my work. As long as I produce marks for my learners, I am fine.*

ED13: *What has kept me going is my silence. I no longer contribute in our morning caucuses. What is the use of making a point that I know for sure that it will never be considered. Most of the time we carry out the instructions as our manager gives us. No questions asked.*

The two statements above were indicative that communication channels between educators and management are deteriorating and alleged characterized by not so easily accessible principals in some sites.

ED3: *Sometimes educators are left with no choice. Principals are always concerned about marks, tests and evaluations. There is no effort in helping the wellbeing of the grinders of marks.*

ED5: *It has never been easy to reach our SMT. They do meet but will always tell us what to do even if that which we must do is ineffective. My principal is worse; he not easily accessible. To see him it is very difficult. In this school, we are required to state our problems in an email, in which he (i.e., principal) promises to respond but he doesn't.*

This answer seemed to suggest that a concerted effort was required to improve the communication techniques and educator involvement in decision-making, more specifically pertaining to their protection and wellbeing.

6.5.1.4 Parents' attitude towards educators –a portrayal of a symptomatic silent expression of uncaring and a 'We don't care' posture towards educators

Educator-parent relationships were reflective of lack of mutual respect and some parents were described, as depicting disrespectful behaviours and these seemed to be prevalent in three of the four Case Study schools. An educator E11 narrated an episode of embarrassment by a parent of a learner who publicly made derogatory remarks about her. He said:

ED11: *In one incident, I was insulted and embarrassed by a parent who came all the way from home to school just to humiliate me. Imagine being shouted at in front of the learners you teach, being told how useless you are and being labelled 'this fat thing'. I am very emotional when I remember this incident.*

In a similar incident of an educator that took place at School P, the educator narrated the story as follows:

ED1: *Last year (January 2020), it was school reopening. I witnessed a wrestling between a male educator and a boy at the school. The boy stormed out of the school and came back with a parent. The boy had apparently discovered that he had failed his previous year's grade and he had to repeat that grade. He was blaming the said male educator for his failure. The parent apparently came to school and was so physical, attacked and hit the male educator. She actually went straight to the class where the educator was teaching. In this incident, some of my colleagues helped in calming down the situation but the parent was very ruthless to the educator.*

The educators in this study, cited role conflict pertaining to themselves and the parents of learners they teach. Many educator-participants alluded to that a kid with poor disciplinary issues come to school with scamps from home and those issues habitually to some degree, were deemed related to the deficient acceptable upbringing standards as visible in the learners (children) at schools. The following examples were extracted from educators of Schools P and Q respectively, who vividly narrated their cases of learners coming from a question of disciplinary concern and poor upbringing background:

ED4: *The trouble is that some children live a double life. They are this at home and a different thing altogether at school. They are observable signs of poor upbringing in some instances. For example, in my school, a learner in the Class 9H had the ability to influence all the learners in the school to boycott classes. Apparently, the father is the leader of a well-known political organization in the local community. He always says to educators that 'like father like son' meaning to what he is doing. It is obvious that he is emulating the father. This causes a lot of disruption even on the child's progress in life.*

ED6: *In a random school search for dangerous weapons and drugs by the local police, a learner was caught with a great consignment of drugs, which he had brought to school to sell. Actually, when he was asked about these drugs he mentioned that his sister is married to this drug-lord (from a Northern African country) and they use him to sell drugs*

to children at our school. The police confronted the parent sister but she denied everything.

Indicators of mischievous rudiments that were evident and displayed in the teaching rooms by learners, could be ascribed to emotional challenges rampant in the learner's family environment. Thus, parental involvement in the education of their children was painted as apathetic and educators deemed parents to be 'adding salt on the wound,' especially the well-to-do parents who were described as having a habit of showing disrespect towards educators and treat them as the underclass. Some educators added that children from well-to-do families undermine them, and describe this as a characteristic, which the children had learned from their parents, which seem to make educators develop signs of dejection leading to depression. In the two extracts above, it also came out clearly that drugs and intoxicating substances are serious issues, which were attributed to the challenge of escalated learner-on-educator violence.

The statements of educators from Schools R and S who stated the following further strengthened this discovery:

ED9: *For an example, if one can refer to the young educator who was stabbed to death by a learner in our neighbouring school (interviewee was referring to School Q that is taking part in this study). It was all over the media that, a learner has stabbed an educator, but the learner was found to be under age, meaning that, according to the law of the country that [a] learner cannot stand before a court of law and meaning he is protected. Even the name of that learner was not published. The learner is a drug addict; he sells drugs and comes from a broken family. This clearly shows that educators are so vulnerable, and yes, they are vulnerable.*

ED14: *Yes. The learner-on-educator violence is escalating and very highly so and the drug lords have now gained access to our school. They have people even learners themselves, who distribute the drugs. Assumably, some learners will owe the drug lords and they will demand them to sell at school. Therefore, they have to sell. The reason why I think its escalating, it's because even the manner in which perform in their schoolwork; they perform very badly. Some learners come from primary school joining our school in Grade 8 or 9 already smoking, especially dagga and this weed. They don't start in high school they come here already being experts in using these substances. The high school environment now favours them because they are no longer confined like at the primary school.*

6.5.2 Summary and discussion

In all four Case Study schools, educators commonly described as observing disempowering attitudes displayed by the learners they teach which involved, lack of respect and disregard for rules. Statements suggesting educators were having feelings of hopelessness were identified. Most educators indicated feelings of being unappreciated in their endeavours of bravery of teaching violent learners, especially by the education authorities. They pointed out, among others, such concerns as teaching in overcrowded classrooms, and more so, under heavy workloads, which ultimately affects their general performance of achieving curriculum goals and their morale. Educators lamented also concerning management styles by some principals, which often leaves them with no choice except to keep quiet. This was indicative of signs of a communication breakdown between educators and the school administrators. Educators also felt parent were less involved in the education of their children, which seemingly resulted in children misbehaving and difficult to handle. These sentiments nearly described a summary of the educators' perceptions and experiences as extracted from the data collected. Generally, these perceptions of educators were summarized as leading to misery, dejection and depression.

The next section below represents the second part of Data Set 1 and these were recorded as the views of the School Principals interviewed.

6.5.3 Part 2: Experiences and perceptions from interviewing principals

The question on experiences and perceptions of the four Participant-School Principals from the four Case Study schools was asked: What are your experiences and perceptions as the School Principal on the issue of learner-on-educator violence at your school? Their responses to this question were grouped under Part two of Data Set 1 and their discussion follow below.

6.5.3.1 The complexity and difficulty pertaining to managing the learner-on-educator violence at School

Principals from Schools P, Q, R and S viewed managing schools as an overwhelming task. They described the challenge of changing times, leadership roles and effective management skills that they lacked as what mainly contributed to their inability to control or manage the phenomenon of learner-on-educator violence.

The representative sentiments from the principals of Schools P, Q and S expressed this predicament:

PR3: *Learners fight principals. Educators insult us. This happens almost every day in my school. If the principal is weak, there is no way he would control the situation. I do not know how I manage.*

PR2: *You can never lead from behind and you must wear a very thick skin. My educators go through a lot; they are insulted, derogatory statements are said to them; moreover, hitting and stabbing that leads to death is experienced. I have lost some educators because of this learner violence. However, at the very same time, the Department of Education is on my neck to follow policies. I do not feel protected myself even though I try to follow their policies.*

PR1: *Even though policies and legislation that one should adhere to are there, I do not cope with all these learner challenges and it looks like I am losing this battle. On the other hand, if you do not adhere to law you will find yourself in trouble with the same law.*

The School Principals also articulated the challenge of learners beyond the school going age as a huge threat to schools' stability and which makes it to a certain extent difficult to make other learners adhere to school rules and instructions.

PR1: *In my school, I am working towards finally eliminating the older children who are outside the bracket of the school going age because they are a problem. I believe the discipline will improve through this initiative because we experience many direct attacks from these old children. If they are not there, then I believe things will be better.*

PR4: *One of the extreme challenges I have had to handle as the principal is that, in our school we have had for a few years now, learners who are beyond the school going age. Moreover, such learners are difficult to control or manage. Some of them belong to certain groups and, there is pressure both on educators and on myself as the principal to appropriately manage these learners. Sometimes they would become so violent and utterly out of hand on educators. Others just want to be perceived as 'untouchable' in the school and no one will do anything to them. This problem does not end there; they would go further to an extent of belittling and undermining educators, especially young educators.*

There is eminent escalating pressure on principals to deliver and appropriately manage violent learners through the management of internal conflicts involving educators and learners. Principals daily encounter a growing problem pertaining to

intense levels of internal conflict amongst themselves. As a result, principals experience violence as coming from the staff they manage. It emerged from the interviews with School Principals that these internal conflicts were posing a grave cold shoulder pertaining to relations and opinion of themselves and of their reputation at schools as principals.

PR1: *I want to be honest with you; we do fight over our own personal issues that often lead to internal instability and sometimes leading to a breakdown of communication. Educators do use learners to achieve or retaliate against one another or against us... (Meaning the principal in the school).*

PR3: *... are you aware that sometimes our colleagues perpetrate this learner-on-educator violence within our own ranks... Yes. Other educators are involved sometimes in violence against their own.*

It was further revealed by three of the four principals that the drug issue was one of the leading factors that contributed greatly to the volatility in schools and it poses a threat to both learners and educators' security and well-being at schools.

PR1: *Some learners come from primary school joining our school in Grades eight or nine already smoking and using drugs, especially dagga and this weed. They do not start at high school; they come here already being experts in using these substances. The high school environment now favours them because they are no longer confined as it was at the primary school.*

PR2: *We have several different groups in our school. These groups are largely aligned to drug pushers in our community. A number of learners have become members of gangsters who are attached to one or more drug Lords. Therefore, the drug issue is my greatest concern.*

PR3: *The highest contributor is the influence of drugs these learners take. Some learners come 'high' at school. They will refuse to take instructions and will be influencing other learners to be disrespectful to a particular educator.*

6.5.3.2 The influence of rural cultural structures

The principals' common reaction was their perception to the influence of the rural structural set up as contributing to the mind set and thinking processes of learners, ultimately inducing an insecure environment of a culture of violence amongst the children (learners). This sentiment came from the principal of School Q who stated the following:

PR2: *I want you to note that about 95% of the community where my school is situated are Zulus or Zulu speaking people. They have beliefs that you cannot compromise. They will never give you a chance to compromise their culture. Our school is situated in a deep rural area. So being in such an environment, these learners, especially boys, during weekends they are not children. Even the elders in the community consider them, as I would say 'the matured'.*

PR3: *Some of these old boys are allowed to contribute to issues pertaining to the community's challenges. The rural chiefs even call them 'izifundiswa' meaning the learned ones. So at community gatherings and meetings, they are allowed to drink 'Umqombathi' that is, African sorghum beer because they are considered part of the decision makers in the community. They then take the same behaviour and attitude to school and that is when issues begin to move out of hand.*

The principal of School S supported the statement above:

PR4: *As a rural school, the cultural influence plays an important role. For example, our community is under the X clan [real clan name hidden] and they often treat some of our children as seniors; and to some extent as equals because of their role in the community. There is boy in Grade 11 who is the acting Chief in the area. At school, he just acts as a chief. Thus, this learner expects educators to give him the same treatment he receives from the community and a confrontation explodes. Educators will treat him as every other learner in the school and he finds it not fitting for his envisaged honour, which he receives from the community.*

The School Principals interviewed feel that cultural structures in their vicinity do not fully commit themselves to educational matters. Principals perceived this lack of involvement of the cultural structures in the education process as providing the breeding ground for hostile learners and ultimately intense community-school relations. They felt there was a need to increase the level of knowledge for the rural folk pertaining to; the importance of their involvement in educational issues; and the understanding of the role played by schools in communities in bringing harmony. Principals from Schools Q and R exposed a belief displayed by some of the cultural

leaders who were purportedly to still believe that schooling or formal education was a waste of time.

This was what they had to say:

PR2: *There is an external factor that I do not have control over, namely, the issue of schooling taken for granted by seniors, especially these cultural leaders. For example, a culturally appointed person who is also representing this community in the X municipality [real name hidden] heads this community. Seemingly, he does not care much about educational issues, especially the issue of learner violence. He always brushes it off.*

PR3: *Our cultural leaders are very quick to respond to issues pertaining what touches them directly but are not helpful in resolving issues that help maintain peace in our school.*

It also emerged from the interviews with principals that their schools operate in communities overwhelmed by the belief in witchcraft. This practice and the belief in 'muthi' (witchcraft) seem to paralyze and negatively affect the culture of teaching and learning at some schools. Moreover, the psychological pressure it imposes on the relations between learners and educators, especially to schools in rural environments, seems to be huge. This was what the School Principals of Schools Q and R had to say:

PR2: *Learners in my school believe so much in witchcraft. I am very sure of this; these learners mutilate one another, which then leads to squabbles that educators are not able to handle. They wear something on their arms, which they refer to as 'amabhande' that means the source of or belt of power. Once they are marked as having graduated to wear this belt of power, their blood boils off because this thing wants them to spill blood always; then they would want to fight.*

PR4: *One strange thing that educated people do not want to talk about is the issue of witchcraft. I once reported this to education authorities but they just ignored it. I guess it is because they do not stay with us here and, as such, they have never experienced what we go through every day. Most of the times, fights in our school starts off as a fight between learners accusing one another of witchcraft. Then, educators would want to jump in in order to maintain peace and calmness, then I bet you me, they get a hiding in the process. Ultimately, it becomes a learner-on-educator conflict. This is serious.*

6.5.3.3 Inability of schools at handling learners from child-headed families

The responses from the School Principals revealed educators as failing to handle the anger of children from child-headed families. Evidence was there that some issues in one-way or another were ignored, allowed to grow to the extent that reached the boiling point. Ultimately, principals were also unable to help their educators to manage resentments as exhibited by such type of learners at school. The principal from School R said:

PR3: *Some of our learners in this school are all by themselves at home. They are leading their families because either the mother or the father or both passed away. As such, we have a number of learners who come from child-headed families. Some of these learners have a lot of anger and they do not care what you say as an educator. They do not even mind to beat up an educator and then drop out of school. To them beating an educator is heroic.*

The principal from School P reiterated this:

PR1: *Twice learners who come from a child-headed home have attacked me. I do believe that things will stabilize now that one of them was arrested because this girl was a bad influence. These learners do bring insecure school environments because they want to be worshipped. I do not have time for worshipping children.*

Principals revealed expressions of misery at the influence of broken families and the impact these have on the stability of their schools. The principals from Schools R and S respectively said:

PR3: *Some girl in Grade 9 from my school confronted me and she was very stubborn. I quickly noticed that the anger she had, had some serious derivative origin. On consultation with the register educator, I discovered that she is coming from a broken family. Her mother is heavy drinker. The father abandoned them. The young girl works in a nearby farm after school because their mother apparently moves from man to another. When I heard this, I repented and changed my voice tone immediately and I now wanted to understand her better.*

PR4: *We deal with children from different family backgrounds. I have a number of them in my school. It is a challenging situation. Others are staying with grandmothers. They are coming from broken families. They are coming from unstable families. In some homes, I have learnt that the mother is in Johannesburg working there and the father likewise in some homes is in Durban for employment opportunities. Now, the grandmother has no authority over the child.*

This child's behaviour spill over to the school as something educators must handle but they are failing.

6.5.3.4 Dealing with stage transition, growth and child development

Principals from Schools P, Q, R and S confirmed having challenges dealing with the tragedy of stage transition, growth and child development. Principals were pointing fingers at educators' debacle of the alleged failure to deal with learners who seem to, somehow succumb to peer pressure because they are on transition to the next stage of their growth and development with no one guiding them through. Principal from School P said:

PR1: *There is a lot happening in relation to the stage transition with learners at school. I guess that might be the reason why we are experiencing a high volume of misbehaviour. Recall they are developing and they are discovering themselves. Some are giving in to peer pressure because they are going through a changeover to the next stage of their growth.*

Therefore, they demand a lot of attention and time. In the higher grades, they are at least having some light, however, they also suffer from different ills. I must state it clear that with our rural set up, things are tough for myself as the principal and even worse for my educators.

PR4: *Gone are the days when we used to say, 'these are my children'. This is no longer there. The way they move to the next stage of life is bewildering and overwhelming. It needs a lot of energy from the educator. Sometimes educators fail to identify the growth stages carefully and this jeopardizes their chances of helping these learners to transit successfully through their growing and development patterns.*

6.5.4 Summary and discussion

In all four Case Study schools, principals generally described the complexity of maintaining orderly schools and effectively sustaining stable school environments. The problem of learners beyond the school-going age seems to put too much encumbrance on principals and could impede discharging their leadership roles fully. Generally, from the excerpts above as pointed out by principals, educators lack skills of thwarting the learner-on-educator violence and the issue was described as daily becoming a living threat to their immediate environment and the teaching/learning process.

Principals appear to live far too long without disentangling problems at their schools and, as such, situations reach extreme ends that are unmanageable. Principals mentioned the drug problem as having reached escalated levels, which they deemed was beyond their control. Principals also stated the influence of the rural cultural structures as somehow hampering the managing aspect of the learner-on-educator violence, as they perceived these structures to be promoting the culture and the mind-set of a violent community that then spills over into schools. From the point of view of principals, educators seem to have some struggle in managing the anger levels of learners from child-headed families, further complicated by principals' inability to effectively support them in managing this situation at schools.

Following next is the presentation of Data Set 2.

6.6 Data Set 2: Influences of the learner-on-educator violence

This next section represents the findings of Data Set 2 from interviewing educators and principals pertaining to how the learner-on-educator violence influence their teaching and/or management practices at schools. The first part examined the assertions of educators pertaining to the learner-on-educator violence encounter as emerging from the educators' virtual semi-structured interview discussions. While the second part of Data Set 2 discussed principals' contentions. Educators' assertions answered the second sub-question, namely: **What is the influence of learner-on-educator violence on educators' teaching practices?** Their responses were summarized and grouped under the sub-headings that follow below.

6.6.1 Part 1: The Influence of the learner-on-educator violence on the educators' teaching practices at schools

This section examines the assertions emerging from the educators' virtual interviews discussions. It was important to determine how the learner-on-educator violence influence the educators' teaching practices within the school environment and classrooms. This was done to fittingly frame the theory under construction on the actual teaching practices at schools. The dominant educators' responses were grouped as Part 1 of Data Set 2.

6.6.1.1 Professional proficiency and work performance of educators at school

In all four Case Study public schools, educators mentioned that the learner-on-educator violence had reduced and degraded their work performance, which was alluded to as blameable for the deteriorating quality of learner achievement. This, they stated, had impacted damagingly on their professional proficiency. Educator 1 from School P said:

ED1: *I believe that as educators, we are constantly developing a decrease in our professional expertise and this is clearly indicated by our results and general school performance. But I also think that we do not receive sufficient help for the improvement of our skills. I am also certain that this challenge of poor performance can be addressed with other means. However, this learner-on-educator violence has negatively affected my morale and no one seems to be prioritizing the issue of skills development to restore the educators and learners' confidence in order to perform better*

The statement above was further echoed by Educator 5 from School Q. She said:

ED5: *The poor performance of the learners I teach is somehow an indicator that something is wrong. The violence has caused havoc in my school such that I'm no longer sure whether I'm still relevant in the teaching profession. I know that great improvement by the government has happened in all the learning areas at school. Thus, I reckon I'm left behind in terms of the new developments. This dampens my spirit big time. My drive is down and I feel I am failing to efficiently deliver given also the context of this violence we experience. My greatest worry is that educators are not always asked to confirm in which areas they need to be developed.*

Educators' have indicated that the learner-on-educator problem had led to their emotional and physical well-being being negatively affected. Some young educator-participants disclosed themselves as victims of sexual harassment and physical assault by the learners they teach. Young educators by virtue of their age cannot defend themselves, more especially against gang-attached learners who are also members of community hooligans.

Educator 7 from school had to say:

ED7: *In my school, last year alone, two cases of rape took place within this school yard. These cases were reported and they are still in the hands of the law. I am so afraid. In my little reasoning, I think disregarding the wishes of educators, for example, caring for their emotional needs, advancing of defensive skills for self-protection against violent learners, and acceptable means in making educators*

feel important and not the feelings of abandonment, can make a great change in preventing these learner hooligans from attacking us, especially us young educators. But nobody seems to care about our safety. I am devastated.

In support of the above finding Educator 2 from School P said:

ED2: *No one is thinking anything to protect the wellbeing of educators, forgetting that they are also parents, they have got families, and somehow they need to go back to their families alive.*

Educators indicated mismanagement and forfeiture of instructional time because learners become wild and complex to manage and much time would be spent subverting the volatile situation and in the process confrontations with learners are unavoidable. Educator 11 from School R stated:

ED11: *I must stress that a whole day can be spent trying to calm down violent learners and this disrupts and ruins productivity of the process of teaching and learning in the school. It happens to me at least once or twice a week that I must be involved with either fighting learners or some learners ridiculing or mocking a colleague.*

An educator from School S stated the same sentiment and said:

ED13: *I always suffer from loss of teaching time. In my school, we have class period registers where we keep the weekly teaching time either spent or lost for each lesson. Our principal always attempts to encourage to be in class at the right time and to use our time efficiently, but once violence breaks out, one would spend a lot of time trying to restore the situation back to normal. It is that bad.*

Judging from the two responses, it was evident that educators are fed up with the violence issue but they do not have proper techniques to handle the situation. If educators do not get enough or use their teaching time to the maximum, school results would be drastically affected negatively. From this finding, the damning cause was the uncontrollable consequences of the learner-on-educator violence incidents in the schools.

6.6.1.2 Influence on the quality of a healthy school environment bringing instability and volatility to the teaching process

An answer that was common across the four public schools was lack of educator commitment to the teaching and learning process. This was described as continuously contributing to sinking the schools into a further deep quagmire in fighting learner-on-educator violence.

ED8: *I know how dedicated I used to be. I am naturally an educator who cherishes working with children, however, I am very discouraged by the continuing violence in our school.*

ED3: *It is quite depressing to work under an unstable state of affairs where you know that results are always compromised by a factor you do not have control over. For now, it is very tough to control the violence in my school. My morale is seriously affected in the given circumstances of a violent environment*

Another challenge that educators of the four public schools had confronted was the cost of self-defence and the issue, which the researcher decided to describe as morality decency or impasse. Most participants had the feeling that they could do very little in resolving the violence against them by their learners by pointing out that some of them have been victims of the criminal justice system.

Retaliation in self-defence had landed some educators in prison. In her response, Educator 8 from School Q said:

ED8: *In 2018, a learner acted against me and opened a police case. The court established I should have acted and responded responsibly because I am an adult and the learner was a minor. I lost the court battle and I had to pay fine. In this instance, what had happened was that, the said learner had me hit with a stick on the head and I got swollen. I later got hold of the stick; I hit back, and that is how I managed to escape the situation. The learner's left arm was left swollen also because I smashed him on the arm. Therefore, each time I have an encounter with a learner I am scared that I might go back to the same previous situation. Therefore, I have always resorted to running away, which has its dignity impact because learners will laugh at you. You are taken as stupid.*

Besides, one of the participants had expressed the concept of 'violence' as somewhat being reported biased against them, particularly by the media.

ED10: *I think educators are exceedingly ostracized, hated and their profession deserted yet they play a significant part in developing the*

country's children by imparting skills to them needed by the entire country. It is even worse in that the media also show partiality against educators in their reporting. The society has developed an attitude that educators are just useless, hopeless and a nuisance.

The statement of ED10 was reiterated in one of the school safety meetings held at School P, where a member of the school safety team expressed concerns about the way the media covered school incidents pertaining to learner-on-educator violence. In this meeting, it was revealed that the media depict schools as perpetrators of school violence but fail to help schools promote safe school environments. The responses also indicated the inability of educators in maintaining the school's Code of Conduct. This discovery had the repercussion that the violence as perpetrated by learners against educators was either not correctly synchronized or was poorly addressed by the available school Codes of Conduct with the intention of reducing or stopping such violent acts.

Educator 1 from School P said:

ED1: *I think the discipline issue in terms of applying our school Code of Conduct is a concern because cases are not tackled timeously. There is always a delay. Maybe the principal is concerned about his reputation in the community, which is not doing us any good because violence keeps rising, and this ultimately affect the character and optimism of the school.*

Pertaining to the same issue of the Code of Conduct, an educator from School Q had to say:

ED7: *The fact is; in our school the Code of Conduct has never been reviewed for the past 5 or 6 years now. Then what do you expect in terms of curbing violence if even the law that must govern these learners is not well maintained?*

6.6.2 Summary and discussion

In the light of the submissions from the views of educators, it became evident that the learner-on-educator violence had severe unfavourable consequences on the educators' teaching practices at schools. The fact that educators exposed their sentiments plainly was in admittance to the issue of learner-on-educator violence as a serious ill to the teaching profession. Furthermore, the findings showed that the educators were not well equipped to combat the effects of a violent nature within school environments.

The next section discusses Part 2 of Data Set 2, which were the responses of School Principals to the following question: **How does the learner-on-educator violence encounter influence your daily management activities as the School Principal at your school?**

6.6.3 Part 2: The influence of the learner-on-educator violence on the principals' management practices at school

This section examined the assertions emerging from the School Principals' virtual semi-structured interview discussions. In order to check and understand School Management Systems and the key role players pertaining to school-violence management, it was imperative to determine how the learner-on-educator violence influence School Principals on their management task, namely, with regard to countering the gravity and effects of this occurrence. The dominant School Principals' responses were grouped as Part 2 of Data Set 2.

6.6.3.1 Indicators that learner-on-educator violence is a major deterrent of principals' admissible performance of their duties

The responses of School Principals showed a general view that principals carry work home after work. Principals perceived this occurrence as sizably decreasing their work performance at their duties as school managers. As a result, they are not able to satisfactorily control and manage the issue of learner-on-educator violence at their schools.

PR2: *Today, the principal's work involves a lot of paper work. Given the challenge of learners who are hard to control, I end up taking most of my administrative work home. The Department of Education wants paper work at all cost and when they visit you, 90% of the things they require is based on paper work. It is very difficult to focus on other issues 100%.*

PR4: *When I started as the principal 25 years ago, we managed well because we were dealing with very respectful children in our times. However, things have changed. You cannot do both paper work and manage these disorderly learners successfully. One of these must suffer. But what can we say? I will keep on trying.*

The responses of principals also pointed out that they were frustrated and tired.

PR3: *I am always tired (PR 3 was even frowning in expressing her point). I am having plenty of time at school, but guess what? I always spend this time on these daily issues of violence. I am always disrupted and I am so much exhausted and tired of this.*

PR2: *I thank God I am retiring in 5 months. I am tired and very frustrated; I wish August were yesterday so that I go home and rest.*

In view of most remarks by School Principals, they described the learner-on-educator violence as also affecting the school results negatively.

PR1: *When learners underperform, I take the blame and become the talk of the region. The department will penalize you for the results. They always neglect or do not even consider the effects of violence, and how these effects cost us at our schools. They will tell you, we are paying you to lead and manage this public school. This is very painful.*

PR2: *The issue of violence has tone down our efforts, we seem to be failing, and we are yielding to the situation. The results are always bad in spite of personally devoting time and energy towards making sure learners do get enough time to do their work. On the other hand, parents will place the demand for results on the principal.*

In addition, School Principals felt that there was existence of external factors that they were unable to control yet these had enormous impact on their management duties of decreasing attacks against their educators at school. Principals mentioned infrastructure and the budget paper money as the two most external factors they cannot control. They claimed this as the function of the provincial government. The principal from School P said:

PR4: *As a Quintile 1 school, we rely largely on the government funding for our school material, including books, feeding schemes and other projects. In most cases, the community will expect and even demand us to register their children even if no spaces are available. The government will also pressurize us to take all learners with no excuses. This place tremendous pressure to the school in terms of availability of teaching rooms, then what follows are overcrowded classrooms. In such a situation, violence is inevitable.*

6.6.3.2 Repercussions of a deteriorating schooling system

Principals indicated were going through a deprecating situation because of disgraceful community reactions that include School Governing Body members as instigating fights directed at principals in order to cause school instability implicating principals as failures in their management roles. The principals of School Q said:

PR2: *The School Governing Body will always itch to fight me solely for one main reason; they want the school money that we receive from government to run the school. Now, if I do not act in line to their wishes, then they also will resort using learners to cause conflict and sometimes use them to hit educators so that this reflects badly on my leadership as the School Principal.*

The principals from School P also shared the same sentiment concerning SGBs at schools. He said:

PR1: *In my school, the SGB chairperson has a way to instigate learners to fight educators but the whole thing being done to make me feel it. Now in the community, it will look like the learners do not want me as the principal but the truth is, it is all because I have taken my leadership role seriously and closed the corruption doors. So learners are sometimes used as tools to achieve selfish ambitions of certain people, especially of the SGB issues.*

One petrifying response by School Principals was their view of their school environments. Principals are scared and feel insecure inside the yards of their own schools. This finding indicated a deeply rooted and complex nature of the learner-on-educator violence problem. The School Principal of School S said:

PR4: *As a principal I am in the front of things always but let me tell you; I am so afraid to the point that I sometimes lock myself up in the office when these learners are rampaging. Yes, I will call the assistance of police but I am always so terrified.*

School Principals revealed the task of managing educators as a mammoth one for them. They alleged educators as engaging in retaliating and frustrating strategies against them. Principals also claimed that educators take advantage of them by using manipulative strategies because they know School Principals always react sympathetically to them. School Principal 1 responded as follows:

PR1: *By virtue of our calling, we must be protecting one another as professionals. However, things are not that rosy. Educators use manipulative methods in frustrating you as the principal. Some are well-known union members whom I expect to support me as the principal but they just become snakes.*

6.6.3.3 Principals' self-esteem, optimism and determination as negatively influenced

All Four-School Principals judged educators as showing disrespectful attitudes towards them and this was deemed to lower the principal's self-confidence and their morale were considered intensely affected by this.

PR2: *Some educators are just disorderly. Some of them lack the manner of approach towards the principal. I am a human being and I fully understand their circumstances but sometimes educators do not have respect for me.*

The School Principal from School R remarked the same:

PR4: *I play a very important role in providing a mechanism for a conducive learning and teaching environment in the school. However, some educators don't support me instead they will mock and show disrespect sometimes in front of these kids. This irritates and annoys me and at the same time affects my morale.*

Principals indicated expressions of exhaustion and a sense of being defeated from the daily complexities of the learner-on-educator onslaught and the general ills as emanating from the management activities of their schools. This seemingly had affected their determination and optimism as school leaders. The response from the principal of School P was noted and he said:

PR1: *Children will get into your nerves many times, but these days I feel so much down and demotivated. I do not know what to do.*

All Four-School Principals related as having experienced physical attack themselves from either learners or educators.

This was what some of them had to say:

PR2: *On this particular day, an educator stormed into my office shouting and claiming I was responsible for him not being appointed permanently. Apparently, the said educator was working on a special contract post that was renewable on a yearly basis. I am not sure where he got the information that I was responsible for him not being permanently employed. He then decided to attack me. However, later, he was relocated to another school as a permanent educator there. I never opened any case against him. Even today, this still pains me a lot, especially when I meet him.*

PR3: *The boy who attacked me had issues with an educator concerning Mathematics test marks. Since I saw the incident because it was just*

happening in front of my office. I tried to intervene to help my educator but that boy took out a knife trying to attack the educator. I managed to calm down the situation but, unfortunately, the boy cut me on my right arm just under my elbow. I never forget this incident.

PR4: *I lost four of my front teeth after a learner hit me on the mouth with a brick during a demonstration at the school. As you can see, I am using these false teeth (taking them out). I still tell this story even today. Learners can be vicious. In this incident, the perpetrators were known that they were learners at the school but they were never taken to task by either law or even the Department of Education for that matter. They did not face the consequences of their actions. However, as the principal I continued with my work. Teaching is a noble calling. You do not quit just because things are not going well.*

6.6.4 Summary and discussion

The responses of the School Principals revealed a very gloomy picture of what was taking place at schools pertaining to managing and controlling the learner-on-educator violence. From the remarks provided during interviews by the participant principals, it was evident that School Principals lack control of the learner-on-educator violence problem. A petrifying challenge was the attack on principals by their educator workforce. It seemed by their actions, educators shoot themselves on the foot.

This implies more complexity in resolving the issue of learner-on-educator violence. However, beyond this challenge, it was encouraging to establish that principals had developed a certain level of resilience against this norm. They have learnt to convert their challenges into strengths. The researcher deemed this to would benefit the creation of a theory that strengthened a positive stance against the learner-on-educator violence at schools. However, it was demoralizing to discover that educators and SGBs were involved in instigating fights and the violence at schools. This discovery is consistent with the argument by Segalo et al., (2018) that some educators were responsible for the breakdown of safe and secure school environments at schools. This further implied that, the lack of positive involvement of SGBs at school could trigger more instability that could ultimately pose a challenge of abdicating the school situation.

The next sections represent an analysis of Data Set 3 from interviewing both educators and principals pertaining to strategies used for coping and managing the situation of learner-on-educator violence at school.

6.7 Data Set 3: Management and coping strategies in the restriction of the learner-on-educator violence

The first part examined the assertions emerging from the educators' virtual semi-structured interview discussions, while the second part looked at the School Principals' views pertaining to the same question. The assertions both educators and principals answered the third and last sub-question coping and managing strategies they employ at school.

6.7.1 Strategies and coping mechanisms employed by educators at school

Below is the discussion as emanating from educators' point of view pertaining to the following third sub-question: **What strategies do educators employ to cope with and manage learner-on-educator violence?** The educators' responses were extracted from interview discussion transcripts. These were grouped as follows and a summary discussion followed afterwards.

6.7.1.1 Colleague-to-colleague support and in-school training for deterring the learner-on-educator violence

Most educators revealed that working collaboratively in executing inventiveness for handling the learner-on-educator violence, was one area that needed careful consideration. They revealed a lack of necessary skills to implement the curriculum effectively – something which ultimately demoralized and led them to be frustrated – of which, at the end, some of them eventually cast it on learners, with others resorting to resigning from the teaching profession. Educator 4 from School P said:

ED4: *The South African basic education landscape has changed massively. It requires an educator who is open minded. I think we are currently not very much upbeat concerning the implementation of this ever changing school curriculum. For example, in my subject area, I evade those areas that seem difficult. I just duck everything I'm not certain of how to explain.*

Educator 4 from School P further said:

ED4: *But after a lesson, I would be depressed, especially when thinking about the fact that, during examinations the learners might come across what I jumped during the course of the year. This dampen down my spirit all the time. I reckon educators need to work as a team across all subjects in order to assist one another.*

Educator 6 from School Q also echoed a parallel sentiment and said:

ED6: *I have been offering business studies in Grades 10 to 12 for the past seven years yet I am still not well acquainted with the teaching content of this subject although I am handling the entire phase grade. While I have a degree in Business studies and Commercials, I do skip certain topics because I feel I lack vital content information on these. As educators I think we need to work together in ensuring that we succeed as a team.*

The majority of the educator participants of the four Case Study schools suggested mitigating and managing potential violent behaviours through conveying the teaching experience gained over the years of exposure to violence in which they described this as crucial.

Educators 1 and 3 from School P said the following:

ED1: *Experienced educators are the furthestmost distinguishable elders in the school, who possess not only the ability to shape a safe place, but to also establish an acceptable frame of mind for both educators and learners through their experience.*

ED3: *Experience is useful at all times and no one can buy it. The procedures and interventions learned over the years and the expert role of elderly educators is crucial in keeping schools intact. There is an African Zulu proverb, which says 'Indlela ibuzwa kwabaphambili', which loosely translates as, 'what you don't know, ask from the experienced'.*

In all of the four Case Study schools, educators remarked, protecting the dignity of a colleague educator was significant and reputable. The educators seemed to understand the need to considerably reducing the dominance of violence against them at schools through promoting colleague-to-colleague respect and collaboration. Educator 9 from School R highlighted the importance of unity and respect amongst educators. He said:

ED9: *I think the violence at schools can significantly reduce if we can learn to respect and protect one another first as educators before we receive respect from our learners. It is disheartening to see an educator fighting another educator. It is said that 'Unity' is power.*

In addition to what ED9 said, Educator 1 from School P further indicated and elaborated:

ED1: *I always share with my colleagues how I personally use the avoidance coping mechanism because over the years it has always consistently worked for me. I try to avoid violent learners as much as possible. I do not address an incident immediately. When an incident happens in class, I am not going to entertain that incident there and there, but I will calmly call the learner alone right when the class is over and try to discuss and resolve that issue with the learner where they are no more spectators around. I can assure you, this works well with me.*

6.7.1.2 Monitoring access and entries to schools

Most educators in this study recognized that, there was need to monitoring access and entry to schools. There was a general feeling across all the educators in this study that unauthorized access to schools had proven one source of the murders of educators by unknown persons and that such incidents are sometimes not accounted for either by the law or school authorities. Educator 2 from School P said:

ED2: *...we really need to control all individuals entering our school. For example, in my school during the course of the day, our main entrance gate is usually left unattended. This gives an occasion for external folks to come into our schoolyard without being searched or even questioned what they are looking for. Our school 'stop nonsense' wall (meaning the wall fence), is not sufficiently tall. These learners effortlessly jump above it when they feel like escaping from school. Sometimes these community gangsters will be chasing them right into the schoolyard without any problem because they know no security will ask them anything. They enter our school premises as they wish.*

An Educator 12 from School R agreed with the sentiment above and further said:

ED12: *Police visibility should be increased and more unannounced police visits must take place. The police should frequently make these unexpected searches for drugs and dangerous weapons because this helps secure our schools. Learners will be afraid to bring dangerous things at school if they are aware they will be indiscriminately searched. Once or twice a week, this must happen. In addition, the police in conjunction with schools must deal with any other related criminal issues, which the learners might have with the*

State because some of these learners are known criminals in the community.

6.7.1.3 Extracting unique contexts within which the learner-on-educator violence occurs for advanced analysis

Some educators specified the need to identify all the common contexts where acts of violence against them by their learners occur. They said these should be categorized and dealt with according to their degree of severity. Educators deemed this necessary to quickly find a workable technique to addressing the serious attacks against them. With regard to this result, Educators 3 and 8 from Schools P and Q similarly articulated their views respectively as follows:

ED3: *To control these unruly learners, educators need to be proactive. I think the categorizing of all common acts of violence against educators in a special school handbook will help in quickly finding a solution that is readily available to all of us in our school. First, knowing what you are dealing with is important, then an estimation of the extent of its brutality and finally providing an immediate action to either stop or minimize its impact. I believe educators are smart enough and they are very creative people.*

ED8: *I think establishing internal school support groups will go a long way in addressing the violence against us. For example, such groups could be used to encourage certain acceptable behaviours by our learners and discouraging what we don't want. Those behaviours we envisage can be recorded in the school user-friendly handbook that can be carried anywhere by anyone. In that way learners will be able to bring home an attitude visualized and eventually change the entire school atmosphere; and the school will make everlasting gains and be able to eradicate any disruptive behaviour in our schools.*

Some educators further admitted that, their SGBs could facilitate immediately the rectification of minor misbehaviours. For example, most educator participants indicated that in dealing with and addressing serious cases of educator victimization by learner culprits, SGBs could act decisively and conclusively by engaging the policy on irregular learner behaviour.

Educator 5 from School Q stated the following:

ED5: *SGBs represent parents of learners in the school. By virtue of their position, they have the mandate to act decisively concerning misbehaving learners in order to safeguard the school against growing violence.*

As a technique of identifying and maintaining best practices which the educators from the four Case Study schools deemed could include; assessing additional educator characteristics and skills, they stressed the need to provide appropriate advanced training skills to educators. In support of this finding, Educator 4 said:

ED4: *I believe we need a holistic approach in combating the violence against educators at school; first, educators need to be empowered. They need programmes where they would be motivated and vent out their frustrations. Secondly, whosoever is involved in the development of the country's policies should have it in mind that educators are human beings first before becoming instructors. Therefore, they need to be trained on how to handle their frustrations, their interactions with learners and other staff members. Then we can talk of lesson delivery and handling the content knowledge.*

6.7.1.4 Collaborative and effective control of school environments

As a method of intervention and consultation process through protective strategies, the educators of the four study schools put forth some interesting guidelines pertaining to control of school environments. For example, educators suggested detecting violent incidents timely through school-police collaboration by having remunerated school-based educator law enforcers. In support of this, Educator 1 from School P said:

ED1: *Creating zero tolerance zones within schools will help a lot in keeping our school environments free from violence of any form. I think paying specialized educators as school-based law enforcers will help curb relapse of certain forms of physical attacks by learners against educators at school.*

Educator 5 from School Q agreed to this and said:

ED5: *Appointing educators at schools operating exactly like the law enforcement agency and working hand-in-hand with the local police as the intelligentsia of some kind within schools, will help to detect any form of violence before it actually takes place.*

As a way of improving community-school tight bonds that promote positive school climates, some participant educators further advanced and suggested prioritizing the participation of the larger community in which schools are located, to help in the fight against the learner-on-educator violence. Educator 10 from School R mentioned the following:

ED10: *I believe that the involvement of our communities should come first now so that the safety of all individuals at schools is ensured.*

People from our communities must desist this glorification of violence at schools. Violence is criminality. Children in schools should face what they have done. Learners thus must be handled in line with the offence they have committed.

A few participant educators indicated the strategy of involving pastors from the learners' churches for Pastoral Care, which they claim must take place within the school yards for control purposes and accountability. They mentioned that this could support the drive to limit the violence against them by attending to the learners' spiritual needs. In support of this finding, Educator 4 said:

ED4: *I think schools can positively make huge gains by involving pastors from these kids' churches. Pastors are still respected and highly esteemed people in communities. If the children at schools know that their pastor is involved in their behaviour at school, a mind shift might occur and schools will reap the rewards and the violence will be reduced in that way.*

6.7.1.5 Understanding and control of psychosocial and emotional issues of newly appointed educators

Most educators of the four Case Study schools indicated the importance of programmes that offer effective orientation to newly appointed educators as these have an impact in their psychosocial and emotional state. According to most educator participants, such programmes could account for ease of settling the newly hired educators in their new schools. Educator 12 from School R commented:

ED12: *Personally, I always motivate the newly appointed educators to do their work and encourage them to ask where they don't understand. If children do not respond accordingly, I encourage them to record such an incident because we do have a 'lesson irregularities form' that we use for recording little classroom mischiefs and disruptions. However, I don't know how the principal and the SMT talk to the newly appointed educators in our school. Nonetheless, I do believe they do give tips there and there for these young educators to be integrated smoothly in the schooling system.*

A few participant educators further suggested a continued and sustained motivation process of the newly appointed educators in order to relieve them of stress and boost their confidence in handling the learners in the new set up. To support this finding, Educators 2 and 9 from Schools P and R respectively said:

ED2: *I know how it feels to be new in a school. I also know the impact of being ridiculed by learners who want to show you that you are still a novice educator. Calming down new educators help maintain continuity of disciplinary standards and assisting the new educator in handling trivial misbehaviours acceptably and avoiding these from escalating into a crisis.*

ED9: *Protecting newly appointed educators is by virtue an 'in loco parentis' principle in that, older educators become parents to the new educators. I make sure they feel at ease by preventing and reducing disruptive behaviour by learners towards the new colleagues. In addition, coaching about conflict resolution techniques and non-violent approaches to new educators help in situations they soon encounter at school.*

6.7.2 Summary and discussion

From the answers of participants, it was evident that most educators from the four Case Study schools seemed to have been able to contain and manage the learner-on-educator violence in their individual school environments. However, it seemed they are not employing systematic and tactical methods in their endeavours of maintaining stability in their schools. Their responses suggested they were working individually and not as teams. From the interviews it emerged that there was limited solicitation of school policies by educators. This inferred that although educators have some knowledge and skills in counteracting the violence against them, it was carried out in an uncertain, unsystematic and haphazard manner. Therefore, it is crucial for educators to acknowledge that besides teaching, they have other roles at school of ensuring learners grow well and acceptably behave towards other people. By this, educators will know when to act and how to act whenever necessary.

6.7.3 Strategies and coping mechanisms employed by school principals as managers of schools

Below is the discussion as originating from the School Principals' point of view pertaining to the following third sub-question: **What strategies do principals adopt to cope with and manage the learner-on-educator violence within the school environment?** The principals' responses were extracted from the interview transcripts. These were grouped as follows and a summary discussion followed thereafter.

6.7.3.1 Promoting and implementing the Department of Basic Education (DBE) Policies

Three of the four School Principals indicated that they do employ the framework on discipline and violence reduction at schools as extracted from the Department of Education latest documents.

Principal 4 from School S said:

PR4: *I incorporate most things in my work plan for Quality Management Systems - QMS. The primary thing that we normally do with my SGB is the continual review of our policies to see if they still represent the actual situation on the ground. From there, it will be my duty as the principal to do everything according to book. Even though the SGB applies the framework on discipline and violence reduction in the school, it does not suit our environment because they copied it somewhere. Their document does not suit our situation. But I am having a discussion with my SGB and currently training them systematically in violence issues. I am directly involved in the process of shaping the government policies so that they are at least relevant to my school and become useful in protecting my teaching staff, learners, and everyone who is a stakeholder in this school.*

However, one School Principal from School R indicated that he does not only follow the DBEs approach to violence reduction in the school. But in addition, he also mentioned the vigorous engagement of governmental and external professional services, for example, psychologists from the local hospital and social workers.

PR3: *I do actively engage with our local governmental experts, especially from the public sector, namely, doctors, psychologists and social workers from our local SASSA office. Outside help has really benefitted this school, namely, the approach of understanding child development an expert's point of view such as our local government hospital psychologist who is working at Amajuba Hospital.*

All Four-School Principals revealed making use of the South African School and Administration Management System (SA-SAMS) in the provision of evidence based discipline portfolio for a misbehaving learner. The School Principal 1 from School P said:

PR1: *As a school, we make use of the SA-SAMS system. The SA-SAMS has a paper tracking system for a learner who is misbehaving. This is the Department of Education's technological technique of*

registering learners' disciplinary issues whether of a violence nature or any behavioural challenge.

I normally tell the learners I have my black book where I enter sinners. They literally think it is a black book but I know that I am referring to the SA-SAMS. According to this system, for each learner a portfolio must be created, in which all his disciplinary issues are entered every time he/she misbehaves.

6.7.3.2 Focused training that match up the demands of today's world of the teaching profession

All Four-School Principals in this study agreed to the strengthening of the training aspect of things at schools and the need to have a working framework that enhanced the wellbeing and safety of all individuals in the schools. Principal 2 from School Q said:

PR2: *Today's are different and teaching children in this era of the fourth industrial insurgency requires careful planning. I think we should strengthen the training aspect of things at schools. The Department of Education offers training sessions but only to Safety Committees of schools. It is important that this should be implemented across to all educators and members within the school.*

Echoing a similar view was Principal 3 from School S who said:

PR3: *There is a need to send our educators to anger management centres or establishments because educators these days are frustrated and angry. They are either angry at the system or angry at themselves with a sense of regret why they chose teaching as a profession.*

Three of the Four-School Principals came out openly and recommended the application of consequence management. They argued it should be a well-defined, appropriate approach relevant to use in addressing accountability and responsible actions of all role players within schools. The principal from School Q said:

PR2: *What I will say now is very tough. It is high time now that everyone must face the results of their conduct through consequence management. Although the truth of facing what we have created ourselves is somewhat painful, addressing this in this manner will go a long way in preventing this learner-on-educator violence. Learners must face the consequences of their irresponsible doing. But also educators who do not adhere to prescriptions of law must face the consequences of their actions. Yes, we hear this being expressed in some quarters (talking about consequence management) but nobody practices it. If 'that thing' can be in place and be followed, I think everybody will know when to act and how to act.*

However, one of the School Principals did not understand the concept of consequence management and he said:

PR1: *I think I need to be well schooled pertaining to this consequence management because it's completely foreign to me.*

However, the researcher continued to probe further on the issue at hand using some leading questions and cues until the principal was able to provide some evidence concerning this important aspect of consequence management. The principal, however, could not say a lot probably because he was not that clear on this concept altogether. All the four school Principals highlighted the importance of schools designing tailor-made school policies that speak directly to their unique situations; avoiding the transference of policies from one school situation to another. The principal from School S said:

PR4: *...concerning policies, if we can design our policies and following everything in our policies, then we are half way towards winning the battle of violence against educators. Look at white schools, if a learner misbehaves, they immediately take action by applying policy. We may not like them but on most occasions they do right things. Let us learn from them without copying their policies word for word because we have schools with unique situations.*

6.7.3.3 Strengthening the role of safety committees in curbing violence

Three of the four School Principals disclosed they had functional Safety Committees in their schools. However, though they said they were pro-active pertaining to the problem of violence, learner-on-educator violence in particular appears to have overtaken them and caught them by surprise. Principal 2 from School Q admitted:

PR2: *At this school, what we have learnt over the years is that we do not wait for the incident to happen. As the principal, I want to confess that the issue of learner-on-educator violence seem to have caught us off guard. The Safety Committee has been found wanting in many instances. They are continuing nail biting and I think we have a serious challenge. However, we are currently preparing everybody in the school including our general staff.*

To further attest to the above sentiment, two of the four School Principals indicated that there were diverse interpretations of policies, either by learners or by parents. Hence the difficulty faced by Safety Committees in undoing this type of thinking amongst the important stakeholders, especially learners at schools. The principals from Schools P and R respectively said:

PR1: *The reason why educators are endangered most of the times it is because we fail to provide enough evidence against the learner who is giving us problems at school either because of poor interpretation of policy or wrongly collected evidence. This seem to have even overtaken the Safety Committee; they have always failed to prepare the portfolio of evidence against misbehaving learners resulting in educators endlessly losing casing against the learner delinquents.*

PR3: *The challenge of diverse explanations of policies poses a threat in successfully dealing with learner-on-educator violence cases. We need better synchronized and systematic approach, especially of understanding and therefore application of policy. As an ex-officio member of the Safety Committee I feel more training in terms of policy articulation is paramount.*

6.7.3.4 The need to revisit the National School Safety Framework strategic guidelines (NSSF)

All the Four-School Principals generally expressed the need to revisit the contents of the South Africa's newly established NSSF meant to curb school violence. They considered the framework as fundamentally citing educators as implementers of policy, and much less as the 'aggrieved' or affected party in the quest for solution on violence against educators by learners. The principal from School S enunciated:

PR4: *Yes, in its preamble, the NSSF document, expresses some encouraging words that announce the importance of safe and secure schools but practically nothing is provided in the document that speaks to the problem of learner-on-educator violence. At present, there is very little support in addressing the safety of educators and almost zero care accessible to educators that is targeted at helping with coping approaches, which can be matched against the demands of their occupation. There is needs to be balance the demands of educators with those of learners at school.*

The Four-School Principals pointed out that positive 'parental involvement' in the kids' education was vital in safeguarding that systematic teaching and learning occurred at schools. The School Principals held that they were obligatory to collaborate with parents in supporting children. Principals coherently stated out enough grounds to believe that the non-present parents in the training of their children had threatened the security of educators' involvement in their task of imparting skills.

Therefore, lack of appropriate parenting was identified as contributing to the learner-on-educator violence at school, thus, for schools to function better, any violence-prevention agenda should stipulate sections that were compelling parents of learners by law, to be convincingly involved in the education of their children.

PR1: *Parental involvement in the education of their kids' offers a soothing feeling to me as an educator. When parents react positively to their kid's coursework, I become encouraged and interested in that learner. I firmly believe that parents are a fundamental component when assembling winning learners in the teaching/learning process. The achievement of these youngsters with their parents being there for them develops in them a sense of approval and subsequently a genuine fulfilment to both the child and the parent similarly.*

6.7.4 Summary and discussion

From the principals' excerpts above, it is evident that the learner-on-educator violence is not an easy responsibility but it is not an impossible thing to thwart. The principals from the four respective Case Study schools attested to the fact that they had preventive techniques that they apply uniquely to their school situations. It seemed that the different schools did not have formalized learner-on-educator violence broad preventive programmes. In the light of the results of Data Set 3 of principals, there was evidence of authority declining in schools with a corresponding increase on learner-educator confrontations. This further inferred that there was some level of sloppiness pertaining to 'unconcern attitude' in the execution of codes of practice and policies. This deteriorating status of principals' authority seemed to encourage learners to disrespect educators and being scornful towards authority with some learners even attempting to assault principals as alluded to by three of the four principals in this study. Thus, it became clear that the learner-on-educator violence is such a complex issue and calls for different methods in order to address it successfully.

6.8 Results and discussion of observation data

6.8.1 Introduction

This section represents data collected through observations. In this study, observations were carried out as secondary data collection tool in order to get data by observing at the four Case Study schools' infrastructure and other related issues. The researcher designed a Non-Participatory Observation Schedule (Appendix I) with the intention to observing particularly formal meetings of the School Safety and Security Committee meetings (SSSC) at all four participating schools.

Data acquired from observations were employed to supplement and substantiate data received through virtual semi-structured interviews. In addition, the researcher used some of the quotes from interviews to substantiate his observations.

The observations included observing of teaching rooms, other buildings, for example, science laboratories, computer classrooms and feeding scheme rooms. The researcher checked the schools' structures pertaining to convenience and appropriateness for use by learners and educators alike. In addition, availability and accessibility of the Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) including textbooks were checked. In the case of schools with computer labs, availability of working computers was observed. Overall, the researcher identified four most important classifications, namely: schools' infrastructure, Learning and Teaching Support Material and playground space for sporting activities and congested classrooms and these are discussed below.

6.8.2 Schools infrastructure

The researcher observed that in three out of the four Case Study schools, the condition of the buildings was deplorable. For example, in some classrooms, the paint looked old and had long peeled off. In one school, some classrooms had no roofing owing to the windstorm that they said hit the school in 2018. Since that time, no renovations or reconstruction of the damaged classes happened. In one school, inside the classrooms looked like a pig's habitation – very dirty, with desks looking old with tops falling off.

In another school, the fence was dilapidated and looked rusty and in certain places, it had fallen down. In support of these observations, in one of the interviews held with Principal 3 from School R, he bemoaned and said:

PR3: *The Department of Education is very slow in addressing the problem of schoolrooms obtainability and this is not good at all for achieving excellent educational goals. For example, as a school we applied in 2016 to get at least three new classrooms just to ease down the congestions in classes but to no avail until today. This school environment is not inspiring in any way. It is even worse because educators are not excited in doing their work. It is just a dull place.*

However, noticeably though, in one school out of the four Case Study schools, the condition of the school environment was much better in comparison and the school looked cleaner and neat right from the main entrance gate. This was credited to the work of collaboration between the principal, parents and educators of that school.

6.8.3 Learning and teaching support material

Pertaining to Learning and Teaching Support Material, the researcher established that two of the four schools had appropriate and enough textbooks. In the other two cases, it was observed that some learners were sharing second hand or used shabby-looking textbooks, while in certain subjects the educator's copy was the only available book. Photocopies of certain pages would be prepared and given to learners, more especially activity pages. In one school, learners were seen copying notes from the chalkboard. Educator 7 from school Q remarked attesting to this observation:

ED7: *Sometimes demanding from learners who have no workbooks or prescribed textbooks becomes very annoying and degrading to us as educators. That is why these learners will never stop mocking us just because we seem to fail in our responsibilities as schools to provide them with proper learning material. Whereas this is the duty of the Department of Education to provide textbooks because we are a Quintile 2 school. We entirely depend on the government supplies for everything. This thing will obviously seriously disturb the learners' class performance, not to mention my own performance as an educator.*

According to the responses recorded for both educators and principals, it was evident that the unobtainability of suitable teaching resources for schools affected not only the general school performance but also the morale of educators as indicated by the sentiments of the participants' excerpts from interviews.

6.8.4 Playground space for sporting activities

The researcher found that, in all of the schools, there was lack of sufficient sporting fields and/or facilities for the different sporting codes that were pronounced as being offered in each of the schools. The researcher had initially asked the principals of the different sporting codes being offered in the schools. However, on reconciling the information obtained from interviews and what was observed, it became clear that in all four Case Study schools, sporting codes only existed on paper except for soccer and netball which do had fields although for such purposes these were not properly constructed.

An educator from School Q had said:

ED5: *In our school, we do have different sporting activities, for example, tennis, rugby, cricket and so forth, but this is just to satisfy the requirements of paperwork when the Department of Education officials visit our school. In fact, we do not offer sports practically. This is shameful even to talk about it.*

6.8.5 Congested teaching rooms

An alarming observation that the researcher made was the seeing of overcrowded teaching rooms. For example, at School R, a classroom that had a capacity of approximately 30 learners overloaded close to 70 learners with some standing at the back of class on their feet during one lesson, not to mention the level of noise in that class. This was just pathetic and disturbing.

Lamenting the same challenge, an educator during one of the interviews at School R said:

ED9: *I think exposing educators to such poor working environments where teaching in a congested classroom is normal, is just disheartening and undermines educators' rights and those of the learners, of receiving learning in such unfavourable conditions.*

6.8.6 Summary and discussion

Making conclusions from the researcher's observations, and the validation of information received and gathered from participants, it became evident that the absence of dependable infrastructure; suitable learning material; and offering the teaching/learning process in overcrowded teaching rooms, negatively influenced the work of educators in the schools.

The lack of adequate sporting facilities further inferred a frustrated teaching staff and learners alike seemed inescapable pertaining to lack of recreational means for easing tensions and/or stress between educators and learners related to the learning and teaching process. According to Alderman (2018), the work ethics of educators and the general mind-set of learners come to be compromised when it is all work and no play, and thus violence between learners and educators become inevitable.

6.9 Analysis of data from document analysis

6.9.1 Introduction

Having obtained access to school documents, the researcher began the process of Document Analysis. The main aim of the Document Analysis process pertained to obtaining further information that would have been unexploited during the interviews and observation stages. The researcher also used some quotes from interviews with educators from the four schools to validate some of the information as discovery from documents of schools. The following were main summaries pertaining to the discoveries made from the documents obtained from the four Case Study schools.

6.9.2 Analysis of minutes of the School Safety and Security Committees (SSSC)

All the four Case Study schools were able to provide the researcher with minutes of their SSCs. Basically, the schools followed a similar structure of minutes taking and these minutes would indicate the date, time, venue, attendees to the meeting and a general agenda for that particular meeting. The narrations from the minutes indicated commonality more often on the issue of school safety as being discussed from a legislative point of view rather than implementing the contents of the legislation or rather the rules that schools have. This could be one evidence why schools cannot control the violent acts against educators that seemed to be on the rise and intensifying. Furthermore, the minutes indicated more reference to the learners' behaviour rather than descriptions of strategies that helped the protection of the educator component at schools. For example, they were similarities in relation to three of the four schools with regard to the narrations that ended without giving any way forward with regard to protecting educators but only mentioning sanctions to be imposed against learners or ways of excluding learners from the SSSCs meetings.

The following were two sentimental extracts from the SSSCs minutes of Schools P and R respectively, which, however, ended without giving any way forward for the challenge of increasing transgressions at the school:

Learner misconduct is escalating, this demands a different and detailed reflection of the rising levels of transgressions, sanctions that needs to be enforced on these learners and measures that must be taken to remedy this situation.

(Excerpt of Minutes from School P)

It is important to respect the time of our SSS Committee meetings as this controls the level of discipline within our own ranks. In addition, let every member put it in mind that the issue of safety is very important. Right now, we must think how we work with these learners. If we include learners in the meetings of the SSS Committee, it will compromise the safety of these learners; therefore, this requires us to think how we can convince the School Governing Body that learners must by any means be protected or maybe only be included on issues that directly affect RCL matters....

(Excerpt of Minutes from School R)

Judging from these sentiments above, it is appropriate to think of SSSCs at these schools as not tackling the issue of violence against educators from a strategic point of view. This finding is consistent with the finding by Mboweni (2019) in his study on exploring educators' morale in selected primary schools at Bohlabela Region in Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. Mboweni's study established that some schools excluded the voice of learners in matters of violence at schools. This inferred that the issue of learner-on-educator violence becomes more complicated in that educators are likely to miss the other side of the story of perpetrators (i.e., learners). Similarly, Masinga (2017) described such an action by educators as 'educators shooting their own foot'. In order to deal with the problems of violence at schools, Belle (2018) argued that it is always helpful to engage learners through their RCLs. Schools should not trivialize the contributions that learners can make if they intend to holistically confront the challenge of violence against them.

6.9.3 Analysis of minutes of the Disciplinary Committees of study schools

A careful scrutiny of the minutes of school Disciplinary Committees' sittings revealed learner indiscipline and violence as the two most frequent issues discussed and recorded across all four Case Study schools, with communications with external agencies such as the police appearing the least.

However, valuable information pertaining to joint cluster meetings of Disciplinary Committees of the circuit was extracted from Schools P and Q respectively. This valuable information provided a glimpse of the discussions held at these meetings. The discussions related mostly to the issue of drugs at schools, which seemingly overtakes the issue pertaining to this study, the learner-on-educator violence.

In all the minutes of the four study schools, at least there was mention of at least an average of four drug related cases from June 2019 to June 2020. This highlighted the depth of the drug problem at schools that is, however, not a concern of this study. The context and culture of learning institutions on how communities can be involved in curbing school violence were captured in the minutes. The other information included, for example, procedures on handling of school logbooks and involvement of RCLs in discipline and violence issues and these were found as records in these minutes.

What caught the researcher's interest though, was the phrase from School Q's Disciplinary Committee minutes, which described the role that could be played by educators in cutting down unnecessary conflicts between educators and learners at schools. This piece of information furnished a management technique that narrated how supporting school interventions, evaluation, and re-evaluation of programmes targeted at slowing down violence against educators could be of assistance to schools. It further referred to critical factors that dictated change that transform and build better relationships between learners and educators without blaming anybody. These factors included, namely, the use of non-governmental agencies, the department of health, and the department of social welfare; improving networking and communication between schools in the circuit and financial resources targeted at controlling school violence. Although this was just a short narration, it opened a door for the researcher pertaining to the formulation of a more grounded solution acceptable across these schools' circuit to start with.

A concluding remark regarding minutes of school Disciplinary Committees was that, it seemed the schools were prioritizing the problem of school safety although the violence against educators had not been treated as an isolated issue but had been blanketed as school violence.

6.9.4 Analysis from school incidents books

The four Case Study schools had different methods of recording incidents that occurred at school. Schools Q, R and S used a thick two-quire exercise book, which they referred to as the incidents book. Whereas only School P used a computerized system of recording the details of learners' misconduct deeds. Thus the records for School P were accessed by the researcher from the school's desktop computer at the principal' office. From the analysis of all the incidents books, the researcher acquired some logic on some of the unlawful acts by learners at these schools. The researcher only scrutinized the preceding 12 months' records and he noted that the rate of recurrence of aggressive behaviour amongst learners was high; followed by confiscation of dangerous weapons that learners were in possession of; followed by acts of intimidation and victimization and disrespect episodes against educators by learners.

In addition, the researcher noted recurrent disobedience acts of defiance such as not wearing of appropriate school uniform. The incidents books correspondingly appeared to substantiate the findings gathered through the virtual and/or face-to-face interviews. The analysis of these documents also seemed to similarly agree with the researcher's observations that manifested at schools. For example, in three of the four Case Study schools, that some learners did not wear the correct uniform with appropriate school colours. Some learners had impressive upmarket sweaters on with some wearing non-school sport T-shirts. The analysis also validated what the researcher found during virtual and/or face-to-face interviews from some educators who stated concerns about disrespectful learners who even refused to follow simple dress code rules at school.

6.9.5 Overview of the schools' code of conduct for learners

All the four Case Study schools indicated had the Code of Conduct for Learners. The School Principals individually furnished the researcher with a printed copy of their school's Code of Conduct for learners to read-through. The researcher noticed that the contents of the Code of Conduct policies for learners, accommodated for all conceivable acts of transgressions by learners, for example, aggressive behaviour, theft, bringing dangerous weapons to school, acts of dishonesty and copying during formalized assessments and examinations. Fighting and violent behaviour seemed to be the leading challenge in all of the four Case Study schools.

From the analysis, the Code of Conduct of the four Case Study schools had specific policies dealing with particular disciplinary challenges, for example, learners who bring cell phones to school, handling of bully learners and the basic disciplinary processes followed for major acts of misconduct. However, the researcher noticed that in the four Case Study schools there were some discrepancies pertaining to the implementation of their Codes of Conduct, especially in the way the schools circulated the contents of the Codes of Conduct to the learners and parents of learners at the schools. The researcher's analysis support the sentiment shared during interviews with the School Principals that, educators only referred to documents when there was a crisis of discipline, particularly when a learner had transgressed. However, this argument is contrary to what was established at School R, where the Code of Conduct was found to be circulated together with the admission letter to parents during official school opening meetings, just a day after the Department of Education had officially reopened schools.

An important discovery made was that in all of the schools the Codes of Conduct for learners had been presented based on the exemplar framework furnished by the Provincial Department of Basic Education. Primarily, the different Codes of Conduct indicated four common parts with dissimilarities only with respect to the first part that gave the preamble, school vision, mission statements and a summary of the objectives of the code. Part 2 specified broad subjects such as school starting times and knock off times, morning assembly meetings, commencing of the teaching/learning process, learner movement and change of class periods, learner conduct towards others in the school, school property and equipment and learners' educational errands. Part 3 sketched out learner conduct pertaining to overall behaviour of all learners within the

school environment, for example, respecting others in the school, keeping of school regulations, extra and co-curricular activities, dress code and general appearance of all learners in the school and grievance processes. Part 4 defined the disciplinary measures for learner misbehaviour.

6.9.6 Summary and discussion

Judging from the documents studied at the four schools, it was evident that rules and regulations were available to guide educators, learners and every member of the school community on how to behave within the ambits of the law inside the school environments. The researcher was able to gather information on the Code of Conduct documents, which indicated that, for all the schools, the Codes of Conduct were user friendly even though in some schools still needed major modifications in their Codes of Conduct for learners. In principle, a major document such as the Code of Conduct for Learners should create a responsive impression to both parents of learners and learners at schools. According to Liebenberg (2017), the language used in the contents of all school documents should be simple and straight to the point for ease of articulation. Otherwise, a document carries no value if it is difficult to be understood by the audience for it was intended. From the analysis by the researcher, the language used in most of the documents was technically difficult and a bit confusing to an illiterate fellow. For example, the usage of terms like, anti-racism, anti-bullying and so forth may not be easily understood or perhaps, well-articulated to an ill-informed person from a rural place.

6.10 Conclusion

Chapter 6 presented, described and meticulously explored data collected ensuing techniques that were employed during the virtual semi-structured interviews educators and School Principals of four Case Study schools at the Gert Sibande District in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. Observations and Document Analysis were used as secondary data collection strategies. The comprehensive description and analysis of voices of each of the 16 educator participants and 4 School Principals were presented. An in-depth understanding of the problem of learner-on-educator violence at schools was gained.

The next chapter (i.e., Chapter 7) recapitulates the main findings as emerging from the empirical investigation deduced from conclusions made from virtual semi-structured interviews, observations and documents analysis. The literature review is referred to in order to help the researcher to answer the main research question, which is *“How can the violence against educators be countered in South African schools?”*

Grounded on these findings for improved practice, Chapter 7 then gives a summary of recommendations to the National Department of Education, the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Education, School Governing Bodies and principals, district circuits and educators as curriculum implementers. The special contribution of this study is also highlighted. Limitations of the study are unpacked and presented and the researcher concludes by labelling trepidations for further research by other researchers.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION TO THE STUDY

7.1 Introduction

The main objective of this empirical investigation was to explore how educators, who are victims of learner-on-educator violence, managed and understood the violence against them and how this violence influenced their teaching practices. Thus, the ultimate aim was to develop a model for countering the violence against educators at school. In Chapter 6, data were analysed, presented and interpreted. The intention was to provide a concise meaning as emanating from the observations and virtual semi-structured interviews held with both educators and School Principals of four Case Study schools in this study. Accordingly, the primary objective of the current chapter is to provide a summary of key findings, conclusions and recommendations of this empirical investigation. This has been done through the discussion of the key themes that emerged from the data. Once the summary of key findings, conclusions and recommendations have been presented, with the relevant contributions of study, the limitations of the empirical investigation and focus areas for further research are discussed.

7.2 Summary of the study

Chapter 1 presented an overview of the study on violence against educators. This overview included discussions of the statement of the problem, the rationale for study and formulation of the research questions. The brief research methodology for the empirical investigation was introduced pertaining to data collection strategies, discussions of the research paradigm and research approach and sampling procedures. A further detailed discussion was done on Chapter 5 of this study.

Chapter 2 was devoted to the applicable theory used as theoretical framework to understand how educators as victims of school violence managed and understood learner-on-educator violence within the school environment. In order to understand educators' experiences a systematic merged theoretical framework relating to Grounded Theory and Eco-Systemic Theory approaches were employed.

Chapter 3 focused on violence against educators reviewed from an international viewpoint. This was done through the review of international studies on educators as victims of school violence.

Chapter 4 focused on a review of literature in relation to the South African context of violence against educators. In addition, an account of how educators managed and understood the learner-on-educator violence situation within their school environments was deliberated. In this regard, educators' counteractions to the violence against them were examined from a South African perspective.

Chapter 5 discussed the research methodology for the empirical investigation. The discussion included an account of the processes that were carried out in order to collect relevant data that answered the research questions satisfactorily. These processes pertained to a consideration of accompanying research methods and the selection of research sites and research participants. Data analysis techniques and the handling of credibility, trustworthiness and ethical considerations were also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 6 presented the research results from the empirical investigation as concluded from data obtained through virtual semi-structured interviewing, observation and Document Analysis.

7.3 Research findings

7.3.1 Introduction

The preceding section gave a broad summary of the complete empirical investigation focusing on how educators, as victims of school violence, manage and understand the violence against them. This section of Chapter 7 offers the discussion of the main research findings of the empirical study. The key findings of this study are deliberated based on three research sub-questions derived from the primary research question. The main findings are summarized individually underneath the sub-questions. These are later summarized into a single generated Grounded Theory.

There were three sub-questions, which assisted, this empirical investigation achieve its aim and these were:

- What are the experiences and perceptions of educators on learner-on-educator violence?
- What is the influence of learner-on-educator violence on educators' teaching practices?
- What strategies do educators employ to cope with and manage learner-on-educator violence?

For this study, conclusions were determined through transcribing the data gathered from both educators and School Principals employing virtual semi-structured interviews, observations and Document Analysis. The questions asked by the researcher were aimed at revealing the experiences and perceptions of both educators and School Principals pertaining to the influence of learner-on-educator violence on educators' teaching practices. In addition, the probing method of questioning was intended at unravelling strategies that educators employed in order to cope with and manage learner-on-educator violence at schools. Throughout the virtual semi-structured interview process, the recordings of the interview discussions with participants was exceedingly vital because key findings depended entirely on these exchanges. For all participants, the researcher listened to their responses, analysed them and transcribed them. In addition, observations were conducted and Document Analysis carried out throughout the fieldwork undertaking.

During Document Analysis, the researcher reflected both to internal and external criticism on the adaptation of the data collection process (Moises, 2020). As such, an important parameter pertaining to Document Analysis for this empirical investigation was that, everything were ought to be probed. For this empirical investigation, data were arranged systematically after an exhaustive scanning process that captured key categories and their subsequent themes.

Data were afterwards accordingly categorized and synthesized. From this process, this empirical investigation gave the following findings:

7.3.2 Findings pertaining to objective one and research Sub-question 1

7.3.2.1 Findings Pertaining to Research Sub-Question 1: Data Set 1 Part 1: Educator Perceptions: What are the Experiences and Perceptions of Educators on Learner-on-Educator Violence?

To provide an answer to this question, this study found that educators perceived the learner-on-educator violence as having a number of different encounters with varying dimensions. Educators experienced disheartening attitudes by learners that lacked respect, and these were revealed as ever increasing, frustrating and confrontational affecting their personal, professional and physical lives. Ranked in the order of their impact, from highest impactful, the identified encounters about learner-on-educator violence were revealed as follows:

- Emotional abuse of educators by learners they teach;
- Schools as toxic workplace locations depicting a negative picture about schools as centres of teaching and learning;
- Overcrowded classrooms as interrupting the process of teaching and learning
- Schools as being under-resourced;
- Creeping distrust of ‘senior administrators’ in the provision of well-founded leadership qualities;
- Lack of constructive involvement of parents in the education of their children; and
- Lack of mutual respect between educators and parents of learners at schools.

These encounters were identified as perceptions of educators as leading to misery, dejection and depression. A finding from literature review pointed out alarming security concerns that remained rampant in many South African schools that include crime with assault, drugs, sexual violence and gangsterism being routine and an everyday event (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.2.1). Eradication of mistrust and fear are some of the attitudes which were well explained in literature which have also emerged from educators’ reflections. Thus, it is therefore important as indicated from literature that schools should do improve in the provision of, not only the acquiring of academic

knowledge, but with respect to growth concerning personal development and learning to know how to live together with others.

Literature reviewed further showed that schools are a habitation where youngsters learn mistrust and fear, and develop distorted awareness of their individuality and character; self-esteem which finally accumulate increasingly so, to antisocial behaviours (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.2.1). In agreement with this literature review finding, this study found that, educators have reached a state of helplessness pertaining to learner discipline and control, particularly disrespectful behaviour of learners towards them. Further to this finding, educators believed and are convinced that they are unappreciated by the Department of Basic Education concerning the bravery they display as front-runners of the National Curriculum at South African schools.

The following statement summed up the key finding of Data Set 1 Part 1 as follows:

Key finding 1 (a): Educators experience different encounters of learner-on-educator violence with varying impact on them. Although they do attend to the aggressiveness of learners at school level through School Disciplinary and Safety Committees, the schooling system was found to be deteriorating quickly and educators do not cope.

7.3.2.2 Findings Pertaining to Research Sub-Question 1: Data Set 1 Part 2: School Principals' Perceptions: What are Your Experiences and Perceptions as the School Principal on the Issue of Learner-on-Educator Violence at Your School?

To provide an answer to this question, this study found that School Principals experience low levels of support from almost all stakeholders in the education sector, namely, from district, education departments, Circuit Management Administrators, and School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and from their own educator staff. This study found that School Principals find it overwhelming to manage and control the learner-on-educator violence at school.

A peculiar finding was that there is an overwhelming pressure on School Principals to deliver under very difficult conditions. This contributes to increased unpredictability and instability to schools, which posed a threat to schools' security trepidations particularly to members of the school community.

The most uncharacteristic finding was the distrust School Principals have developed against rural cultural structures where their schools are located.

They consider these structures as irresponsible and contribute to the mind set shift and distorted thinking processes of children (learners) that ultimately induce insecure environments of a culture of violence amongst the children (learners) at schools. The cultural practice in the instance of the quest for developing strong boys through small fights that encourage bravery, children would misinterpret this cultural drill. Naturally, the children will want to show off to other learners at school that they are true men. Consequently, these children carry such a mind-set to school thus disrupting the school's stability. This was thought to characterize the upbringing around an environment that promote acts and the belief that a man ought to be strong, however, producing a negative impact on the schooling system. This impasse has given birth to the inability of schools of in dealing assertively with the tragedy, especially during stage transition, growth and child development.

This finding concurs with the finding from literature reviewed that, educators lack in the training that can work to promote effective child development approaches that counter the negativity associated with acts of violence. Some educators were labelled by principals as failing to use and attach common sense rules that integrate goals of child management and effective learner-teacher interpersonal relationships; as these are necessary ingredients for destabilising children's negative behaviour towards educators and their equals alike (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.2.2). This finding has an implication to the ability to cope with new educational progresses in the area of modern teaching methods and thus needed attention.

Another important finding this study established was the failure of schools to handle children from child-headed families. This study found that children from child-headed families were not well understood thus not well managed by schools. In one way or another, schools tend to ignore them. Expressions of misery at the influence of broken families leak over to schools and the impact these have on the stability of schools is inconceivable. This finding agrees with that of a study by Simuforosa (2015), namely, that some learners come from broken families where the bringing up is not done acceptably; as a result, when such children come to school, the educators find it very challenging to discipline or cope with them. This finding also concurs with a research

that investigated incidences of learner discipline and their effect on educators, which found that some educators perceived parents as using schools as dumping zones for their spoilt children (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.2.2). Thus, educators are obligated to put extra effort in the matters of disciplining the learners. With its often upsurge of work demands, this learner-on-educator violence related factor negatively affects the well-being of an educator and often becomes a barrier to an effective learning/teaching process.

Another important finding this study revealed was the continuing complex issue of drugs being easily accessible to learners at schools. This finding agrees with the findings from literature reviewed that uncovered factors that link to violence in the communities, namely, prevailing poverty, deficiency of resources, and the accessibility to illegal substances, including drugs and alcohol which were linked to learner-on-learner, and learner-on-educator violence at schools. This finding is consistent with what Document Analysis revealed that, a majority of schools' meeting minutes' discussions related commonly to the issue of drugs at schools, which ostensibly overtook the issue pertaining to this study on the learner-on-educator violence.

Thus, concerning School Principals' experiences and perceptions, the following general finding is submitted:

Key finding 1(b): Maintaining orderly schools is a complex task for School Principals that has reached escalated levels, which are unmanageable, with drugs, learners from child-headed families and rural cultural structures hampering the management aspect of the learner-on-educator violence by them.

7.3.3 Findings Pertaining to Objective One and Research Sub-Question 2

7.3.3.1 Findings Pertaining to Research Sub-Question 2: Data Set 2 Part 1: Educators' Perceptions: What is the Influence of Learner-on-Educator Violence on Educators' Teaching Practices?

In relation to the phenomenon under scrutiny, this study found that the learner-on-educator violence reduce and degrade educators' work performance which led to poor learner-achievement at schools. Poor school results negatively affect the emotional well-being of educators. This finding is consistent with the literature reviewed, which revealed that educators do respond broadly to school violent issues. However, they are not coping because they have to deal also, with public pressure for improved academic performance at schools, while coping with the hard-to-teach learners in

South African schools. This finding is further relatively blameable for the loss of considerable teaching time by educators who spent most of their teaching time calming down hot-blooded learners and in the process find themselves in confrontational conflicts with violent learners.

Another appalling finding was educators who have lost interest in the teaching profession and ultimately had low levels of commitment towards the teaching and learning process. Educators who are victims of the learner-on-educator violence problem indicated increased levels of helplessness and lacked commitment. This finding infer schools have sunk deeper into an intricate predicament of learner-on-educator violence due to inconsistent and inadequate support for educators at schools. This finding also confirm the literature reviewed which revealed that educators at schools were discouraged and dejected, nervous, endangered and frightened and thus feel unsafe coming to schools (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.2.2).

This study also revealed the media as expressing the concept of 'learner-on-educator violence' as rather reported biased against educators, particularly with respect to offering solutions. The researcher summarized this participants' viewpoint, by illuminating the manner, in which educators perceived the media. The media reports on school violence in the manner that motivate public perceptions, which contribute to specific attitudes and can inspire certain decisions by policy crafters. The more often a matter is undertaking in a particular approach by the media, the more expected that readers would perceive the media's account as the truth (Nako et al., 2018).

Generally, news is presumed dependable, all-inclusive and unbiased. However, this study found through participants' views that, the media emphasised on the highly discouraging outlook of school violence rather than offering and encouraging social responsibility.

Thus, concerning the influence of the learner-on-educator violence on educators teaching practices, the following general finding is submitted:

***Key finding 2(a):** With the current state of affairs at schools, educators could do very little in resolving the violence against them by their learners and it is evident that educators are exposed to severe unfavourable consequences of the learner-on-educator violence that included huge workloads, congested teaching rooms and media that reports biasedly against educators.*

7.3.3.2 Findings Pertaining to Research Sub-Question 2: Data Set 2 Part 2: Influence of the Learner-on-Educator on School Principals' Management Activities: How does the Learner-on-Educator Violence Encounter Influence Your Daily Management Activities as the School Principal at Your School?

In answering this question, this study found that the learner-on-educator violence negatively influenced principals' performance of their duties at schools; thus, principals are tired and frustrated. Principals showed deep elements of what the researcher referred to as 'leadership fatigue' and a sense of being overpowered from difficulties of the learner-on-educator violence. Generally, the management task of principals at schools has become more complicated. This has affected their tenacity and optimism as front-runners. In addition, from literature, Masinga (2019) revealed that School Principals fared poorly when it came to consultation in decision-making, which emphasized the necessity for an improved principals' attention on decisiveness in their approach to their leadership practices.

A frightening finding that added salt on the wound was the issue of communities being directly involved in the instigation of learner-educator conflicts. This finding indicated a deeply rooted and complex nature of the learner-on-educator violence problem. Arising from literature in support of this finding, Kingwill (2016), who agreed with Human-Vogel et al. (2017), revealed that youth in South Africa live in communities in which they learn that violent behaviour pays.

They learn that violence is a possible way to unravel their issues, which makes them feel commanding and imperious. The finding overall confirmed that families play an important role in children upbringing. This study confirmed the researcher's opinion raised in Chapter 4 (see section 4.2.3.2) that, a decline in the relationship between healthy family life and family satisfaction promoted increased neglect, conflict, violence, substance abuse, poor relationships and disconnectedness in families. Literature supported the interpretation that there may be calamitous consequences resulting from community violence spilling over to society, particularly affecting educators and children as learners at schools.

Thus, concerning the influence of the learner-on-educator violence on School Principals' management activities, the following key finding is submitted:

Key finding 2(b): Principals' endeavours of managing and controlling the learner-on-educator violence are thwarted by the demoralizing actions of educators and SGBs who are involved in instigating the learner-on-educator fights.

7.3.4 Findings Pertaining to Objective One and Research Sub-Question 3

7.3.4.1 Findings Pertaining to Research Sub-Question 3: Data Set 3 Part 1: Strategies and Coping Mechanism Employed by Educators at School: What Strategies do Educators Employ to Cope with and Manage Learner-on-Educator Violence?

The third sub-question was aimed at determining strategies used by educators to manage and cope with the learner-on-educator violence at schools. In answering this question, this study found that educators implemented various collaborative initiatives to control and manage the problem of learner-on-educator violence, which included the following:

- colleague-to-colleague support;
- monitoring access and entries to schools;
- advanced analysis of particular exemplar learner-on-educator violence occurrences for improved future deterrence strategies;
- Mitigating and managing potential violent behaviours through transference of experience gained over the years of exposure to violence;
- Identifying and maintenance of best practices that reduce violent acts;
- Involvement of SGBs in mitigating minor and manageable misdemeanours;
- detecting violent incidents timeously through school-police collaborations;
- prioritization of the participation of the larger community in which schools are located; and
- Involvement of pastors from the learner's local churches for Pastoral Care.

An important discovery made from literature reviewed agreed with most techniques indicated above (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.3). Literature revealed that building resilient school-community relationships could ultimately contribute to retaining right educators in schools because educators would be experiencing harmonious school-community relations; hence literature showed that addressing the day-to-day educators' challenges would help to establish school positive ethos and a non-violent culture amongst school community members including educators and learners.

Thus, concerning the strategies and coping mechanisms employed by educators at school, the following key finding is submitted:

Key finding 3 (a) educators employ an amalgamation of strategies and coping mechanisms in order to manage and control the learner-on-educator violence at school.

7.3.4.2 Findings Pertaining to Research Sub-Question 3: Data Set 3 Part 2: Strategies and Coping Mechanism Employed by School Principals: What Strategies do Principals Adopt to Cope with and Manage the Learner-on-Educator Violence within the School Environment?

The third sub-question was directed at School Principals with the aim of determining strategies they adopted to cope with and manage the learner-on-educator violence at schools. To answer this question, this study found that School Principals employed the different frameworks on discipline and violence reduction at schools as given in the Department of Basic Education policies.

To deal with learner-on-educator violence, the following were strategies mostly used; principals use:

- the South African School and Administration Management System (SA-SAMS) which is commonly employed to capture the evidence based discipline portfolio for misbehaving learners;
- School safety and discipline policies;
- To a limited extent, focused training that enhance the wellbeing and safety of all individuals within the schools; and

- Parental involvement in the education of their children and also in the handling of discipline cases of their children.

The finding above slightly confirmed the finding from literature reviewed that revealed efforts directed at dealing with school violence were in place, which include growing basic levels of good management skills, school effectiveness and teacher professionalism (See Chapter 4, section 4.2.2). However, in her Grounded Theory research, Khanyi (2013) revealed that strategies that deal with school violence should focus on good leadership and educator resilience, which was the commitment of this study.

For this study, the finding was that the designing of effective prevention programmes that work to systematically improve the internal school organisation were not in place at schools. In support of this finding, literature pointed out that if schools lacked a continual raising of futuristic hopes and occasions for an improved school-working environment then it is a recipe for tragedy. Furthermore, literature pointed out that the best way to create order was to increase a sense of promoting secure working settings by generating effective prevention strategies (see Chapter 4, section 4.4.2). However, this study found that principals were less innovative pertaining to learner-on-educator violence preventive programmes. In addition to this finding, schools lacked systematic, continuous management and supervision of their coping or control mechanisms, which this study deemed necessary for School Principals to integrate organisational capacity of schools such as understanding the interconnectedness of policy execution pertaining to educator tasks strictly demarcating these from School Principals' tasks.

Thus, concerning the strategies and coping mechanisms employed by principals at schools, the following key finding is submitted:

Key finding 3 (b): School Principals do apply a few preventive techniques that are unique to their school situations but have not been formalized as programmes to counter the learner-on-educator violence; thus, this deteriorate the status of principals' authority at schools.

7.3.5 Summary

This section of Chapter 7 presented the discussion of the main research findings of the empirical investigation. The key findings were deliberated based on three research sub-questions and their subsequent objectives initially put forth. The sub-questions were addressing the primary research question: *How can the violence against educators be countered in South African schools?* The study proceeded from a qualitative research approach primarily located within Grounded Theory. The study sought to understand and reveal how educators who are victims of learner-on-educator violence coped and managed this phenomenon at South African schools. The researcher was able to present and provide an authentic and insightful understanding of how educators interpreted their day-to-day interactions with the learners they teach pertaining to the learner-on-educator violence at school.

7.4 Summary of the Grounded Theory for this study

Grounded on the findings from the empirical investigation, and through the researcher's exploration of relevant literature, observations and Document Analysis, this section briefly presents and discusses the researcher's 3-step Grounded Theory method. This 3-step Grounded Theory method on the educators and principals' response strategies generally allowed the researcher to capture what was useful pertaining to dealing with the learner-on-educator violence as constructed and grounded on data. To achieve this, the researcher discussed and presented this as summed up by the three steps of primary characteristics of how educators as victims of school violence could manage and control learner-on-educator violence at schools.

Developing a model on how the violence against educators could be countered was the original commitment of this study. To this end, the Ecological Systems Theory and Grounded Theory as an amalgamated theoretical framework were used as appropriate lenses for making reasonable judgements of answering the primary research question that guide this study (see Chapter 2, sections 2.2 & 2.3); and to correctly capture and elucidate the researcher's 3-step theory method grounded on the data. First, a recap of the key findings is important and these were captured as follows:

- Key finding 1 (a): Educators experience different encounters of learner-on-educator violence with varying impact on them. Although they do attend to the aggressiveness of learners at school level through School Disciplinary

and Safety Committees, the schooling system was found to be deteriorating quickly and educators do not cope.

- Key finding 1(b): Maintaining orderly schools is a complex task for School Principals that has reached escalated levels, which are unmanageable, with drugs, learners from child-headed families and rural cultural structures hampering the management aspect of the learner-on-educator violence by them.
- Key finding 2(a): With the current state of affairs at schools, educators could do very little in resolving the violence against them by their learners and it is evident that educators are exposed to severe unfavourable consequences of the learner-on-educator violence that included huge workloads, congested teaching rooms and media that reports biasedly against educators.
- Key finding 2(b): Principals' endeavours of managing and controlling the learner-on-educator violence are thwarted by the demoralizing actions of educators and SGBs who are involved in instigating the learner-on-educator fights.
- Key finding 3(a): educators employ an amalgamation of strategies and coping mechanisms in order to manage and control the learner-on-educator violence at school.
- Key finding 3(b): School Principals do apply a few preventive techniques that are unique to their school situations but have not been formalized as programmes to counter the learner-on-educator violence; thus, this deteriorate the status of principals' authority at schools.

The stated findings present the learner-on-educator violence as a complex challenge that encompasses various elements of educators' lives including their professional conduct, interaction with learners and the discharging of their obligation of imparting skills to learners. Such an interaction and impartation of skills occurs within an environment that is mainly made of an interplay amongst the factors of a physical, cultural and social nature. In order to explore the ecology of the contexts of the teaching and learning environment as put forth by Bronfenbrenner (1994), important elements as coming from the findings have been incorporated as part of this theory.

7.5. Evaluating the 3-Step Grounded Theory

The first step concerns 'fully-perceiving' that educators are part of a school community that require support and enhancement of their skills to relevantly fit and function efficiently to deliver the National Curriculum outcomes without hindrances. Schools as workplace sites must provide a conducive atmosphere for the relations that exist between educators, School Principals, learners, general staff and the School Governing Bodies as governors of schools to function maximally. Consequently, because of the principles of workplace culture (Mncube, 2014), there is a certain level of cooperation required to harmonize these relations and allowing them not to crumble. Given such a background, there is an aspect, which the researcher would like to refer to as 'total-direct dependency' between educators' meaningful support and their ability to cope with the teaching profession demands. By meaningful 'support', it is intended to mean that characteristic of attention given to an individual educator, which is not limited to providing comfort or encouragement but also concerned with the necessary mechanism to do so. In Chapter 2 of this study, literature revealed that observing educator' fissionable reactions (referring to evolving negative interaction between educators and learners), is crucial. Therefore, identifying the basis of meaningful support starts with, in this instance, knowing the intensity and duration of an incidence in order to better frame what could be understood that is a driving force behind the learners' violence against their educators as this forms, to the highest degree, part of the solution to the problem.

The second step is concerned with, as indicated in section 2.2.1 of Chapter 2, determining the transactional practices of the learner-educator relations - referring to child behaviours as impinging on their way of thinking in relation to actions towards their educators; and as rooted in the relationship between the learners and their environments. One common type this study confirmed was the transactional practice, which most educators at schools use that of holding private individual dialogues with their learners. This practice helps the learner to identify himself/herself as a child first and as an important member of the school community.

In turn, the interlinked relationship of the home-school neighbourhood environment become more visible and well understood in the frame of mind of the learner as a child within a network of relations.

The participation of the learners as they grow as children in such an environment influence and eventually isolate those issues which need to be tackled separately as the 'core' drivers of violence against educators. On the other hand, educators gain satisfaction and a sense of purpose in doing their teaching task, which enhances their proficiency and general performance. This then facilitates effective teaching and learning under healthy and supportive conditions. In observing issues beyond the control of the school community network, it is important to study such contexts separately from the educator-learner interactions. This study was limited to a school environment and only derived meanings by interpreting educators and School Principals' points of view. Hence, under the recommendations section of this study, the researcher gave mitigating strategic recommendations that would stabilize the occurrence of the violence against educators. The recommendations were flowing from the key findings discussed in earlier sections of this chapter.

The third step is concerned with diagnosing the role-played by School Principals in ensuring effective and well-functioning school structures, namely, School Management Teams, the School Safety and Discipline Committees, School Governing Bodies and Representative Council for Learners. These are very important structures forming the core school community. Thus, the School Principal by virtue of his/her position is obliged to engage and transform all school structures to function optimally. If school structures function well, the broader school community develop collaborative and mutual strategies, which positively engage everyone in the school. Attempting common preventive programmes become more perceivable and achievable. The School Principal then plays a pivotal role in constantly improving the school environment for better curriculum implementation, enhancing accountability, and the provision of improved working conditions. However, that ought to be admitted by all stakeholders as a mutual and collaborative activity, which eventually draws and forces everyone in the school towards addressing violence issues holistically.

This study revealed some of the aspects that must be harnessed to yield positive results in the fight against learner-on-educator violence at schools. These aspects were communicated under the recommendation sections of the study.

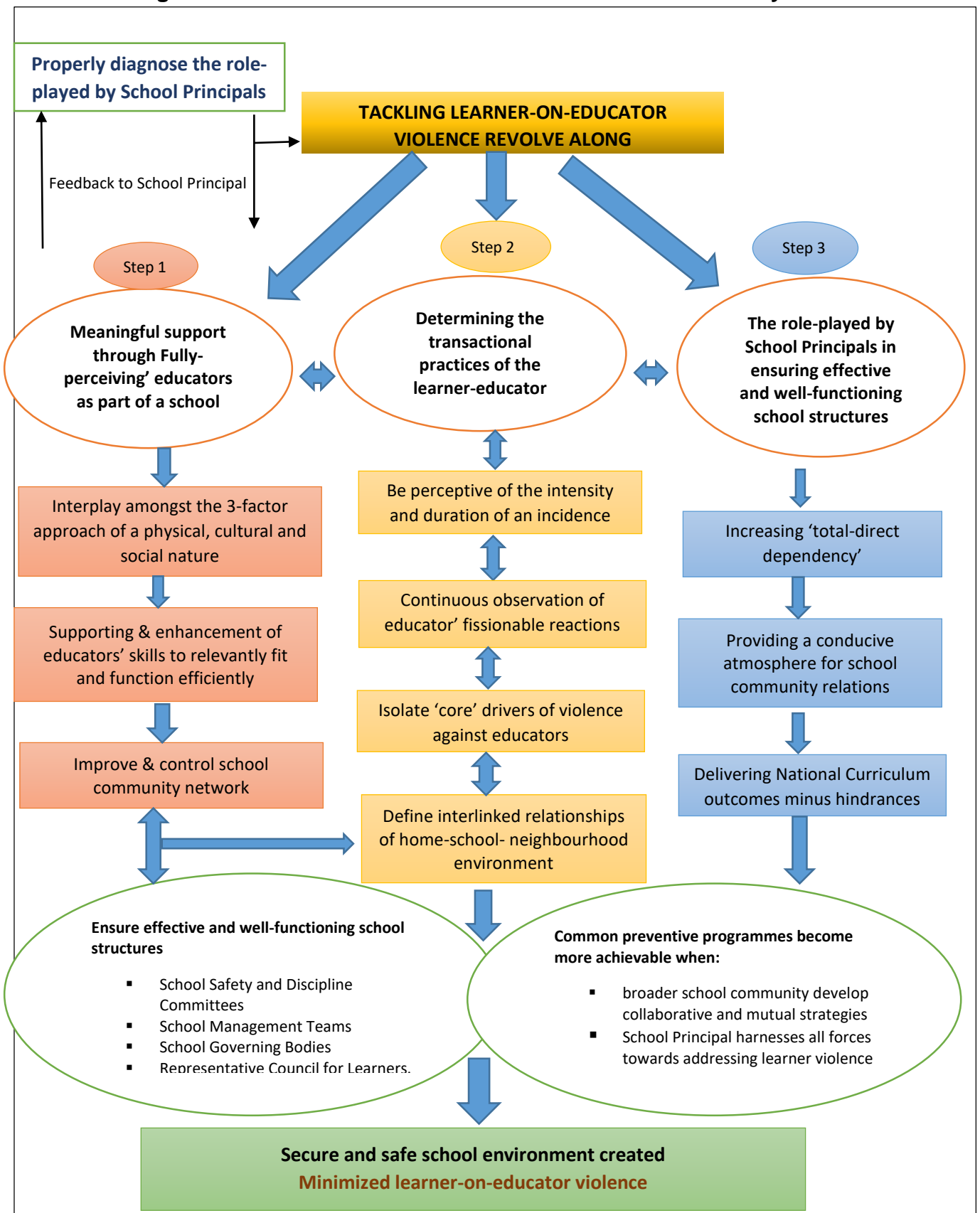
Cultivating a conducive school environment, in addition to dealing with personal educator capabilities has been indicated in both international and local studies to promote the mental health and the propensity of educators to communicate knowledge

better (Berg et al., 2016; Birolim et al., 2019). Thus, any successful specific School Anti-Violence Programme would contribute to identifying characteristics that discriminate threats against educators. Moreover, when schools are acquainted and exposed to school-violence regulatory strategies that address both capacity and implementation techniques, then exterminating the deeper concerns of the learner-on-educator violence become more eminent and practicable. This study made a breakthrough in arguing a direct and practical process of the regulatory strategies dealing with the learner-on-educator violence problem.

To summarize the 3-step Grounded Theory, School Principals must not be afraid to take decisions in the quest of their leadership role at schools. Primarily, addressing the requirements of their challenging role means building their leadership capacity and supporting them through the Continuous Professional Development (CPD), which is the standing framework for educator development in South Africa. Principals would be able to transfer the same leadership capabilities to their educator staff. In short, this would be their greatest incentive to their educator staff, of leading by example and delegating some of the principal roles to others in the school. Delegation would be a form of creating ownership of the school programmes and goals. Thus, the blaming game diminishes because everyone is on board pertaining to what must happen in the school in reducing the violent incidents.

Figure 7.1 below draws the reader's attention to a schematic representation of what the researcher has proposed as a 3-step Grounded Theory model constructed to counteracting learner-on-educator violence based on key findings of this study. The interrelationship between these key findings was given some details as shown in figure 7.1 below:

Figure 7.1: Schematic Representation of the 3-Step Grounded Theory Model Pertaining to Learner-on-Educator Violence at the Four Case Study Schools



According to Kraus (2019), it is important for researchers to trace back their journey at the endpoint of their quest by reflecting on what makes sense to the reader or audience. For this study, the researcher has elected to reflect upon the quality of his generated 3-step Grounded Theory by employing the four-point yardstick as used by Charmaz (2015) to review the quality of theory formulation, namely, credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness. The researcher reasoned it as important to elucidate 'the quality aspect' of this study's theory because the learner-on-educator violence is a phenomenon infrequently researched as it was revealed by the literature reviewed.

Pertaining to credibility, the theory must have achieved intimate acquaintance with the background or topic by providing logical acquaintances between the collected data and researcher's argument and analysis (Charmaz, 2015). The 3-step Grounded Theory model presented for this empirical investigation finds acquaintance with the research process. After the coding process was initiated, the progression of data analysis was equally logical and systematic. The researcher's organization of the data analysis process, as generally explained in Chapter 5 together with the applicable appendices, affords readers or other researchers a review-tracking system concerning the advancement of all concepts used for this study. The schematic representation of the violence countering model (see Figure 7.1), supports the credibility of the theory as applicable to the four Case Study schools for this research.

Pertaining to originality, categories should be fresh and suggest new insights of the Grounded Theory by challenging, outspreading, or refining existing ideas, concepts, and practices (Charmaz, 2015). This was proven in the style of presentation, probing and evidence extraction from the virtual and/or face-to-face interviews, which led to the key findings of this study. The display of categories, themes and sub-themes through key concepts and their dimensions provided a comprehensive understanding of the researcher's process of engagement with educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence at schools. Re-counting the interactions and their corresponding relations amongst the school community members, namely, educators, School Principals, learners, SGBs, general staff and external stakeholders, offered new understandings into the method of dealing with violence against educators by their learners.

For this study, these understandings were concluded and presented as a 3-step Grounded Theory model. In addition, the findings of this empirical investigation demonstrated the importance of resolving the school-violence issue from a multi-approach perspective of engaging everyone involved with the education of children at schools.

Pertaining to resonance, the description of categories should display the completeness of the studied experience (Charmaz, 2015). Thus, the Grounded Theory formulated, should make sense to the participants who shared their circumstances with the researcher and offer them with a deeper insight concerning their lives and environments (Betz & Wulf, 2018). The information richness as grounded in the educators and School Principals' own declarations, gave a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The Violence-Countering Model presented revealed an important implication for education managers and education planners as discussed under the section on contributions of study. The study inferred recognizing that the learner-on-educator violence had far more reaching consequences than those currently deliberated by the education fraternity.

Pertaining to usefulness, the researcher's analysis should offer interpretations that participants or persons can employ in their daily lives with ease (Charmaz, 2015). Furthermore, the researcher's analysis should spark further research in other fundamental areas and contributing to creating a better world. The Violence-Countering Model generated for this study has transferable elements as drawn out from categories. The generated theory embraced some essential features applicable in other training or teaching orientated settings with different populations in which complex issues relating to 'violence' may not obviously emerge, for example, violence directed at community college trainers by their trainees. The Violence-Countering Model advanced for this study is convenient to first expose, control, and then deter disputes or concerns, which may not be immediately perceptible or verbalized. In addition, other researchers agreed with some elements of this empirical investigation, which emphasized the usefulness of Grounded Theory as a methodology for studying social justice concerns (Betz & Wulf, 2018; Azzari & Baker, 2020).

7.6 Recommendations of the Study

This study used a qualitative research approach primarily located within Grounded Theory chosen to explore the experiences and perceptions of educators and School Principals. Hence, this section of the empirical investigation is aimed at providing recommendations from the key findings and conclusions painted in this study. The reason for giving recommendations for this study is to provide education managers, educators at schools and policy crafters within the Department of Basic Education, with a model of understanding and ameliorating violence against educators in the name of improved educator wellbeing engendering improved learning success. In this regard, the whole aim is to promote and help secure non-harmful school environments and enhancing school leadership that cares for its educator component. Thus, the recommendations are presented below.

7.6.1 Recommendations Pertaining to Objective One and Research Sub-Question One:

7.6.1.1 What are Educators' Experiences and Perceptions of the Learner-on-Educator Violence?

The key finding for this part of the study revealed the challenge of educators as experiencing different encounters of learner-on-educator violence with varying impact on them. This was found to deteriorate the entire schooling system and result in educators not coping with the learner-on-educator violence. Educators are filled with fear and are frustrated. As there is an escalating rate of occurrences of the learner-on-educator violence at schools, the Department of Basic Education ought to immediately step in and provide a temporary relief through provision of professional counselling support first to educators who are already traumatized. This infers accelerating a more practical approach to the protective factors through the path of counselling and life skills education as highlighted in section 4.4.3.2 of Chapter 2. Practically, what would work is the establishment of a relief fund (whether temporary or on a permanent basis, that could be established later), where a special budget is set aside to address the urgent restoration of the already compromised and depleted educator component.

Educators could interpret this as a gesture indicating that the Department of Basic Education cares for its educators as implementers of the National Curriculum, and declaring that educators are important for economic growth through their provision of a skilled workforce. This could also act as an educator-retaining strategy at schools because educators are living the teaching profession. In short, educators articulated an impression that demanded recognition and earmarked them as important assets for delivering National Curriculum outcomes. The researcher acknowledges the direction taken by the Department of Basic Education pertaining to the *National School Safety Framework* as just one-step in the right direction.

This study supports the Department of Basic Education's commitment to the rights of all educators in South Africa. Thus, this empirical study recommends fully operationalizing of the *National School Safety Framework*, as the researcher believes it could offer some recourse to all those in the school community, of realising the vision set out in the National Development Plan, and to ensuring safe and equitable access to quality education for children throughout South Africa (cf. DBE, 2015). Various support structures to assist victims of school violence are indicated in the draft *National School Safety Framework* developed in 2015 as an intervention strategy (DBE, 2015). In this recourse, educators need to be guided on the steps to take in case of a violent occurrence, which they may experience as perpetrated by learners at school. Educators should be assisted what to do when reporting incidents of a violent nature.

7.6.1.2 What are School Principals' Experiences and Perceptions on the Issue of Learner-on-Educator Violence at Your School?

This study revealed that maintaining orderly schools has become a complex task for School Principals and that the problem had reached escalated levels that are unmanageable, where access to drugs, problems of learners from child-headed families and rural cultural structures, are all obstructing the management side of things for School Principals. It is evident that without systematic strategies, it is difficult to bring order at schools under control. To address this impasse, this study recommends to the Department of Basic Education to rightly diagnose the role of School Principals pertaining to learner-on-educator violence at schools. School Principals must be well supported in refreshing effective and well-functioning school structures.

This will improve and help build healthy interrelations between the school community, support School Safety and Discipline Committees to function competently; School Management Teams to work collaboratively; and School Governing Bodies and Representative Council for Learners alike.

7.6.2 Recommendations Pertaining to Objective Two and Research Sub-Question Two:

7.6.2.1 What is the Influence of Learner-on-Educator Violence on Educators' Teaching Practices?

Linked to the finding of this empirical investigation, it was found that educators could do very little in resolving the violence against them by their learners. It was also evident that educators were exposed to severe unfavourable consequences of the learner-on-educator violence, which included being burdened with huge workloads, congested teaching rooms, and the media that reported biased against educators (see Chapter 7, section 7.3.2.3). This study recommends to policy makers and the National Department of Basic Education to direct Provincial Departments of Basic Education through gazetted legislation and policy provisions to equip schools with appropriate security gadgets, including employing competent security guards, at least two, in schools with bigger school populations, and one in schools with lesser school populations.

Population size can be determined according to Guidelines for Employment Provisions of the Employment Act. Entry to schools is compromised by lack of appropriate fencing. Thus, the Department of Basic Education through SGBs has an obligation to safeguard schools by preventing unauthorized access to the school premises through fencing the schools. Quintiles 1 and 2 schools are 100% State reliant pertaining to funding; therefore, these State-funded schools could be a government priority. In this way, delivering the National Curriculum will become a reality without hindrances caused by lack of support from the relevant education authorities as revealed by this study.

7.6.2.2 How does the Learner-on-Educator Violence Encounter Influence School Principals' Daily Management Activities at School?

This study found that, despite principals' endeavours of managing and controlling the learner-on-educator violence, their plans are frustrated by the distressing actions of educators and SGB members who are in the forefront in the instigation and provocations of the learner-on-educator fights. Based on this finding, this empirical study recommends to District Education officials dealing with matters related to school governance and Circuit Managers to engross SGBs (School Governing Bodies) in robust training to correct develop and improve the conduct of such members.

This may take some substantive time but ultimately it could yield the desired outcomes of ensuring a safe and secure school environment. Pertaining to educators who misbehave, unions should be involved because support coming from Teacher Unions may prove pertinent and valuable. School Principals should strive to nurture School-Trade Union partnerships because they have proven to work most of times. It was revealed in the literature reviewed that, if unions collaborate with government and schools, they can certainly diminish the complexity of school violence, which influence negatively on achieving perfect and sustainable school environments (see Chapter 4, section 4.4.3).

7.6.3 Recommendations Pertaining to Objective Three and Research Sub-Question Three:

7.6.3.1 What Strategies do Educators Employ to Cope with and Manage Learner-On-Educator Violence?

The finding of this empirical study pointed out that educators employ an amalgamation of strategies and coping means in order to manage and control the learner-on-educator violence at school. Grounded on this finding, a recommendation is made to School Principals and Circuit Managers to prudently review their schools' organisation internally. In the four Case Study schools, this study found no formalized programmes in place that curbed the learner-on-educator violence. This recommendation agrees with the literature reviewed that there was a need to isolate, monitor and control the violence against educators by creating a broader understanding of educator harassment at schools (see Chapter 4; section 4.4.2). Educators perform a critical responsibility at every phase of learner progression and growth.

Thus, farther the consideration pertaining to educator persecution tolls at schools, there is need to increase a more pronounced likelihood of lowering school violence in general, by paying more attention to violence against educators in particular. Decreasing learner-on-educator violence could thus present gains for all members of the school community. Thus, this study recommends a systematic formulation and supervision of prevention and intervention programmes that must urgently take place at schools.

Circuit Managers could come in to quality assure and ensure compliance and act as external evaluators of the strategies and procedures that schools as organizations are obliged to implement in making their schools safe for educators and learners.

7.6.3.2 What Strategies do Principals Adopt to Cope with and Manage the Learner-on-Educator Violence within the School Environment?

The findings of this empirical investigation revealed that School Principals do apply a few preventive techniques that are unique to their school situations but have not been formalized as programmes to counter the learner-on-educator violence; thus, this had led to the deteriorating status of principals' authority at schools.

This study recommends to the Department of Basic Education to refresh the knowledge and understanding of School Principals pertaining to school violence in general and learner-on-educator violence specifically. This infer School Principals taking compulsory tests and checks in relation to prevention plans they have developed for their schools. Literature revealed that this could take the Department of Basic Education to screen School Principals against their level of understanding in relation to background information about the primary application of prevention strategies at workplace as proposed by Occupational Health and Safety Act, Act No. 85 of 1993 (see Chapter 4; section 4.4). This action could increase School Principals' commitment to care for their staff and support members of the school community according to their orientation to the norms of the schools. This recommendation assumes that School Principals would have been informed prior about this requirement and may have developed a learner-on-educator violence-prevention plan, made it known to new educators who join the school and would have trained them on the practical aspects of his/her prevention plan.

The aspects in question would include the need for training and re-skilling of educators at schools in dealing with, amongst others:

- practical steps engaged in that facilitate a countering influence that will be accepted as a wide-ranging school practice;
- hands-on concrete interpretive deterrence actions that reduce the impact of a threatening situation; and
- intervention strategies that works and unique to a given schooling environment.

The next section discusses the contribution made by this empirical investigation to the body of knowledge, the teaching profession and to policy making.

7.7 Contribution of the Empirical Investigation

The critical objective of an investigation is to search for information that adds value to theory and practice, knowledge and understanding and to law and policy (Graham, 2018). To this end, this study expectantly had to improve and deepen understanding of the learner-on-educator violence problem in South African schools. Thus pertaining to that improvement and understanding, the researcher identified the following valuable benefactions as highlighted herein under.

7.7.1 Contribution to Theory and Practice

Learning and teaching at schools is enriched when the atmosphere inside the school permits conducive and healthy school community relations (Williams, 2020). This study provided the model for such an atmosphere and presented information to entirely perceive educators as school community members who need to be well supported to sufficiently deliver and convey the National Curriculum to children at schools. This model displayed how important it is to eradicate and isolate the core drivers of violence in order to improve and secure safe environments at South African schools. Any acts of violence against educators or School Principals are counterproductive and damage the image of the teaching profession. The arguments and opinions that were echoed by educators and School Principals were loud enough to realize that something was amiss between theory and practice.

Hence, this study was able to make fair contributions to either rectify or refresh some of the practices, which were deemed to influence the violence against educators at school. Thus, to this end, participants in their own words indicated many generic challenges construed from different perspectives. This study was able to contribute positively in bringing the different pedagogic approaches as used by educators in their quest for understanding the escalating problem of violence under a focused approach, which was made easy for readers to follow.

7.7.2 Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding

The aim of this empirical investigation was to understand how educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence dealt and coped with this problem at four Case Study schools. Thus, literature reviewed indicated that amongst the dominant problems faced by educators at school was lack of knowledge and understanding of how to tackle the challenges of this type of violence. Literature revealed that educators were not adequately equipped to counter the violent incidents; hence, they had often times, routinely reacted through violent means without understanding the problem of violence against them from a perspective of providing constructive encountering techniques. Thus, this study provided such knowledge and understanding from a Grounded Theory point of view. The study exposed valuable knowledge pertaining to the significance of social relationships amongst learners, educators and all school community members, which aided a better conception of the phenomenon learner-on-educator violence at schools.

7.7.3 Contribution to Law and Policy

The findings from this empirical investigation provided to law and policy makers, information needed for critical debates on educational policy development pertaining to the concept of school violence, particularly dealing with the learner-on-educator violence within school environments. The information generated by this study might enrich deeper understanding and supplement informed decisions pertaining to policy guiding the control and management of school violence.

Findings from this study may prove worthy for provincial education managers, Circuit Managers, School Principals, educators at schools and any other persons or organizations studying the concept of violence. For example, those involved in gender based violence may profit in the discussions and debates involving bullying and child-headed families.

7.7.4 Contribution to Undertaking a Grounded Theory Study

The major contribution was the conduit to theory advancement in an empirical investigation that was solicited through Grounded Theory. From the beginning of the study, the purpose was to develop a Violence-Countering Model within a Grounded Theory in order to inform improved practice in the handling of the concept of school violence, particularly learner-on-educator violence at school.

Therefore, the elementary principles of Grounded Theory to permit free innovation of theory formation and to restrict any presumptions were tested. The researcher as anticipated managed to then propose a Grounded Theory developed through this empirical investigation. The main breakthrough was in the flexibility of Grounded Theory method, with its applicability capable of being tested in other settings, for example, the learner-on-educator violence at rural primary school contexts. The findings of this empirical investigation and the Grounded Theory herein suggested by the researcher has offered an evocative contribution to enlightening through exploratory investigations in the field of education management and leadership and promoting the emotional wellbeing of educators.

Furthermore, the elementary principles of Grounded Theory have also contributed to the researcher's professional growth in understanding research through using flexibility in the formulation of theory grounded in the data as coming from educators and School Principals' experiences. The Constructivist perception in the creation of robust first-hand experiences of participants proved challenging but exciting. The Grounded Theory approach therefore gave the researcher various options, principles and carefully outlined processes to follow throughout the empirical investigation. The researcher gained important experience through the Grounded Theory research process, which presented the researcher with an opportunity of carrying out an exploratory study, rather than a descriptive qualitative study would.

This confronted the researcher to move beyond the traditional thematic analysis of qualitative research data, to a level of theory formulation. The greatest contribution was the rich philosophical foundation and methodological guidelines suggested by the originators and supporters of the Grounded Theory method which delivered a much-anticipated structure to a novice researcher. The researcher, however, had some little unseemly glitches during initial stages of study, especially the coding process and the theory generation process. Nevertheless, this occurrence unintentionally stimulated the researcher's understanding of the Grounded Theory research process.

7.8 Limitations of the Empirical Study

As with the majority of studies, the findings of this study have to be seen in light of some limitations. Admitting the limitations of the study enables the reader to interpret rightly the checks enacted concerning the study (Biaett, 2018). The discussion of limitations facilitates a better frame of mind in understanding the context in which the research study settings and claims made were located (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Thus, the empirical results described in this study should be considered in the light of the identified limitations. The researcher functioned within the following two main limitations:

Firstly, data collected in this study cannot be generalised to all populations because this was an empirical study conducted using a Non-Randomised Sampling Method with a small size of participants selected at each of the four Case Study sites. For this study, there was no intention to generalise the findings, but the encounters experienced by the educators and School Principals pertaining to the learner-on-educator violence would uphold comparably for schools in related circumstances.

Secondly, educators from certain selected sites were twitchy and nervous, as the interviews were unfolding, to the extent that they would pass along the interview-room with the purpose of eavesdropping to the ongoing conversations between the interviewer and the interviewee. Amusingly, this facetious attitude did not have any influence on data because the researcher was able to arrest and put the situation under control.

The nervousness of some of the educators at the schools could demonstrate undeniably that the volatility and intense unhealthy relationships between school community members were indeed serious even with regard to 'trust issues'. To remedy this situation, the researcher kindly asked the educators not involved in the interview not to impede with the process, as research is sensitive to confidentiality and privacy of participants. In spite of this limitation, the study completed and attained its original intentions because data were gathered employing appropriate instruments at the right place (either at a private office space as elected by the participant, using virtual interviews or at the comfort of a participant's home in some cases) and at the right time (after school hours).

7.9 Opportunities for Future Research

Literature reviewed indicated a lack of studies regarding learner-on-educator violence carried out in South Africa. This inferred more research was required. Following the findings of this empirical study on how educators as victims of school violence manage and understand learner-on-educator violence at school, the researcher submits the following as possible avenues for further and future research:

- A study could be carried out to determine the transactional practices of the learner-educator interactions that alleviate the challenge of implementing violence-prevention strategies that influence the learner-on-educator violence;
- A study could be conducted to establish and investigate the psychological effect of overcrowded classrooms on the mental health of educators who are victims of learner-on-educator violence and check for the inhibitory effect these have on the delivery of quality instruction and the National Curriculum;
- A study ought to be conducted to check the complementary influence and conjecturing role/character of the media in discouraging the learner-on-educator violence at schools;
- A study could be conducted on how the schools in chieftaincy environments (rural schools under traditional leaders) could engage parents into collaborative school undertakings that embrace the implementation of

policies that contribute to the prevention of school violence at schools under the governance of rural leaders;

- A study could be conducted to investigate the tolerance, competence and effectiveness of the existing Department of Basic Education policies as experienced by educators pertaining to consequence management in schools;
- A study ought to be conducted to establish techniques that could support schools in properly implementing clear school anti-violence policies that effectively negate learner misbehaviour; and
- Lastly, studies are required to generate models that test the theoretical and practical implications of low educator morale that are targeted at retaining the existing educator staff in the teaching profession through the promotion and improvement of their morale; and inculcating among educators a sense of love, commitment and enthusiasm towards the teaching profession.

7.10 Final Concluding Remarks

Chapter 7 concluded and gave a summarized windup of this empirical investigation. The key sections of the thesis were again echoed in this chapter, which included the summary of the empirical study, key findings, presentation of the 3-step Grounded Theory model for this study, recommendations, contributions, limitations of the research and opportunities for future research. Although the researcher followed all the basic requirements of a Grounded Theory method, he does not claim that the study conclusions were the ultimate word; and further cannot ignore that the research process could have a few shortcomings, but rather realistically contemplates that the intentions of the study were credible, sensible and sincerely undertaken. Finally, this study serves as an archetype that could be used in the quest of finding solutions to violence against educators at schools and the school violence in general.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Clearance Certificate from UNISA



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2021/02/10

Ref: **2021/02/10/35096772/20/AM**

Dear Mr R P Zwane

Name: Mr R P Zwane

Student No.: 35096772

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2021/02/10 to 2026/02/10

Researcher(s): Name: Mr R P Zwane
E-mail address: 35096772@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 065 735 9411

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof R.J. Botha
E-mail address: botharj@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 082 411 6361

Title of research:

Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools: A model for countering the violence against teachers

Qualification: PhD Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2021/02/10 to 2026/02/10.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2021/02/10 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



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3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2026/02/10**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2021/02/10/35096772/20/AM** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



Prof AT Motlhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za



Prof PM Sebate
EXECUTIVE DEAN
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za



Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

Appendix B: A Letter to the District Director Requesting Permission to Conduct Research with Educators in the Gert Sibande District of Mpumalanga Province



The Head of Department
Mpumalanga Department of Education
Private Bag X11341
Nelspruit
1200
Email: n.madihlaba@mpuedu.gov.za

P.O. Box 2123
Volksrust
2470

02 March 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY

I, Richard Petso Zwane hereby request permission to conduct a research study at four public secondary schools in the Gert Sibande Region in the Mpumalanga Province. Under the supervision of Prof. R.J. Botha in the Department of Educational Leadership, I am studying towards a PhD degree at the University of South Africa at the faculty of Education-UNISA, and am in the process of data collection. I am inviting educators within your district to participate in a study entitled: *Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools: A model for countering the violence against educators.*

This study focuses on the phenomenon of educators as victims of school violence; how educators manage and understand the violence against them; and how this violence influences their teaching practices. The ultimate aim is to develop a model for countering violence against educators at school.

The following aims direct study:

- To understand how educators experience and interpret learner-on-educator violence.
- To determine how learner-on-educator violence influence teaching practices at school.
- To develop strategies that educators can adopt to cope with and manage learner-on-educator violence within the school environment.

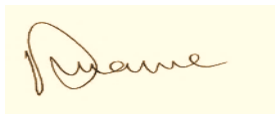
Since the study seeks to get a deeper insight into how educators manage and understand the violence against them, the study will provide the researcher an opportunity to explore in detail how this violence influences their teaching practices. Data collection will involve semi-structured individual interviews of approximately 45 minutes in length, conducted by the researcher with school principals and educators. As managers, school principals will be asked questions pertaining to management

issues arising because of violence against educators in their schools. Educators will be asked questions relating to their daily confrontations with learners. In this study, the researcher will use non-participatory observation, which means the researcher will remain as undistruptive as possible in order to extract record and interpret information from the background with zero direct involvement.

The benefits of this study is to contribute through a model of understanding and ameliorating violence against educators in the name of improved teacher wellbeing engendering improved learning success. In this regard, the study aims to promote non-harmful school environments and enhancing school leadership that cares for its educator component. The interviews will be conducted after school hours to ensure that school activities are not disturbed. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. However, the maim benefit will be the feedback provided that will entail a written submission and presentation about some of the helpful and interesting findings in my study.

- My contact number is as follows: cell number is 065 735 9411.
- Email address: dvn.mystery@gmail.com or 35096772@mylife.unisa.ac.za
- My supervisor Professor R.J. Botha can be contacted at **082 411 6361** or bothari@unisa.ac.za

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in brown ink on a light yellow rectangular background. The signature appears to read 'Richard Petso Zwane' in a cursive script.

Richard Petso Zwane

Appendix C: Response Letter from Director of Research, Education Department, Mpumalanga Province



education
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ikhama Building, Government Boulevard, Riverside Park, Mpumalanga Province
Private Bag X11341, Mbombela, 1200
Tel: 013 766 5552/5115, Toll Free Line: 0800 203 116

Litiko le Temfundvo, Umnyango we Fundo

Departement van Onderwys

Ndzawulo ya Dyondzo

Mr RP Zwane

PO BOX 2123

VOLKRUST, 2021

Email: dvn.mystery@gmail.com

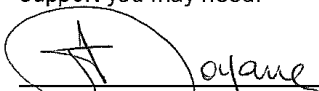
RE: Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South Africa schools: A model for countering the violence against teachers

Your application to conduct research study was received and is therefore acknowledged. The title of your research project reads: “**Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South Africa schools: A model for countering the violence against teachers**”. I trust that the aims and the objectives of the study will benefit the whole department especially the beneficiaries. Your request is approved subject to you observing the provisions of the departmental research policy which is available in the department website. You are requested to adhere to your university’s research ethics as spelt out in your research ethics.

In terms of the research policy, data or any research activity can be conducted after school hours as per appointment with affected participants and COVID -19 regulations to be observed. You are also requested to share your findings with the relevant sections of the department so that we may consider implementing your findings if that will be in the best interest of the department. To this effect, your final approved research report (both soft and hard copy) should be submitted to the department so that your recommendations could be implemented. You may be required to prepare a presentation and present at the departments’ annual research dialogue.

For more information kindly liaise with the department’s research unit @ 013 766 5124/5148 Or n.madihlaba@mpuedu.gov.za

The department wishes you well in this important project and pledges to give you the necessary support you may need.


MRS LH MOYANE
[A] HEAD: EDUCATION

02 / 03 / 2021
DATE



Appendix D: Request Letter to School Principals to Conduct Research at Their Schools



P.O. Box 2123
Volksrust
2470

17 February 2021

The School Principal

Title of the research: Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools: A model for countering the violence against educators.

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY

I, Richard Petso Zwane hereby request permission to conduct a research study at your school. Your school has been selected as one of the four public secondary schools in the Gert Sibande Region to participate in this study. As such, I kindly request your permission to interact with your teachers in relation to the above research title. Under the supervision of Prof. R.J. Botha in the Department of Educational Leadership, I am studying towards a PHD degree at the University of South Africa at the Unisa faculty of Education, and am in the process of data collection. I am inviting educators within the Gert Sibande District to participate in a study entitled: *Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools: A model for countering the violence against educators*.

This study focuses on the phenomenon of educators as victims of school violence; how educators manage and understand the violence against them; and how this violence influences their teaching practices. The ultimate aim is to develop a model for countering violence against educators at school.

The following aims direct study:

- To understand how educators experience and interpret learner-on-educator violence.
- To determine how learner-on-educator violence influence teaching practices at school.
- To develop strategies that educators can adopt to cope with and manage learner-on-educator violence within the school environment.

Since the study seeks to get a deeper insight into how educators manage and understand the violence against them, the study will provide the researcher an opportunity to explore in detail how this violence influences their teaching practices. Data collection will involve semi-structured individual interviews of approximately 45 minutes in length, conducted by the researcher with school principals and educators. As managers, school principals will be asked questions pertaining to management issues arising because of violence against teachers in their schools. Educators will

be asked questions relating to their daily confrontations with learners. In this study, the researcher will use non-participatory observation, which means the researcher will remain as undistruptive as possible in order to extract record and interpret information from the background with zero direct involvement.


The benefits of this study is to contribute through a model of understanding and ameliorating violence against educators in the name of improved educator wellbeing engendering improved learning success. In this regard, the study aims to promote non-harmful school environments and enhancing school leadership that cares for its educator component. The interviews will be conducted after school hours to ensure that school activities are not disturbed. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. However, the maim benefit will be the feedback provided that will entail a written submission and presentation about some of the helpful and interesting findings in my study.

My contact number is as follows: cell number is 065 735 9411.

Email address: dvn.mystery@gmail.com or 35096772@mylife.unisa.ac.za

My supervisor Professor R.J. Botha can be contacted at **082 411 6361** or botharj@unisa.ac.za

Yours Faithfully



ne

Declaration

I (Full name of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools: A model for countering the violence against educators.** I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should I so desire.

Signature of Participant: _____ Date _____

Signature of Witness/ Research Assistant: _____ Date _____

Thanking you in advance

Mr Richard Petso Zwane

Appendix E: Letter Requesting Circuit Managers for Permission to Use Their School in the Research



P.O. Box 2123
Volksrust
2470

22 January 2021

The Circuit Manager
The Volksrust Circuit
42 Adelaide Tambo Street
Volksrust
2470

Title of the research: Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools: A model for countering the violence against educators

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY

I, Richard Petso Zwane hereby request permission to conduct a research study at four public secondary schools in the Volksrust Circuit. The four schools fall within your circuit as such I kindly request your permission to interact with your educators in relation to the above research title. Under the supervision of Prof. R.J. Botha in the Department of Educational Leadership, I am studying towards a PHD degree at the University of South Africa at the Unisa faculty of Education, and am in the process of data collection. I am inviting educators within your district to participate in a study entitled: *Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools: A model for countering the violence against educators.*

This study focuses on the phenomenon of educators as victims of school violence; how educators manage and understand the violence against them; and how this violence influences their teaching practices. The ultimate aim is to develop a model for countering violence against educators at school.

The following aims direct study:

- To understand how educators experience and interpret learner-on-educator violence.
- To determine how learner-on-educator violence influence teaching practices at school.
- To develop strategies that educators can adopt to cope with and manage learner-on-educator violence within the school environment.

Since the study seeks to get a deeper insight into how educators manage and understand the violence against them, the study will provide the researcher an opportunity to explore in detail how this violence influences their teaching practices. Data collection will involve semi-structured individual interviews of approximately 45 minutes in length, conducted by the researcher with school principals and educators.

As managers, school principals will be asked questions pertaining to management issues arising because of violence against educators in their schools. Educators will be asked questions relating to their daily confrontations with learners. In this study, the researcher will use non-participatory observation, which means the researcher will remain as undistruptive as possible in order to extract record and interpret information from the background with zero direct involvement.

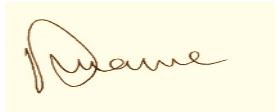
The benefits of this study is to contribute through a model of understanding and ameliorating violence against educators in the name of improved educator wellbeing engendering improved learning success. In this regard, the study aims to promote non-harmful school environments and enhancing school leadership that cares for its educator component. The interviews will be conducted after school hours to ensure that school activities are not disturbed. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. However, the maim benefit will be the feedback provided that will entail a written submission and presentation about some of the helpful and interesting findings in my study.

My contact number is as follows: cell number is 065 735 9411.

Email address: dv.mystery@gmail.com or 35096772@mylife.unisa.ac.za.

My supervisor Professor R.J. Botha can be contacted at **082 411 6361** or botharj@unisa.ac.za

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'R. Petso', is displayed on a light yellow rectangular background.

Richard Petso Zwane

Appendix F: Letter Permission Letter to School Governing Body/Disciplinary Committee Chairpersons



P.O. Box 2123
Volksrust
2470

22 January 2021

School Governing Body/Disciplinary Committee chairperson(s)
Secondary School

Title of the research: Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools: A model for countering the violence against educators.

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY

I, Richard Petso Zwane hereby request permission to conduct a research study at your school. Under the supervision of Prof. R.J. Botha in the Department of Educational Leadership, I am studying towards a PHD degree at the University of South Africa at the Unisa faculty of Education, and am in the process of data collection. I am inviting educators at your school to participate in a study entitled: *Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools: A model for countering the violence against educators*.

This study focuses on the phenomenon of educators as victims of school violence; how educators manage and understand the violence against them; and how this violence influences their teaching practices. The ultimate aim is to develop a model for countering violence against educators at school.

The following aims direct study:

- To understand how educators experience and interpret learner-on-educator violence.
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Since the study seeks to get a deeper insight into how educators manage and understand the violence against them, the study will provide the researcher an opportunity to explore in detail how this violence influences their teaching practices. Data collection will involve semi-structured individual interviews of approximately 45 minutes in length, conducted by the researcher with school principals and educators. As managers, school principals will be asked questions pertaining to management issues arising because of violence against educators in their schools. Educators will be asked questions relating to their daily confrontations with learners. In this study, the researcher will use non-participatory observation, which means the researcher will

remain as undistruptive as possible in order to extract record and interpret information from the background with zero direct involvement.

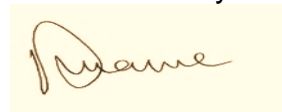
The benefits of this study is to contribute through a model of understanding and ameliorating violence against educators in the name of improved educator wellbeing engendering improved learning success. In this regard, the study aims to promote non-harmful school environments and enhancing school leadership that cares for its educator component. The interviews will be conducted after school hours to ensure that school activities are not disturbed. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. However, the maim benefit will be the feedback provided that will entail a written submission and presentation about some of the helpful and interesting findings in my study.

My contact number is as follows: cell number is 065 735 9411.

Email address: dvn.mystery@gmail.com or 35096772@mylife.unisa.ac.za

My supervisor Professor R.J. Botha can be contacted at **082 411 6361** or botharj@unisa.ac.za

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink on a yellow rectangular background. The signature appears to be 'R. Petso Zwane'.

Richard Petso Zwane

Appendix G: Letter Requesting Educators to Participate in Interviews



P.O. Box 2123
Volksrust
2470



22February 2021

Title of the research: Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools: A model for countering the violence against educators.

Attention: Selected educator participant

Dear Colleague

Request for you to participate in research interviews

Title of the research: Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools: A model for countering the violence against teachers.

I, Richard Pitso Zwane hereby request for your participation in a research study involving your school. Your school has been selected as one of the four public secondary schools in the Gert Sibande Region to participate in this study. As such, I kindly request your permission to interact with you in relation to the above research title. Under the supervision of Prof. R.J. Botha in the Department of Educational Leadership, I am studying towards a PHD degree at the University of South Africa at the Unisa faculty of Education, and am in the process of data collection. Thus, I am inviting teachers within the Gert Sibande District to participate in a study entitled: *Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools: A model for countering the violence against educators.*

This study focuses on the phenomenon of educators as victims of school violence; how educators manage and understand the violence against them; and how this violence influences their teaching practices. The ultimate aim is to develop a model for countering violence against educators at school.

The following aims direct study:

- To understand how educators experience and interpret learner-on-educator violence.
- To determine how learner-on-educator violence influence teaching practices at school.
- To develop strategies that educators can adopt to cope with and manage learner-on-educator violence within the school environment.

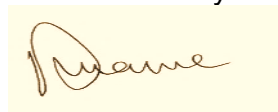
Since the study seeks to get a deeper insight into how educators manage and understand the violence against them, the study will provide the researcher an opportunity to explore in detail how this violence influences their teaching practices. Data collection will involve semi-structured individual interviews of approximately 45 minutes in length, conducted by the researcher with school principals and educators.

As managers, school principals will be asked questions pertaining to management issues arising because of violence against educators in their schools. Educators will be asked questions relating to their daily confrontations with learners. In this study, the researcher will use non-participatory observation, which means the researcher will remain as undistruptive as possible in order to extract record and interpret information from the background with zero direct involvement.

The benefits of this study will be to contribute in the body of knowledge through a model of understanding and ameliorating violence against educators in the name of improving educator wellbeing stimulating improved learning success. In this regard, the study aims to promote non-harmful school environments and enhancing school leadership that cares for its educator component. The interviews will be conducted after school hours to ensure that school activities are not disturbed. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. However, the maim benefit will be the feedback provided that will entail a written submission and presentation about some of the helpful and interesting findings in my study.

My contact number is as follows: cell number is 065 735 9411. Email address: dmv.mystery@gmail.com or 35096772@mylife.unisa.ac.za . My supervisor Professor R.J. Botha can be contacted at **082 411 6361** or botharj@unisa.ac.za

Yours Faithfully



Richard Petso Zwane

Consent / Assent to participate in the study

I (Participant name) confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in the research '*Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools: A model for countering the violence against teachers*. The researcher has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the Information Sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions. I am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty. I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publication and or conference proceedings, but my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the semi-structured interviews. I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant name and surname (please print) _____

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's name / Surname (print) _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix H: Semi-structured Virtual Interview Schedule for Educators



Enquiries: RP Zwane; 14 Moepel Street, Volksrust

Mobile no: 065 735 9411

Email: 35096772@mylife.unisa.ac.za OR dvn.mystery@gmail.com



Research title: Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools: A model for countering the violence against educators.

OPENING THE INTERVIEW TO ESTABLISH RAPPORT

My name is Richard Pitso Zwane and I am conducting this research under the supervision of Professor RJ Botha, the professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. I am a registered PhD student at the University of South Africa (Unisa). I am residing at 14 Moepel Street, Volksrust-Mpumalanga. I am working and employed as Deputy Director at the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations. May you kindly please introduce yourself? How long have been teaching at this school, which grades and subject areas and your highest qualification(s)?

I understand that you are an important member of the teaching staff at your school. I therefore would like to pose questions, prepared in connection with what you experience in your everyday life as an educator.

Why your selection for this study?

You were selected to take part in this study because, I believe that you met the criteria set for the study, and I believe you could provide me with the best or at least relevant information to address the research questions. Your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic is important for this study, as I believe you will help education planners and policy developers in making informed decisions concerning educator protection and wellbeing at schools. The information you will share, which I will convert into narrative research findings will not bear your identity but however, will be made available to all scholars worldwide as a contribution to the body of knowledge pertaining to educator development, protection and wellbeing.

The interview will not last longer than 45 to 60 minutes of your precious time and with your permission, I would like to request voice recording of our meeting. This will assist me later to make correct narrations for the purposes of this study and to refer back where I did not understand. Data collected through this interview will strictly remain anonymous and confidential.

QUESTIONS

Main Research Question:

How can the violence against educators be countered at schools?

Theme 1

Understanding how educators experience and interpret learner-on-educator violence.

1. As An educator at this school, what are your perceptions and experiences of the learner-on-educator violence at your school?

2. In your experience, what are the reasons that triggers the learner-on-educator violence at your school?

NB: Employ the technique of probing for more clarity.

Theme 2

Determining how the learner-on-educator violence influence teaching practices at school.

3. How does the learner-on-educator violence encounter influence your daily teaching activities at the school whether in classroom or outside classroom?
4. How do these encounters influence your morale?
5. Could you share with me how the learner-on-educator violence problem has personally frustrated your efforts to your teaching profession?
6. How does the learner-on-educator violence in your school influence access to education for all learners who may not be directly involved in violence matters with educators?
7. Are you aware of any educator(s) who may have left the teaching profession at your school as a result of learner-violent behaviour on them?

Theme 3

Developing strategies that educators can adopt to cope with and manage learner-on-educator violence within the school environment.

8. How do you personally respond and manage the violence that is perpetrated by a learner against you?
9. What policies, measures and initiatives are taken by your school to promote a violence-free or secure environment that protects educators against learner-perpetrated violence?
10. According to you, what intervention strategy can you recommend as a way of enhancing educator wellbeing, especially against learner-on-educator violence at your school?

CLOSING REMARKS FOR THE INTERVIEW

- I really value your efforts and time you took in participating in this interview; do you have anything that you would like to bring to my attention that will be of help for this study?
- My contact numbers that I have given you are for you to contact me in case you have any additional information you would like to provide.

As soon as the data collected has been completed, I will send it to you for ratification and the final document of this study will also be made available for you. The assurance I make to you is that the data you have provided during this interview will remain anonymous and confidential.

Kind Regards

R.P. Zwane
(Unisa Student Researcher)

Appendix I: Semi-Structured/Virtual Interview Schedule for School Principals



Enquiries: RP Zwane; 14 Moepel Street, Volksrust

Mobile no: 065 735 9411

Email: 35096772@mylife.unisa.ac.za OR dvn.mystery@gmail.com



Research title: Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools: A model for countering the violence against educators.

OPENING THE INTERVIEW TO ESTABLISH RAPPORT

My name is Richard Pitso Zwane and I am conducting this research under the supervision of Professor RJ Botha, the professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. I am a registered PhD student at the University of South Africa (Unisa). I am residing at 14 Moepel Street, Volksrust-Mpumalanga. I am working and employed as Deputy Director at the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations. May you kindly please introduce yourself? How long have been teaching at this school, which grades and subject areas and your highest qualification(s)?

I understand that you are an important member of the entire school as the HEAD and leader. I therefore would like to pose some questions, prepared in connection with what you experience in your everyday life as principal of the school.

Why your selection for this study?

You were selected to take part in this study firstly because, I believe that you met the criteria set for the study, and I undoubtedly believe you will provide me with the best or at least appropriate and pertinent information to address the study research questions. Your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic is important for this study, as I believe you will help education planners and policy developers in making informed decisions concerning educator protection and wellbeing at schools. The information you will share, which I will convert into narrative research findings will not bear your identity but, however, will be made available to all scholars worldwide as a contribution to the body of knowledge pertaining to educator development, protection and wellbeing.

The interview will not last longer than 45 to 60 minutes of your precious time and with your permission, I would like to request voice recording of our meeting. This will assist me later to make correct narrations for the purposes of this study and to refer back where I did not understand. Data collected through this interview will strictly remain anonymous and confidential.

QUESTIONS

Main Research Question:

How can the violence against educators be countered at schools?

Theme 1

Understanding how educators experience and interpret learner-on-educator violence.

11. As the School Principal, what are your perceptions and your experiences of the learner-on-educator violence at your school?
12. In your experience and understanding, what are the reasons that triggers the learner-on-educator violence at your school or are at least attributable to the problem?

Theme 2

Determining how the learner-on-educator violence influence management practices of principals at school.

13. How does the learner-on-educator violence encounter influence your daily management activities within the school premises?
14. How do these encounters influence your morale as a School Principal?
15. Could you kindly share how the learner-on-educator violence problem has personally frustrated your efforts to lead/manage your school professionally?
16. How does the learner-on-educator violence in your school influence access to education for all learners who may not be directly involved in the violence dilemma with your educators?
17. Are you aware of any of your educators who may have left the teaching profession at your school as a result of learner-violent behaviour against them?

Theme 3

Developing strategies that principals can adopt to cope with and manage the learner-on-educator violence within the school environment.

18. How do you personally respond and manage the violence that is perpetrated by a learner against you or your educators?
19. What policies, measures or initiatives that are taken by your school to promote a violence-free or secure environment that protects you and, more especially your educators against learner-perpetrated violence?
20. According to you, what intervention strategy/framework can you recommend as a way of enhancing educator wellbeing, especially against learner-on-educator violence at your school?

CLOSING REMARKS FOR THE INTERVIEW

- I value your effort and time you have taken in participating in this interview; do you have anything that you would like to bring to my attention that will be of help for this study?
- My contact numbers that I have given you are for you to contact me in case you have any additional information you would like to provide.

As soon as the data collected has been completed, I will send it to you for ratification your transcript final document of this interview, the findings of the study will also be made available to you. The assurance I make to you is that the data you have provided during this interview will remain anonymous and confidential.

Kind Regards

R.P. Zwane
(Unisa Student Researcher)

Appendix J: Example of Interview Transcript

SCHOOL Q

Date: 18 March 2021 Time: 17:13 PM VOICE CODE: PR2

Interview Transcript

Interviewee: Principal 2 (pseudonym: voice of PR2)

Interviewer: Student researcher-UP (Abbreviated: SR)

Interview set up and venue: Principal's Office, afterschool quiet, comfortable and no disruptions experienced.

Summary of Preliminary information:

- **Teaching Experience**
 - 30 years
- **Highest qualifications**
 - STD/ACE/Bed Hons and MEd: Educational Leadership.
- **Duties in the school**

I am the principal of the school and my main duties concerns the general management of the school including learner discipline, time table, class teaching (Geography & Social Sciences) and HODs monitoring.
- **School description:**
 - Township school next to a mine
 - 845 learners and 29 Teachers

Start of interview:

SR: *Ma'am good evening and welcome to this interview and I am so much happy to have you as my participant in this study that I am pursuing with the University of South Africa under the supervision of Professor RJ Botha. And I hope we shall have a wonderful session since you requested that you want private space where you are comfortable so I am here now doing this interview with you. I am working at the QCTO, which is the Quality Council for Trade and Occupations, and I am a Deputy Director there. I also understand that you have become a very important member of your school in terms of your experience and expertise. First, I think we should go through the Consent Form that you signed to check if we are still on the same page in terms of the confidentiality policy.*

I think you agreed that you voluntarily participate in this study research and the following issues have been discussed with you:

- *mainly the aim, scope;*
- *purpose;*
- *the possible consequences in term of benefits with the findings of the research;*
- *the method of data collection; and*
- *the means by which we attempt to ensure your anonymity, integrity and confidentiality.*

Moreover, you are entitled to withdraw at any stage of the interview should you feel uncomfortable. I think you have already signed the Consent Form. I am also going to use a pseudonym for your school, yourself to ensure that you are comfortable. Let me also mention that this interview may take us, 30 to 45 minutes or less than that depending on the depth of our discussion. The main purpose of the study is tackle the issue of educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence art schools: a countering model against this type of violence. Therefore, the intention is to create a model that will counter the violence against educators in South African schools; and which is workable for educational planners and that is relevant for educational planning in terms of educator welfare issues.

Please introduce yourself and just give a highlight of yourself.

PR2: Am I allowed to express myself in Zulu?

SR: Yes please feel free.

PR2: My name is (PR2 real name hidden). I am a teacher and principal at my school. I have been a principal for the past 13 years. But I started as an educator in 1987 in KwaZulu-Natal at KwaNongoma. I was later appointed as an HOD. I then served as the deputy head and thereafter became the principal. Therefore, I have travelled all the stages of being a teacher. I studies at Mlokothwa high school at Nongoma, I did my STD at Esikhawini College of education. I did the ACE programme (Advanced certificate in Education), I then did the Advanced Certificate in Principalship. I did also ACE in LO and then I did honours degree with Pretoria university. I then did the PGCE Certificate with Regenesis. Then I was lazy to continue to Masters.

SR: But it's just a remarkable journey in relation to your narration of your educational journey. And to achieve such, it is quite a milestone. I am also amazed by the way you climbed the ladder in your leadership journey its great. Just now it shows your strength in terms of your leadership capabilities. Let us go through the first set of questions. I am sure you will engage professionally because this is an area of your expertise. The first question that I would like to you pose is, as the School Principal, what your perceptions and experiences of this leaner-on-educator violence at your school?

PR2: You know what, at school, fortunately the most of the schools where I have worked, and comparing with the period I have taught, learners had remarkable respect for the educator. So it was quite rare having learner-on-educator violence. But as times passed, it has become a very sharp turn of events. Learners have become so violent today in such a way that sometimes I feel so afraid to go to school. But we do handle the challenge but it is very difficult. For example, I want you to note that about 95% of the community where my school is situated are Zulus or Zulu speaking people. They have beliefs that you cannot compromise. They will never give you a chance to compromise their culture. One of the extreme thing I have had as the principal is that in our school we have had for a few years now, learners who are beyond the school going age. And such learners were difficult to

control or manage. We also had the learners who belonged to certain groups and, as such, there was pressure both on educators and on myself as the principal of appropriately managing these learners. They would become so violent on educators. Others wanted just to be seen that they were big boys in the school. This did not end there; they would go further to an extent of belittling and undermining educators, especially young educators. There is one they forget that, this educator, behind being an educator is a human being. I have spent my time studying this phenomenon. The major challenge we are facing is that, we are in a deep rural area. So being in such an environment, these learners, during a weekend they are not children. Even the elders in the community consider them, as I would say the matured. And they are allowed to contribute to issues pertaining the community's challenges. They even call the 'izifundiswa' meaning the learned ones. So at community gatherings and meetings, they are allowed to drink 'Umqombothi' that is, sorghum beer because they are considered part of the elders and decision makers in the community. They then take the same behaviour to school and that when issues begin move out of hand. The elders in the community treat them as equals and so these type of learners expect educators to give them the same treatment and a confrontation explodes. Educators will treat them as every other learner in the school and the find not fitting for their envisaged honour, which they receive in the community. The influence comes from home. Secondly, the learners in my school believe so much in witchcraft. I am very sure of this; these learners mutilate one another, which then leads to squabbles that educators are not able to handle. They wear something on their arms, which they refer to as 'amabhande' that means the source of or belt of power. Once they are marked as having graduated to wear this belt of power, their blood boils off because this thing wants them to spill blood always; then they would want to fight. Most of the times, fights in our school starts off as a fight between learners, educators would want to jump in in order to maintain peace and calmness, then I bet you me, they get a hiding in the process. Ultimately, it becomes a learner-on-educator conflict. And another thing I have noticed, most of our learners in this school are all by themselves at home. They are leading their families because either the mother or the father or both passed away. As such, we have a number of learners who come from child-headed families. Some of these learners have a lot of anger and they don't care what you say as an educator. They don't even mind to hit an educator and drop out of school. To them beating an educator is heroic.

We have another group different from the one I was describing. This group is largely formed mainly by drug users and drug pushers. A number of such learners become members of gangsters. There is common term they 'nkabiyami' meaning the brave one or the valiant one. Once you are referred to as the valiant one, obviously what follows next is, you will be given a task to do that will qualify you to be a truly the 'brave one'. That is why then this group will attack mostly educators by either stabbing or clapping or any form of humiliation that will gain them a heroic praise. I must say that, in my initial stages of being the principal of this school it was very tough for me. Others are staying with grandmothers. They are coming from broken families. They are coming from unstable families. In some homes, I have

learnt that the mother is in Johannesburg working there and the father likewise in some homes is in Johannesburg for employment opportunities. Now, the grandmother has no authority over the child. This spills over to the school as something educators must handle.

SR: *If I may come in, would you say that the kind of behaviour you have just narrated and described so vividly, can be expected from girls as well? Because it looks for now as if it is boys who are giving the school trouble?*

PR2: With girls, it is not so much about fighting. With girls, the most common problem with them is involvement or sexual relationship with older man, more especially the working class. That is what girls commonly known for in this community and hence in this school. People who will be challenged in this regard are male educators because these girls they look at them as a potential husband. Remember what I said, this is a rural set up where ukuthwala is still commonly used. 'Ukuthwala' means forced marriage. This is a subject for another day. Girls in this school are very stubborn. I think some of them have anger of coming from the broken families I spoke about earlier. In my view girls are far much than boys. They rarely confront educators. But boys Yoooo... What I have noticed though is that, if a girl is violent, then drugs or intoxicating substances are involved, she is not alone.

SR: *Okay you want add something.*

PR2: Yes, we are so fortunate now in our school that the drug issue is not as high as one would expect maybe it is because of the rural set up of the place I guess. But sometimes you would see that something is happening because we have many of these people (referring to foreign owned shops) which have mushroomed and whom we don't know what they are selling in their shops. But if you compare our school and other neighbouring schools situated in town centres, then our school is far much less affected by the drug issue.

SR: *I think you have partly or wholly so the next question that I was going to ask you that, in your experience and understanding what are the reasons that trigger this problem of learner-on-educator violence at your school?*

PR2: I think I dwelt much on the causes already.

SR: *Okay, let's go over to the next question. How does this problem that you have just described so well, influence your daily management activities within the school premises?*

PR2: As the principal, I end up not doing my administrative work. I end up addressing cases. I end up like a person without a plan. Instead of doing, the work I was hired to do, I now spent all of my time being an advocate, a judge and so forth. I miss my deadlines and my daily targets. Someone may think these re petty issues but let me tell you they consume a lot of time and energy.

SR: Yes Ma'am you may continue.

PR2: Yes we have two main important committees, namely, the Safety Committee and the Disciplinary Committee. Ultimately, the bus stops at the principal's office. Honestly, classes are always disrupted every time there is this learner-on-educator violence issues. Moreover, as the principal I cannot behave as if I do not see what is happening. In my school, the huge problem is in Grades 8 and 9. There is a lot happening in these grades.

SR: Can you elaborate a bit Ma'am?

PR2: There is a lot happening in relation to the stage transition with learners at this age. I guess that might be the reason why we are experiencing a high volume of misbehaviour. Remember they are growing and they are discovering themselves. Some are succumbing to peer pressure because they are on transition to the next stage of their growth. Therefore, they demand a lot of attention and time. In the higher grades, they at least have some light, however, they also suffer from different ills as I illustrated in my earlier explanations. I must state it clear that with our rural set up things are tough for myself as the principal and even worse for my educators. So this learner-on-educator violence is a real threat to our education system. I must point out that I have managed to eliminate the older children in my school and now I can say we have school going age children. The discipline is improving though we still have direct attacks by certain learners who are coming, especially from the child-headed families. I do believe it will stabilize and we will once again enjoy a secure school environment.

SR: Yes I can see you want to elaborate something

PR2: They are other external factors which we do not have control over, namely, the issue of old guys who have these sexual relations with our girls in this school. This people are working and some of them have wives but they cheat with our children.

SR: How does that have an impact on learner-on-educator violence?

PR2: There is one person (an adult male) who came to school and took a girl out of class. One of my male educators intervened but was hit by this guy. A police docket was opened and the issue is still under investigation. So my educators are not only experiencing the learner violence but they also suffer in the hands of people who supposed to be supporting the school. I take that these are grown up people. They are supposed to be exemplary to these young girls and boys. However, the story is different.

SR: You wanted to add something on the issue of repeaters?

PR2: Yes. There is a relationship between the learners who use the so called 'power belt' and performance of that learner. A number of repeaters in the school are usually those boys who are using the power belt. And with the

education policy saying don't let a learner stay more than 4 years in a phase was intended to help us. But educators feel different in that, it is difficult to progress to the next grade a learner who is absolutely non-competent and moreover, who is not committed to his schoolwork. We then decide to let the learner repeat a grade in the name of giving the child an opportunity to master the grades work before proceeding to more abstract work of the next grade. This is what is killing us, because the same learners eventually become a big challenge in terms of disciplining and managing.

SR: *I understand very well Ma'am. You have already touched on the issue of your morale as the principal in performing your duties since I was going to ask you, how do these encounters influence your morale as the School Principal in relation to you having the energy.*

PR2: E Chuuuu... (PR2 sighing, a sign that I touched an issue that directly affects her). I am always tired (even frowning in expressing her point). I will always carry work from school to do at home whilst I am having plenty of time at school, which I spend on these daily issues of violence. I am always disrupted and I am tired.

SR: *Maybe going forward, you have shared your frustrations in terms of your being a leader and manager in the school. How does this type of violence influence access to education for all learners, especially for those learners who may be directly involved in this violence dilemma that hurts educators?*

PR2: The challenge is educators move with, concentrate on fast and gifted learners, and somehow neglect the slower and average learners. This approach is common in my school with my educators. I think educators are not doing justice in that aspect. I am highly concerned with this practice.

SR: *Do you address your educators in this issue?*

PR2: Yes, I do highlight it every morning in our briefings. However, maybe I need a different approach. In addition, I think educators have developed some negative attitude towards learners, especially because they are always under siege then I feel they somehow use retaliation techniques towards these learners. Unfortunately, this is affecting the school results. Educators have run out of patience for these children. Gone are the days when we used to say...these are my children. This is no longer there. Educators they go through a lot, for example, insults, derogatory statements, hitting and stabbing that leads to death. I have lost some educators because of this learner violence. But at the very same time, the Department of Education is my neck to follow policies. I do not feel protected myself even though I try to follow the policies. On the other hand, the Department of Education gives policies, however, we as implementers of curriculum we do use Ubuntu sometimes. I must admit that we do treat some issues with kids' gloves, more especially because I have the woman gene in me. At times, I need not to be too harsh. For example, it is not easy to expel a child from the schooling system no matter how bad the child is; this is because of the repercussions that follow after. Our community is very quick to respond to

issues pertaining what touches them directly but are not helpful in resolving issues that help maintain peace in the schools. Let me also point the fact that, the Department of Education does not help us. They will only tell you that, you were supposed to do things according to the book. But if the violence is from the educator to the learner you are expelled immediately. In our circuit, there was this incident of a principal that scared me extremely so. He mistakenly dropped his cell phone in a pit latrine toilet since their school is still using the pit toilets. He used a child to pick it up. Now this has turned out to be very serious and this principal has been arrested. I am just saying this; but if it was a child this have been treated quite differently. They were going to have an internal investigation. I just feel pity for the principal.

SR: *Your concern is the weakness of the policies when it comes to issues involving educators at schools seems to neglect the protection of their wellbeing.*

PR2: **Yes, that's so much true.**

SR: *Are you aware of any educator who might have left the teaching profession because of the learner-on-educator violence in your school?*

PR2: **No in my school no. However, I do hear sentiments of resentment from educators who always express the sense of exhaustion and wanting to leave the school. I am somehow lucky because I have more educators who are committed in their work lazy ones. These always treat teaching as a calling. Because if teaching is not treated as a calling, honestly they would have left a long time ago. You have been an educator in one of our neighbouring schools. You will remember when the learners were on strike one time.**

SR: *I do remember very well.*

PR2: **Yes. The principal lost four of her teeth after a learner hit her on the mouth with a brick. I still tell this story even today. Learners can be vicious. In this incident, the perpetrators were known that they were learners at the school but they were never taken to task by either law or even the Department of Education for that matter. They did not face the consequences of their actions. But the principal continued. She was very brave. She really proved that teaching is a noble calling. You don't quit just because things are not going well.**

I sometimes think that our school is very fortunate to have survived this far. Looking at the various incidents that took place in our school, we were not supposed to be breathing today. But here we are. We are still alive; and have survived serious stormy conditions. (At this stage, the interviewer had to stop the interview for some few minutes because the interviewee was becoming emotional and even dropping some tears. She needed some time to just cool off before we continued. This story was touchy).

PR2 (continued) ...but this learner-on-educator violence...ummm...are you aware that sometimes our colleagues perpetrate this learner-on-educator violence within our own ranks.

SR: *You mean by other educators?*

PR2: Yes. Other educators are involved sometimes in violence against their own. They would instigate learners to do something that will hurt another educator.

SR: *Quite for some time and then commented...this is quite complex now. Because we were looking at the learners as the instigators but it a painful thing if this has gone to extent where educators fight educators?*

PR2: Yes, that is why I am saying this issue of educator safety is a very complex issue. Let me give another incident that happened. While I was still a deputy principal, one educator would even instigate the learners to leave the school telling go home. Now when one enquires, the learners would give names of educators who told them to do that. Now this means the principal is in trouble not only to the Department of Education but also to parents of these learners. When the principal tried to stop them, the learners begin to fight the principal. This happened here in this school. If the principal is weak, there is no way he would control this situation. In another example, a male educator would prompt learners to come to my office to demand impossible things, for example, he would tell them to demand from me, extra buildings, air conditioners in classrooms and so forth. Our situation is not that simple because we depend on 100% government funding as a Quintile 1 school. He would even steal documents from my office, give these to the community people and tell them to come and fight me.

PR2: (continuing)...as a principal I try to manage these internal conflicts involving educators and learners but there are educators who make life very difficult for me. SGB on the hand, fight with me for one main reason; they want the school money with receive from government to run the school. Now, if I do not act according to their wishes, then they also will use learners to cause conflict and sometimes hit educators so that this reflects badly on my leadership as the School Principal. For the small school projects, they would want to employ people who are their relatives. Otherwise, they turn the back of the community against you. For instance, there was a project to put tiles in the school. I got very reasonable quotes from 3 different people. However, the SGB would just undermine what I do and look for their own quotes that suits them. A simple R10 000 project, they would make it cost R50 000 so that they gain in the process. Now remember that the intention is to cause conflict in the school so that I am seen as a failure out there because I am a woman.

SR: *This is a very complex issue.*

PR2: The SGB chairperson will now instigate learners to fight educators but the whole thing being done to make me feel it. Now in the community, it will

look like the learners don't want this principal but the truth is, it is all because I have taken my leadership role seriously and closed the corruption doors. So learners are sometimes used as tools to achieve selfish ambitions of certain people, especially of the SGB issues.

SR: *How do you work around this issue because you are exposing the real problem and context of this study to say, it is just a circle of issues? How do you correct this?*

PR2: Haaaaaaa...(PR2 sighing with an emotional looking face). *If I may tell you, I am very stubborn. I do what is correct. I don't care what they say or do anymore because they are always fighting with me. Sometimes I would react very emotional and tell them that, I was not voted for, I applied and called to an interview and was appointed. No body raised their hands to vote for me (angrily emphasizing this point). That is why I have resorted to doing things according to the book and policy. I am the final accounting officer of this school. Even now, you will see when you come to my school during one of our Safety Committee meetings, I have fought, I have stood my ground in dealing with the issue of gangsterism in this school. I have actually learnt that leadership is not for the faint hearted.*

SR: *We need strong leaders like you Ma'am . You are an inspiration. Without a strong heart that you are displaying in your leadership of leading in front, it would have been worse I assume?*

PR2: *You cannot lead from behind and you must wear a very thick skin.*

SR: *You have slightly touched on my next concern, the issue of policies, measures in place to curb, manage and cope with the learner-on-educator violence in your school and to maintain a safe and secure school environment that protects you as the principal and, especially, your educators against learner-perpetrated violence and all stakeholders in the school?*

PR2: *Once you have policies at school, the next step is implementing them, and making them popular in the school by the way of promoting these.*

SR: *In your particular case, do you have certain initiatives that are directed at addressing the issues you highlighted, because you have just narrated a complex issue? Is there any specific initiative, programme or whatever you are following or using as a school to address the learner-on-educator violence?*

PR2: *I incorporate most things in my work plan for QMS. The first that we are doing with the SGB is review of our policies to see if they still represent the real situation on the ground. From there, it will be my duty to do everything according to book. Even though the SGB has a framework on discipline and violence reduction in the school, it does not suit our environment because they have copied it somewhere. Their document does not suit our situation. But I will sit down with my SGB and train them thoroughly in violence issues. I am going to direct and shape the policies so that they at least protect my teaching staff, learners, and everyone who is a stakeholder in the school.*

SR: According to you, what is the current working strategy, guideline or framework that is being employed by your school? Especially against this pandemic?

PR2: As a school, we use the SA SAMS system. The SA SAMS has a paper trail for a learner who is misbehaving. This is a Department of Education technological technique of registering learners' disciplinary issues whether of a violence nature or any behavioural challenge. I normally tell the learner I have my black book where I enter sinners. They literally think it is black book but I know that I am referring to the SA SAMS. According to this system, for each learner a created portfolio must be created, in which all his discipline issues are entered every time the child misbehaves.

SR: So you mean this programme has an aspect that addresses the behavioural problems of learners?

PR2: Yes. When you apply for a learner to be suspended from school following any misbehaviour, or your intention to recommend expulsion, you must have the paper trail, which is a build-up of cases against that particular learner. Otherwise, the Department of Education cannot grant you as a school, the permission to suspend or even expel a learner unless the evidence of the paper trail is provided. This is the reason why educators are not protected because they fail, most of the times, to provide enough evidence against the learner who is giving them problems at school. Educators have always failed to prepare the portfolio of evidence. The best way to keep upbeat with this programme is to immediately record any mischief a learner has committed. It is very easy to forget the details of a learner's misbehaviour trail. So record immediately. Offences are categorized into level 1 to level 5. For example, if a learner repeats level 1 three times, for instance, then it is an alarm that something needs to be done concerning that learner. This system strictly works with records. If we can learn to keep records of these learners' offences, then we will be on our way to winning some of these minor battles. In fact, this system makes it easier to involve the Department of Education because they will be evidence provided. The procedure is simple, this learner committed 1, 2 or 3, and then there was a hearing sitting, and the learner was given a verbal warning, then written warning, and the final warning. Now, because we have set down and looked down on this issue hence we are referring it to the Department of Education. The Department of Education goes back to review how you handled the issue, and then a decision can be taken concerning that learner. So all this information must be on the paper trail portfolio of a learner in the school system

PR2: (continuing)... what we are not doing right is that, we use too much traditional methods of disciplining learners whereas the demands of today's world needs the touch of technology.

SR: As a last note of closure, let us check this, if you were to recommend what works everywhere every time, what would it be?

PR2: I think we can strengthen the training aspect of things. The Department of Education does offer training sessions but only to Safety Committees of schools. On coming back from these training sessions, Safety Committees do not cascade the information to all educators. It solely becomes their information only. I believe the training can be offered across the board to involve all educators; it can tremendously make a positive landmark.

Moreover, what I will say now is very tough. [PR2 continuing]...it is high time now that everyone faces consequence management. Although the truth of facing what we have created ourselves is sometimes painful, it will go a long way in addressing this learner-on-educator violence. Learners must face the consequences of their doing. But also educators who do not adhere to prescriptions of law must face the consequences of their actions. Yes, they do talk about consequence management but nobody practices it. If that thing can be in place, I think everybody will know when to act and how to act. If there is no proof of the learners' paper trail, that case must be thrown out of the window. Some educators keep saying and claim, they do not like talking, but in this profession, you were trained to talk in the first place.

PR2: (continuing)...concerning policies, if we can design our policies and follow to the book, then we are half way to winning the battle. Look at white schools, if learners misbehaving, they immediately take action by applying policy. We may hate them but sometimes they do right things. Let us learn to apply policies. It is quite rare to find in white schools, learners confronting educators because they take action there and there. We are being killed by the culture of Ubuntu.

SR: In closing, I want to take this opportunity to say thank you so much for availing yourself for this interview and hope I will still see you going forward because the journey has just began for me. I real value your effort and commitment, especially to me as a person. Let me reiterate that, I will provide you with a professional summarized kind of feedback and findings to the study.

Interview concluded at 17:59.



Appendix K: Non-Participatory Observation Schedule



NB: The researcher assumes the role of non-participatory observer. (Especially of meetings for Discipline, Safety and Security Committee – DSSC at each of the four participating schools).

This Non-Participatory Observation Schedule is designed with the intention to observing particularly formal meetings of the DSSC meetings at all four participating schools.

When attending the formal meetings of DSSC the researcher will focus on the following:

- ✓ Listen to what participants say and watch what they do and furthermore take extensive notes on,
- ✓ What was said?
- ✓ Details of who was speaking?
- ✓ How long the discussion took?
- ✓ The seating plan of the members during the meetings;
- ✓ The speaking turns;
- ✓ Contribution made by each member of the DSSC.

Further, the researcher will observe the following:

- Participation by each stakeholder member at disciplinary hearings (especially SGB members, parents and learners);
- Representation of stakeholders in such meetings

Further, the researcher will observe the following:

- Prevalence of issues of violence/discipline at such meetings
- Who the perpetrators are (female or male educators Vs boy or girl learners) and the commonality of violence issues;
- Noting the nature of issues of violence in relation to gender lines and/or criminality –if any; and whether the school through its Principal and/or SGB understands and implements the rights of all, especially of educators and how they implement these in the context of protecting their educator component.

The researcher will record the notes of what was observed during the actual observation/s as quickly as possible immediately after the observation meeting since the quantity of information can easily be forgotten.

Duration	Time: 30 to 60 minutes Activity: attend 2 meetings in each school during the months of data collection (depending on accessibility) (also depending on number of observations and daily research objective) Follow-up: at least once (depending on amount of data and collected data types needed)
Physical requirements	Notebook, photo camera, video camera, voice recorder, legal agreements (consent and/or confidentiality agreement)
Expected minimum number of participants for each meeting	Minimum 5 (but aim for at least 20 per group)
Expected output	Texts, notes and sketches



Appendix L: Document Analysis Schedule



The researcher will review documents that are not older than two and will include:

1. Written sources such as minutes of the School Governing Body (SGB) or Discipline, Safety and Security Committee (DSSC) where issues of learner violence and/or discipline are discussed and recorded.
2. School Disciplinary Committee meetings and hearings will be studied. Frequency of these incidents as well as who are involved shall also be noted and recorded.
3. The researcher will also focus on the schools Code of Conduct for Learners' policy.
4. The school's Log Book and the Incidents Book will also be lengthily studied.

All official documents will be employed to validate the observations and interviews thus improving the triangulation process of the findings. The documents may divulge characteristics that were not discovered through the observations and interviews. They may even reveal new information for observation and interviews. Documents can provide critical information about the context and culture of organizations and often provide a different gap for the researcher to elucidate to readers and expose a better illumination of an issue. Extensive notes will then be taken on issues concerning discipline and school-based violence.

Appendix M: The Protocol for Managing Distress in the Context of a Semi-Structured Interview in Addressing the Risk of a Discomforting Reaction

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Research title: Educators as victims of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools: A model for countering the violence against educators.

According to Dodds and Hess (2020), a risk is considered to be minimal where the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, in and of themselves, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examination or tests.

In this study, the researcher has stipulated specific procedures that will be used if a participant experience an adverse emotional reaction or discomfort during the virtual interviews. The researcher will be guided by Draucker, Martsof and Poole's Distress Interview Protocol (Draucker, Martsof & Poole, 2009), which include the following steps taken to protect participants:

- For a participant who indicates they are experiencing a high level of stress or emotional distress OR exhibit behaviours suggestive that the interview is too stressful such as uncontrolled crying, shaking etc., the researcher will stop the discussion/interview immediately.
- Encourage and suggest to the participant to move to a quiet area. Notify someone closer to the participant.
- With the consent of the participant, ask participant to call their GP or nearest health facility or health provider for further advice and support.
- Follow participant up with courtesy call if participant consents.
- Encourage the participant to call either if he/she experiences increased distress in the hours/days following the virtual interview
- The researcher will consider the potential physical and psychological impact on the research study of participants' description of their life experiences.
- Clearly establish procedures to address their situation of emotional or physical harm by address feelings of stress, guilt, and loss of self-esteem by clearly distinguishing procedures, which are considered as "standard of care" from those that are conducted solely for research purposes in the main interview schedule and the informed Consent Form.
- The researcher will only resume the interview if the participant feels able to carry on with the interview/discussion with his/her consent.

Thus, the Distress Interview Protocol will be integrated with the main interview protocols for this study in order to help the researcher to determine when such distress exceed what would be normally expected during the course of an interview on a sensitive topic and might signal an adverse emotional reaction or discomfort.

An important Covid-19 research finding from an Australian study by Biddle, Edwards, Gray and Sollis (2020) suggested that participants who experience distress rarely regret participation or report lasting harm. Based on that finding and the ethical

principles of autonomy and justice, the researcher has developed all the interview protocols in a way that does not hinder the participation of individuals who are distressed but protects their right to immediately discontinue with the interview should they feel or are experiencing an emotional discomforting feeling. According to Showalter (2020), the research interview-distress-protocol requires interviewers to be aware of four indications of acute emotional distress beyond what would be expected in an interview on a sensitive topic:

- (a) Statements or behaviours that suggest that the interview is too stressful;
- (b) Statements that reveal a participant is considering hurting himself or herself;
- (c) Statements that reveal that a participant is considering hurting someone else; or
- (d) Statements that reveal a participant might be in danger if another person found out about the interview.

Thus, for this study, the interview protocol contains follow-up questions that promote dialogue to reveal acute emotional distress or imminent danger so that a prompt decision is taken in terminating an interview or questions that pose discomforting reactions for participants.