GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT MODEL TO ASSIST PARENTS AND LEARNERS WITH AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

by

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DECLARATION

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I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements 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."

_____   <u>26 September 2019</u>

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my thesis to my only child, my greatest blessing,

My son Thivashkar Kishalin Padayichie.

The best sound in this world is the sound of your heartbeat,

You are my proudest achievement.

You have the kindest heart and purest soul,

You have exceeded the meaning of your name: **Divine and Pleasant.**

You are my life and, most of all, the reason for my existence,

Life is beautiful because of YOU.

I am so proud of you and have complete admiration not only for the gentleman that you are,

but also for

Your strength, determination, ambition and drive to achieve your dreams.

Continue to always reach beyond the stars with Lord Muruga as your guiding light.

All my love and hugs

Your Mummy Always and Forever

ABSTRACT: ENGLISH

In the light of increasing concerns related to violence in the South African society, this study sought to explore the nature of aggression amongst Grade R learners through the voices of principals, phase heads, educators, parents and support staff. Bandura's Social Learning Theory, Social Learning Cognitive Theory and Bronfenbrenner' Bio-ecological Theory provided the theoretical lens for this qualitative study. The study was undertaken in two primary schools and one nursery school with 22 participants in the Johannesburg area in South Africa. Data was produced through interviews and questionnaires. The findings show that the nature of aggression is complex, multi-dimensional and contextual. Aggressive behaviour was conceptualised as interconnected physical and emotional states coupled with the verbal competence to act out aggressive behaviour. This was triggered by a number of factors included in the genetic and environmental domains. The exploration of approaches, methods and lines of intervention suggest the need for multi-stakeholders to work together for holistic and responsive interventions. These findings contributed to the development of the *Tree of Nurturance* in order to unravel a contextualised site-based model for intervention to address aggressive behaviour.

KEY TERMS:

Aggression, Aggressive Behaviour, Guidance, Learners, Model, Support, Guidance, Grade R, Social Learning Theory, Social Cognitive Learning Theory

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My late Granny, Mrs. Tholsie Agnes Kuni, always believed that education is the most empowering tool that a woman can have. I have carried that torch with me and only wish THAT you could be here today. Love you, Hama.

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To everyone that made my study possible, I am eternally grateful.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

NELSON MANDELA

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABCD	-	Asset-Based Community Development model
ADD	-	Attention Deficit Disorder
ADHD	-	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
CD	-	Conduct Disorder
DBD	-	Disruptive Behaviour Disorders
DBST	-	District-Based Support Team
DOE	-	Department of Education
ECD	-	Early Childhood Development
GDE	-	Gauteng Department of Education
LoLT	-	Language of Learning and Teaching
ODD	-	Oppositional Defiant Disorder
PD	-	Professional development
PSED	-	Personal, social and emotional development
SBST	-	The School-based Support Team
SCLT	-	Social Cognitive Learning Theory
SIP	-	Social Information Processing
SLT	-	Social Learning Theory
TALIS	-	Teaching and Learning International Survey

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW TO THE STUDY

1.1   INTRODUCTION

I open this thesis with scenarios that show a developmental trajectory of aggression and aggressive behaviour. My aim is to provide a reality check, which lays bare the key issues related to the nature of aggression amongst young learners. According to Parlakian, Lerner, Briggs-Gowan and Hunter (2014:1), aggression does not only begin from school going age but there are clear signs from early childhood. Aggression does not always present itself in an age group at a given time. There are usually signs, incidents and behaviour that lend themselves to a pattern being formed. The scenarios that follow are presented in order to enable the imagination to connect with the realities of aggression and aggressive behaviour. This is a deliberate stance taken in order to invite the reader to gel with developmental experiences of challenging behaviour in the early years.

Scenario 1:

Venay aged 10 months wants a bite of the chocolate that his mum is eating. He makes a lot of sounds whilst kicking and waving his arms. But his mum gives him another spoonful of his food. Venay moves his arms about and hits the spoon out of his mum's hand. The food is now all over the floor! Venay kicks his feet and bangs his hands on the feeding chair and begins crying (Parlakian *et al.* 2014:2).

The greatest challenge when battling with aggressive behaviour is that it could be very distressing for parents, both emotionally and physically. When their baby tugs on their nose and will not let go, clutches at their earrings, yanks hair, bites when breastfeeding, or strikes their hand at the parent/s it is entirely normal for parents to feel a spark of frustration or even anger. However, babies do not intend to cause anguish or sadden their parents or family members. They are merely discovering the realm around them through their perceptions. They unearth how the world operates by biting, miming, seizing, shaking, dropping, striking, smacking and seeing what happens as an outcome, which is typically an epic response (Parlakian *et al.* 2014:2).

During this phase they do not have the oral competences to communicate their needs; by adults reacting in a physical manner they get a reaction that gives them context for their behaviour at the time.

Scenario 2:

The temper tantrums associated with the 'terrible twos' is normally commonly accepted behaviour. The aggression related to these tantrums (kicking and throwing things), is therefore understood and endured. The idea of the precise developmental stage when an increase or decrease in aggression is anticipated is then supported. Aggressive symptoms may vary with developmental ability in motor and cognitive spheres. A toddler with good motor skills can throw objects at siblings with the objective to hurt, and a petulant, exasperated preschooler can easily prod his peers with a crayon (Reebye, 2005:2). Solt (2017:12), states that young toddlers are often just developing the base of their vocabulary. Often learners are equipped with only a restricted number of words to use daily and these words may not provide assistance to them in their conflicts. According to Broder (2013:18), research investigating the connection between young learners' behaviour and language has emphasised behavioural disturbances more broadly (e.g., aggression). The interactions below illustrate this:

Mother: "Don't pull my hair! Madam! Don't pull hair. No. It's not nice to pull hair, is it?"
Child: "Hair."
Mother: "Hair, yes, but you mustn't pull it, must you?"
Child: "Yes!" (Smiles)
Mother: "No! No!"

(Shantz 1987; Solt 2017:12).

Scenario 3:

Scenario 3 is one of many incidents that I was exposed to as an educator. The Grade R learner is brought to school by mum or dad and refuses to say goodbye. The learner's mum/dad stays a while longer as he/she knows that the situation is about to escalate. The learner starts crying and screaming as mum/dad attempts to leave. Mum/dad lowers her/his voice to appease the learner by 'bribing' him/her, "If you stop crying, I will buy you a toy after school." This has no impact and the learner starts lashing out. At this point the educator intervenes and attempts to distract the learner by a favourite game that she enjoys playing with her friends. In so doing, the educator empathises with the learner, making the learner aware that she understands his/her feelings but also reminding the learner that hitting is not acceptable. The educator hugs the learner to ensure that the learner feels safe and secure (Parlakian *et al.* 2014:3).

The educator's approach in the above scenario was one in which the situation did not spiral out of control but was contained after the initial physical reaction by the learner. The educator's reaction allowed for the learner's feelings to be understood, but in the same vein the learner is made aware that the behaviour is not an acceptable response to an emotion (sadness) being experienced. Furthermore, the educator was able to divert the learner's attention and encourage her to participate in an activity that included her friends (Parlakian *et al.* 2014:3).

In the above scenario, the educator was able to maintain a relatively calm atmosphere by approaching the learner, explaining the behaviour and then distracting him/her. Very often this is not the case and the learner's aggressive behaviour has an effect on the educator and other learners in the classroom. According to O'Connor (2014:1), aggressive behaviour in learners also causes substantial anguish in others. Aggressive learners may be confrontational and verbally aggressive. They may struggle to control their tempers and are easily distressed and infuriated by others. They are often insolent and may appear infuriated and indignant. Their aggressive behaviours can interrupt lessons in school and harm, threaten and scare other learners.

Levine and Kline (2007:45) state that the indicator of aggressiveness regularly develops in combination with too many stressors and engulfing circumstances.

Familiar signs that young learners have more feelings inside than they are able to manage are: temper outbursts, tantrums, throwing toys, hitting or bullying siblings and playmates, biting, grabbing, and kicking. The effect of aggression on parents is an emotional one. According to Lehman (2015:1), a lot of parents feel as if they are powerless in the face of their child's anger and aggression. In fact, many mums and dads have said, "I feel like I'm failing at parenting."

Aggressive acts, such as hitting a parent (scenario 3), often appear when toddlers are weighed down by a tense situation or by challenging feelings like anger or jealousy. These moments can be tremendously demanding for parents because they are hurtful. Parents often presume that, as their older toddler's verbal skills grow and they advance in their thinking skills, they are capable of more self-control than they really are. This period of development can be very perplexing because, while a two-year-old may be able to inform the parent what the rule is, they do not have the impulse control to stop themselves from doing something they desire. At this age, emotions still supersedes thinking skills almost every time (Parlakian *et al.* 2014:3).

As is evident from the scenarios, parents are at the end of their tether. According to Empowering Parents (2015:1), most parents struggle with bad behaviour, whether it is disrespect, arguing or severe defiance. The American approach of: The Total Transformation: The James Lehman Approach, takes parents step-by-step through understanding and managing their child's behaviour and shows parents exactly what they need to do to develop their child's problem-solving skills by stopping bad behaviour for good.

1.1.1   A commentary on the three scenarios

The three scenarios discussed above exemplify how aggression progresses early in life and in most cases reveals a steady decline over the initial five years of life. Most learners learn to thwart aggressive behaviours by utilising other skills that emerge during that time.

Some young learners participate in aggression that is enveloping, recurrent and relentless (Keenan, 2012:22). Aggression that becomes apparent and endures during the first five years of life is impairing and linked with later mental disorders, deficient social outcomes and an accretion of deficits (Keenan, 2012:22).

Language problems, impulsivity, hyperactivity, inadequately regulated negative emotions and defiance should be considered when incessant and elevated aggressive behaviour transpires in a setting which leads to problem functioning. Although the direction of effect (i.e., which problem came first) isn't yet known, the co-occurrence argues for a wide-ranging evaluation of developmental functioning when trepidation about early aggressive behaviour arises (Keenan, 2012:22).

According to Gottman (1997) and Latouf (2008:1), learners have become extra anxious and petulant, more morose and temperamental, more dejected and lonesome, more impetuous and noncompliant. This was found by a nationwide random sample of more than two thousand American learners, as rated by parents and educators. Latouf, who is a pre-primary educator, then raises the question whether comparable scenarios occur within the South African context. These above-mentioned traits have been observed and identified by Latouf (2008:1), as well as the educators from the Evergreen Pre-primary environment, located in Pretoria, South Africa. Latouf's question of whether similar scenarios are prevalent within a South African context is a pertinent one. Latouf (2008:1) mentions that Brink (2006:37-44) highlights that there are an array of behavioural and emotional difficulties experienced by learners, particularly within the South African context: lack of responsibility, bereft of respect for adults, inability to delay gratification, lack of boundaries, incapable to play, lack of motivation, bereft of empathy for others and over assertiveness.

Bearing in mind the display of aggressive behaviour by learners and the effects on adults and learners themselves, this study sought to examine the nature of aggression in Grade R by engaging school-based staff and parents. This approach to the study of aggression was directed at the development of a model of intervention for parents and learners with aggressive behaviour. By developing a model, emphasis was placed on the nature of aggressive behaviour in Grade R within a South African context as this is a critical phase in the formative years and the entry point for basic schooling.

1.2   RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION

This study is motivated by both my personal and professional experiences. On a personal front my childhood experience with aggression and aggressive behaviour is limited. At school, however, I did witness overt (verbal and physical) and covert (e.g., stealing and truancy) types of aggression. To my best knowledge at the time, it was not that rife and it did not result in anything serious. I am part of a large family; I have memories of watching Bruce Lee movies with my male cousins. After the movie they would often model the tactics from the movie on each other. I also remember the boys at school mimicking Chuck Norris. This would often result in tears from the person on the receiving end. The situation was always resolved by an adult /educator intervening and politely reminding them that, "You cannot do to others what you watch on television". Subsequently, I now know that research has been done on the effects of violence from television and how it impacts on learners' behaviour.

On a professional front this study stems from the fact that I was a Grade R educator for eight years and I have been exposed to learners with negative behavioural patterns towards their peers and adults in their environment, interactions with their parents and support staff. During these years, I had learners in my class that became easily frustrated with their peers and this was often when they were not gratified immediately. I noticed that these learners had poor social skills, were unable to verbalise what made them angry and their initial response to their demands not being met was to react physically. I used different methods in my approach to assist the learners and gave parents ideas on what approaches can be used.

During parent meetings it became evident that parents were not equipped to deal with this type of behaviour. Some parents informed me that this type of behaviour was not displayed at home. Parents felt helpless and did not have the tools to assist learners. When I suggested that particular learners be assessed, the results often confirmed that there was an imbalance with dopamine and serotonin levels. This led me to understand that sometimes behavioural patterns are beyond learners' control and they would require assistance and sometimes medical interventions in order to effect behavioural change. It also raised questions for me as an educator as to why this type of behaviour prevails. I decided to further my studies with my Master of Education in the field of socio-education with the title of my dissertation being:

"An Investigation of Children's Aggression in the Foundation Phase: A Socio-Education Perspective". This study provided much more insight into the aggressive behaviour of learners as the factors/causes were analysed.

For the past three years I was Head of the Foundation Phase at a private primary school in Johannesburg. During that time, I was confronted with learners who displayed aggressive tendencies on a regular basis. I was involved with learners from Grade R to Grade 3 and exposed to a variety of personalities (of both learners and parents). The reasoning of learners provided more enlightenment and meetings with parents disclosed more understanding as to why learners displayed negative behaviour. These observations and experiences provided a motivation for my current research study.

This study was also motivated by finding a "bottom-up" approach to understanding the complexities of aggression. According to Stump, Ratliff, Wu & Hawley (2007: 23), ''top-down'' approaches to social competence refers to specific practices in which researchers initially classify behaviours and mechanisms of relationship functioning that they believe to be ''socially competent'' and then investigate for commonalities among their indices. Thus, from a top-down system, the nature of social competence itself refers to the practice of first defining external manifestations of social competence before defining the definite construct (Stump *et al.* 2007:24); otherwise, this creates difficulties in generating theories or root causes of social competence. The best way to comprehend the approach is to envisage, for example, social competence being depicted as a tree.

A top-down approach to social competence would involve starting at the leaves of the tree (i.e., the manifestations of social competence) and attempting to accumulate them all together to find the common branch. On the contrary, a bottom-up approach is one in which researchers focus on underlying root causes of behaviour, thereby allowing several pathways to lead to competence (and not only those that involve behavioural profiles that conform to a top-down, value-laden approach). In contrast to top-down approaches, as stated in Stump *et al.* (2007:28), bottom-up approaches to social competence first considers how the nature of the organism intermingles in its environment. In essence, social competence refers to the capability of an individual to flourish in his or her social environment. As the researcher, I do believe that the latter is the best approach to curbing learner aggression.

The 'Tree of Nurturance' model which will be discussed in Chapter 7 is informed partly by the bottom-up model with the centrality of the learner being of paramount importance.

Another aspect that motivated this study is the paucity of focus on social and emotional development in light of the over-emphasis on the academic programme in Grade R. According to Gelderbloem (2014: iv), a comprehensive literature review was conducted which revealed that social and emotional learning programmes are highly effective in addressing the subject of violence and social problems in schools along with constructing an optimistic school ambience with high learner academic achievement. Data collected from the Life Orientation Curriculum documents, Grades R-12, and the electronic interview revealed that the Life Orientation curriculum covers most of the crucial fundamentals required to make an impact on the development of learners' social and emotional skills, but there is a lack of knowledgeable educators to enable such an important study area. This is particularly true for Grade R where the educators are inadequately qualified. Furthermore, not enough time and resources are allocated to social and emotional learning (Gelderbloem, 2014: iv).

Gelderbloem (2014:3) stated that his research endeavoured to make a case that social and emotional learning in schools is essential to develop holistic, emotionally skilled individuals, capable of social cohesion and acceptance leading to productive and self-fulfilled lives in contemporary South Africa. This is a pertinent comment as it mirrors the times that we are living in. Gelderbloem (2014:3), states that South Africans, like all world citizens, need institutions to foresee changes before they occur, empathy to see the correlation between unrelated events, and creativity to discover new ways of defining problems. This study is an attempt to contribute to filling the gap in literature on one facet that is creating concern in the South African context, namely, aggressive behaviour.

The above must be understood in light of the levels of violence in South Africa which are on the incline. This is prominent in schools as well. Jacobs (2012:2), points out that the reality in South African schools, as portrayed in the media, is not congruent with the education ideal of promoting democracy and the protection of fundamental human rights, which is spelt out in various South African policies and pieces of legislation. Jacobs (2012:3), further states that the printed media inform the public about incidences of school violence and Jacobs (2012:64), states that a specific frame of pre-school learners referred to as terror tots who created mayhem at school featured in an article.

The authors portray learners as bullying, swearing, engaging in fistfights, being impudent, naughty and exhibiting angry behaviour. Neither that article nor any other article provided an alternative preschool-learner frame. Taking the latter into consideration, my study is valuable to map an intervention.

1.3   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

As previously mentioned, aggression/violence in the early years can be described in terms of contexts wherein learners spend the most part of their lives, i.e. their home (primary socialisation), school (secondary socialisation) and the community. According to Venter (2012:49), if excessive aggression in the preschool learner is not treated, it could lead to a maladjusted and unhappy teenager and adult.

- Home

Richards (2012:6), who conducted research in Cape Town (South Africa) in a predominantly coloured area, cites that throughout their phases of development, learners learn from behavioural models put forward by their parents. Through modelling reinforcement, learners learn not only from behaviour directed towards them but also from observing how parents treat others and how they conduct themselves in various social situations.

- School

School is the environment where secondary socialisation takes place. Ahn (2005:55), states that learners in the early years need extensive assistance and practise to recognise their feelings and to learn applicable ways to deal with them. In addition to serving as models for the expression of appropriate emotions, educators need to give their learners tangible advice for dealing with their feelings. One way of doing this is to aid the learners to learn to verbalise their emotions, instead of physically enacting them out.

- Community

The community in which a learner is raised is of critical importance as what the community projects onto young minds is the behaviour that they will reflect. Stewart (2008:1) believes that the community plays a vital role in the example it sets, and the morals conveyed. He states that another underlying issue that causes aggressive behaviour is exposure to violence in the community.

Bukatko and Daehler (2004:601) state that neighbourhoods' matter with respect to behavioural and emotional problems; both are likely to exist in communities with a low socio-economic status. When parents have larger social support from family and friends within the community, the negative effects that often supplement increased parental stress in low income neighbourhoods may also be reduced. The individual and collective efforts of community members to overseer and support in the supervision of learners may be important avenues for promoting learner development. The above three places where learners spend most of their time and experience aggressive behaviour has far-reaching effects on their behaviour.

Richards (2012:2) and Latouf (2008:2) conducted their studies in South Africa. In Richard's (2012:2), study the participants were 65 parents of boys and girls between the ages of six and eight from a first-grade classroom in a primary school in Cape Town. Latouf's research (2008:4) was undertaken according to the quantitative approach, using a sample of thirty parents from Evergreen Pre-primary in Gauteng. A comparison between the research of Richards (2012:2) and Latouf (2008:2) is important given their findings. Richard's (2012:2) results showed that substance abuse was connected to aggression, but no major association was established between involved parenting, positive parenting, corporal punishment, inconsistent discipline, poor monitoring and supervision and learners' aggression. Whereas Latouf's results (2008:4), indicated primarily that the authoritative parenting style was commonly used by the parents of the five-year old group and that this parenting style tends to lead to more acceptable social behaviour among the five-year olds.

Latouf (2008:65) clearly stated that parenting is daunting. She further states that Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) is learnt along the way and influenced by certain aspects; however, it still plays the most important role in shaping the learners in their behaviour towards others and in developing their self-esteem. Haasbroek's (2012:14), study on the other hand focused on Grade 1 learners and on the factors that put first graders at risk for aggression. Haasbroek's (2012:32), research revealed that both Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Conduct Disorder (CD) were identified as notably associated with aggression.

Hence, two different studies mentioned that parenting skills are of utmost significance in decreasing aggression in learners. Therefore, my research in theorising a model and guidance on the latter will definitely be of value.

According to Hall, Woolard, Lake and Smith (2012:87), a child-only household is defined as a household in which all members are younger than 18 years. These households are also commonly known as "child-headed households". De Lannoy, Swartz, Lake and Smith (2015:70) mention that only 0.5% of children lived in households headed by children. 35% of children under the age of 18 live with both parents (De Lannoy *et al.* 2015:69).

It is important to note that in a South African context early intervention is sometimes not enough as some of the sources of aggression are situational based, as many households in South Africa are child-headed. In addition, some learners live in poverty, which makes them vulnerable and it is a fertile ground for aggressive behaviour. Gauteng has the lowest learner poverty rates calculated at 38% (Hall *et al.* 2012:88) and has the lowest levels of income poverty, with less than 20% of learners who live in unemployed households (Hall *et al.* 2012:89). Due to this fact, the incidence of aggression could be expected to be higher.

Operational support and suitable connecting relationships are crucial in assisting young people develop a sense of belonging; yet these are without fail undermined for young people today. A family is the first site of belonging for most individuals – an institution that theoretically supports secure attachment and positive self-identity. However, with high rates of orphanhood and physically absent parents, many young people may experience a lack of belonging in the early years. As mentioned previously, thirty-five percent of learners under the age of eighteen dwell with both parents. The rest reside predominantly with their mothers only, while relatively few reside with their fathers or extended family members. The disruption of family care, especially at a young age, has significant psychosocial effects. For example, learners without secure attachment are more prone to behavioural problems such as aggression, learning difficulties, poor language development and weak decision-making abilities, and are less resilient to poverty. These, in turn, affect projections for social mobility later on (De Lannoy *et al.* 2015:84).

In Botha, Myburgh and Poggenpoel (2013:1), they state that aggressive behaviour in South African schools has become a growing concern as, "people of all ages, cultures and both genders" resort to aggressive behaviour in order to express their emotions and frustrations (Breet, Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 2010:511; Botha, Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 2013:1).

According to McLeod (2007; Huggins 2014:12), Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1968) also supports a holistic approach to foster learning. His model points to numerous levels of need a person should attend to in order to advance through to the highest level of self-actualisation. Maslow believed that everyone has the motivation to attain each of these needs, however "*unfortunately, progress is often disrupted by failure to meet lower level needs*".

This model considers the implications of learners' personal, social and emotional development (PSED) within an effective transition policy as it highlights the need for, "safety and security", "love and belonging" and the promotion of learners' "self-esteem". Transitions must meet learners' "need to feel emotionally and physically safe and accepted within the classroom to progress and reach their full potential" (McLeod, 2007; Huggins 2014:13). Below is the pyramid of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Self-Actualisation

Esteem Needs

Needs for love, affection and belonging

Safety Needs

Physiological Needs
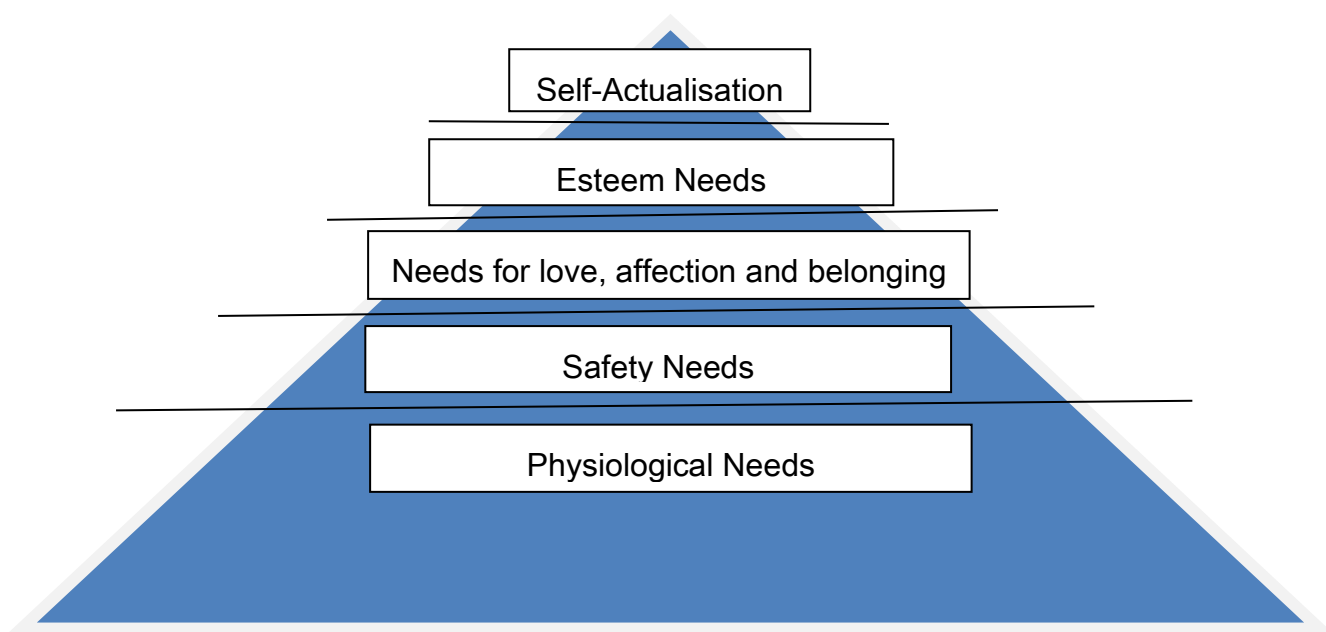
Figure 1.3.1: Learners' hierarchy of needs

(Maslow 1954; Jerome 2013:41)

Learners spend most of their life between home, school and community. A common thread between all three of them is that modelling of behaviour plays an important role. Bukatko and Daehler (2004:500) clearly indicated that parents manage aspects of their learners' lives that, in turn, influence their social development.

What is also important to note is, according to Haasbroek (2012:5), learner aggression is a strong forecaster of violence and felonious behaviour in the future. Therefore, ascertaining risk factors for aggressive behaviour at an early age is advantageous for preventative intervention in reducing rates of violence and crime. Poverty and violence have a bearing on aggressive behaviour and a clear indication of this is made by McKay (2000:1), who states that violent crime perpetrated by young boys or men against their friends, families, neighbours and complete strangers is of profound concern in South Africa. Many factors are known to have aided: poverty, the experience of violence from the authorities during the long years of apartheid, frustration at seeing no future in a context of unemployment, increasing use of alcohol, the escalation in numbers of street children, and absent fathers — either by preference or while seeking employment.

Because of the harshness of economic deprivation and inequality in South Africa, elucidations of violent or unlawful behaviour are often fairly mechanistic. Sometimes the personal experience of individuals is lost in the political analysis (McKay, 2000:3). However, despite having a wealth of information on the subject of aggression and aggressive behaviour and its dimensions, we do not essentially comprehend aggressive behaviour in context for the development of responsive intervention models. Therefore, a study on aggressive behaviour with a view to developing a guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour is both timely and crucial.

1.4   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Aggression and aggressive behaviour in South Africa has not been sufficiently explored according to the realities that school-based staff and parents experience. Bearing this in mind, this study seeks to use a bottom-up approach to examine the experiences of principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents with a view to develop a model that will assist to deal with the phenomena in context. This investigation helps to provide clarity on what aggressive behaviour looks like in early schooling. Such a response is necessary to contribute to appropriate interventions for parents through a school-based model.

1.5   AIM OF THIS STUDY

The main aim of this study was to explore aggressive behaviour amongst Grade R learners as experienced by principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents with the view to developing a school-based guidance and support model to assist parents and learners.

1.5.1   Research questions

Main question:

What does the experiences of principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents suggest about the nature of aggression and aggressive behaviour in Grade R, and what are the implications of this for a school-based model for addressing aggression and aggressive behaviour aimed at parents and learners?

Subsidiary questions:

- What do the participants understand by the concept of 'aggression and aggressive behaviour'?
- What are the factors that lead to aggression and aggressive behaviour of Grade R learners?
- In what ways can principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents deal with aggressive behaviour?
- What does the above suggest for a school-based model to support parents and learners with aggressive behaviour?

1.5.2   Objectives of this study

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To establish how the concepts of aggression and aggressive behaviour are understood by principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents;
- To identify contributory factors that lead to aggression and aggressive behaviour of Grade R learners at school and at home;

- To ascertain how principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents deal with aggression and aggressive behaviour (approaches, methods, lines of intervention employed);

- To establish how the school can support educators and parents to deal with learners' aggressive behaviour;

- To propose a school-based guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour.

1.6   THE RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

According to Hammond and Wellington (2013:107), research methods provide the means through which data are gathered and analysed within a research study. I have selected to exclusively use the qualitative approach as Hammond and Wellington (2013:107) state that such an approach is seen as postulating a concern for more inductive analysis, for exploring, explaining, uncovering phenomena and for generating new theoretical insights.

Hammond and Wellington (2013:107) state that qualitative methods feature strongly in methodologies such as life history, narrative enquiry, case study and ethnography, that is inclined to explicate local rather than broad-spectrum conditions. The type of qualitative study that I selected is a case study. I chose the latter because this technique enabled me to meticulously scrutinise the data within a definite methodological framework. In most cases, a case study mode is selected for a minute geographical region or a very restricted sum of individuals as the subjects of research. Case studies, primarily explore a study as a research approach to examine a current real-life phenomenon through comprehensive contextual analysis of a limited or rare number of events or conditions, and their relationships. By 'rare' it is meant that only a very small geographical district or number of subjects of relevance are examined in detail. Case studies examine the data at the micro level (Zainal, 2007:2).

There are several advantages in employing case studies. Firstly, the examination of the data is most often carried out within the context of its use (Yin, 1984 in Zainal, 2007:4), that is, within the setting in which the activity takes place. The thorough qualitative accounts often generated in case studies not only assist to delve into or illustrate the data in a real-life environment, but also help to explicate the complexities of real-life situations which may not be captured through experimental or survey research (Zainal, 2007:4).

The three schools involved in the case study were a private pre-school, a private nursery school and a government primary school. Collectively, these three schools form the case to inform the development of the guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour.

According to Guest, Namey and Mitchell (2013:41), sampling is one of the most vital characteristics of research design. Sampling refers to the manner of selecting a subset of items from a distinct population for inclusion in a study. My study population was precisely defined by my research objectives. Guest *et al.* (2013:43) stated that the hallmarks of qualitative research are the skills to account for context and acquire a more holistic representation of the research topic. Including the most knowledgeable individuals in the qualitative study is essential. My study was based on purposive sampling in Grade R classes at two private schools and one government school. The participants comprised of three principals, one phase head, two grade heads, six Grade R educators, three support staff members and seven parents as they were rich in information, which was relevant to the study.

Data collection techniques:

Semi-structured interviews with questionnaires are focused dialogues in which I endeavoured to find out what the participants knew about the topic, to ascertain and document what the individuals had encountered, what they thought and felt about the nature of aggression and aggressive behaviour in Grade R and what implication or value it had (Mears, 2012:170). By collecting the participants' accounts of situations, analysing their contents, finding patterns and sharing what is learned, I was able to better understand the research study (Mears, 2012:175). Interviews were conducted with the three principals, the Foundation Phase head and the two grade heads, and paired interviews with the Grade R educators and questionnaires for the support staff and parents.

I did not opt to do focus group interviews with parents, as they can be complicated to pull together. It would not have been easy to get the sample that is able to respond to my questions and focus groups may deter some people from participating, for example, those who are not very eloquent or self-assured and those who have communication challenges or special needs (Gibbs, 2012:187). However, paired interviews were held with the six Grade R educators.

Qualitative data analysis is a relatively methodical course of coding, categorising and interpreting data to reveal accounts of a single phenomenon of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:364). After the fieldwork was concluded and the information documented, the data was compared and thereafter coded. Categories were formed from the coded topics. A category is a more broad-spectrum and abstract entity that epitomises the meaning of similar topics (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:370). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:373), the eventual target of qualitative research is to make all-purpose statements about relationships among categories by unearthing patterns/themes in the data. A pattern/theme is a relationship among categories. Pattern/theme-seeking meant that I examined the data in a variety of ways. The patterns/themes that were found served as an outline for the analysis of the data collected (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:373).

According to Guest *et al.* (2013:317), ethical considerations involve the safeguarding of persons with impaired or diminished sovereignty, which requires those who are reliant or defenceless to be afforded with security against harm or exploitation. Due to the fact that my research was based on a case study, I dealt with real people who have legal human and civil rights and to whom I owed some type of moral obligation. I paid meticulous attention to the ethical facets of my project. The most essential principles of ethical research are informed consent and the guarding of confidentiality (Angrosino, 2012:167).

I wrote letters to the principal and parents describing what the study entailed. I also approached the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and the Department of Education (DOE) to gain permission to use the schools in the research. Grade R educators and support staff were approached to participate in the interviews. Appointments were arranged with the participants at a time and place convenient for them. The principals, phase heads, grade heads and Grade R educators were interviewed on the school premises in their offices and classrooms respectively. Support staff members and parents completed a questionnaire.

1.7   CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 1:   Introduction and overview of the study

This chapter introduces the notion that aggression does not always present itself to a specific age group. Typically there are signs and behaviour that indicate that patterns are being formed.

Chapter 2:   The theoretical framework to study aggression in Grade R

This chapter sets the stage for the theoretical framework to study aggression in Grade R. The latter was measured to be crucial to the study on aggressive behaviour of Grade R learners. This chapter expounds on the nature versus nurture perspective.

Chapter 3:   Research design and methodology

In this chapter I present the research design and methodology for the study, which is based on an interpretivist paradigm. A comparison is made between a qualitative and quantitative research approach and an explanation provided for the choice of a qualitative research approach.

Chapter 4:   The concepts of aggression and aggressive behaviour and the types of aggressive behaviour

This chapter answers the research question and illuminates on the types of aggressive behaviour prevalent in Grade R according to the perceptions of the participants.

Chapter 5:   Factors leading to aggression and aggressive behaviour

This chapter identified the contributory factors that leads to aggression and aggressive behaviour of Grade R learners at school and at home. Principals, phase heads, educators, support staff and parents were the participants of this study.

Chapter 6:   Lines of intervention for dealing with aggression and aggressive behaviour.

This chapter explores the lines of intervention for dealing with aggression and aggressive behaviour. Parents' needs and vulnerabilities, types of interventions deemed appropriate and techniques and behaviours for dealing with aggression and aggressive behaviour are the three themes discussed in Chapter 6.

Chapter 7:   A school-based guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour

This chapter summarises the findings from Chapters 4, 5 and 6 and demonstrates its relevance towards building a school-based guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour.

Chapter 8:   Conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study

The final chapter focusses on the conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study. The development of a school-based model for addressing aggression and aggressive behaviour aimed at parents and learners appropriately titled 'Tree of Nurturance' is realised.

CHAPTER TWO

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK TO STUDY AGGRESSION

IN GRADE R

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the theoretical framework to study aggression in Grade R. This phenomenon of interest was considered critical to the study on aggressive behaviour of Grade R learners. I present a justification for my choice of theories which moves away from the nature to the nurture perspective. A dominant force in explaining the trajectory of aggression and aggressive behaviour can be explained by the age-old psychology debate of nature versus nurture. The question posed is as follows: Is genetic or the environmental factors of greater magnitude? Evidence shows that by 'nature' we mean inborn biological givens - the hereditary information we acquire from our parents at the moment of conception. By 'nurture', it is explained as the intricate forces of the physical and social world that influence our biological makeup and psychological experiences before and after birth (Berk, 2007:7).

This is not to discount the importance of the nature perspective but merely to ground the study in the social realm of experience and relationships. This type of knowledge is urgently needed in Grade R which should focus on children's social and emotional development in the formative years. The latter is being side-lined in favour of cognitive development through a heavy focus on mathematics and language development in the South African context. This is concerning especially since Grade R is the entry point to basic schooling. I chose to use Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) and Social Cognitive Learning Theory (SCLT) as theoretical lenses to make sense of aggression and aggressive behaviour that emanates from it. These lenses together with the Bio-ecological Model, as proposed by Bronfenbrenner, assisted in providing insights to build a model for guidance and support,

2.1.1   Opening remarks

According to Bushman (2016:2), aggression is undeniably the gloomy face of human nature. Although aggression may have been adaptive in our primeval history, it barely seems adaptive in the present day. Aggression is deliberate rather than unintentional and the victim wants to steer clear of the harm (Bushman, 2016:2). The subsequent statement by Deckman, Pond and DeWall (2015:1), is relative to the study in the field of the research as violence and aggression are ubiquitous across human cultures and daily existence. Turning back the clock, it can be said that, for our early human ancestors, aggressive behaviour had significant adaptive value. In particular, aggression was useful for securing access to valuable resources, including food and shelter and then defending those resources once they were acquired. What's more is that aggression is also effective in acquiring access to mates and protecting offspring. For this reason, aggression proved to be a worthy behavioural strategy for passing on one's genes to successive generations. Humans depend on social groups for survival; therefore people must navigate between antisocial and pro-social impulses (Deckman *et al.* 2015:1).

According to Britt, Janus and McIntyre (2013:2), frustration is described as the interface between a physical, social, personal or environmental stimulus that involves inhibition of an organism's activity and an organism's emotional or primal response to that stimulus, which is typified by *a "change in tension, disturbance of homeostasis and maladaptation," and frequently expressed into anger, withdrawal, or aggression.* Bushman (2016:3), states that aggression is not an internal response, such as having enraged feelings or belligerent thoughts (although such internal responses can raise the likelihood of actual aggression). Furthermore, Bushman (2016:3) asserts that *"it is a behaviour that you can see."* With this being said, Bandura's experiment laid ground to purposefully frustrating the children in the experiment in order to observe a reaction. This brought into question the ethical treatment of research participants and the participants being children. According to Lansford (2012:183), some critiques have questioned whether Bandura's study would have been endorsed by a 21st century Institutional Review Boards (IRB) given the perspicuous modelling of aggression to which the children were exposed to as well as the goading in denying them access to the appealing toys that was meant to provoke the children's own aggressive responses.

The following have been probed by scholars: the generalisability of the findings given that the child participants were all enlisted from the Stanford University preschool, and, thereby, more socioeconomically privileged than the broad population; the original study does not provide information about the children's race, ethnicity, parents' education, or other sociodemographic variables that are characteristically reported in the literature today. Ensuing research has documented sociodemographic differences in children's mean levels of aggression. Furthermore Lansford (2012:183) stated that children with more educated parents (Nagin & Tremblay, 2001), from families with fewer stressors (Sanson, Oberklaid, Pedlow, & Prior, 1991), and from two-parent households (Vaden-Kiernan, Ialongno, Pearson, & Kellam, 1995), on average, demonstrate lower levels of aggression than do children with less educated parents, from families with more stressors, and from single-parent households, respectively. Third, some researchers have questioned the ecological validity of the findings given that the aggression took place in a laboratory setting, which may not have shared certain key features with real-life settings, and that children's aggression was coded in close temporal proximity to when they witnessed the adult model's aggression. Given these limitations, it was not clear from the original study whether children would imitate aggression in real-life settings or would imitate aggression following a delay or over long periods of time. More recent studies have established that children do imitate aggression in a variety of contexts and even following lengthy delays between exposure to violence and behaving aggressively (Bushman & Huesmann, 2010; Guerra, Huesmann, & Spindler, 2003; Slater, Henry, Swaim, & Anderson, 2003).

Devshi (2014:8) concurs with the authors above by stating that the fact that the learners were frustrated broached ethical concerns as they are intentionally subjected to behaviour that inflicted distress and could psychologically harm them (Devshi, 2014:8). There are also ethical concerns around psychological well-being as encouraging aggression could be contended to be ethically wrong as they may recreate this aggression in other forms or see this as a viable way to deal with problems in the future (Devshi, 2014:8). The study and social learning explanation could be argued to be short of internal validity as measuring how a child behaves towards a Bobo Doll (Devshi, 2014:7). This is nothing like a real person and may not be a justifiable measure of aggression. Some learners were overheard saying, *"That's the doll we have to hit"* suggesting researcher bias may have inclined the learners to behave aggressively, also further undermining the study (Devshi, 2014:7).

According to Altin, Jablonski, Lyke and Spinella (2011:5), children were directed into a room where, there were many toys and the children immediately started playing with the toys. However, in order to frustrate the children, they were told that these toys were for other children and that they could not play with them. The children were then led into a third room. In this room there was an assortment of both non-aggressive and aggressive toys. The child was held in this room for 20 minutes during which time their behaviour was observed by experimenters through a one-way mirror. The observers evaluated the subject based on numerous measures of aggressive behaviour including: the exact type of behaviour, the regularity of aggression, and who or what the aggression was aimed towards. Thus, it is possible that the children may not have acted aggressively if they had not been frustrated.

Knowing the concept of aggression helps to recognise the type of aggression that comes to the fore and probable ways of dealing with this. Aggression is further characterised as damaging, deleterious, antagonistic and often caused by frustration (Azimi, Vaziri & Kashani 2012:1280). Aggression can exhibit in several different forms. It can be physical, verbal or passive. Physical aggression is discernible by impudent hostility towards authority, being pugnacious, abusing others and destroying property. Verbal aggression and passive aggression are recognised as communication designed to cause pain to another person. It may be name calling and nasty remarks, slamming a door or silence and sulking (Azimi *et al.* 2012:1280). Brain (1986:12-14; Gasa, 2005:14) explicate aggression from a Freudian view which states that it stemmed from an innate, self-directed death wish that could be alleviated by redirecting it towards others. Aggression is an instinctive drive. In this case, aggression is derived from an innate fighting instinct, which is universal to all humans. Brain (1986:12-14; Gasa 2005:15), state that the frustration aggression hypothesis stems primarily from an outwardly elicited 'drive' to wound others; frustration brings forth a relentless 'drive' toward aggression. As noted, this study gives preference to the SLT and SCLT as an interpretation of aggression as theorised by Bandura (see a full discussion in the literature review of Chapter 2). Aggression from this viewpoint is a learned social response. (Brain, 1986:12-14; Gasa, 2005:15), states that Bandura (1973) argues that instrumental conditioning and social modelling are strongly involved in the acquirement of responses of aggression (Brain, 1986:12-14; Gasa, 2005:15).

Aggression is particularly detrimental in contemporary times, particularly since it seems to be so omnipresent in our daily interactions. As a result, it remains a considerable area of study within the social sciences, chiefly amongst social psychologists. Arguably, deliberations around the nature versus nurture controversy have continued for years. What will influence one's position in this regard will depend on one's perception of the perspective and one's experiences of it. As a result the debate focuses on the comparative influence of genetic inheritance and environmental contributions to human development (Deckman *et al.* 2015:1).

In this chapter, each perspective will be elaborated on and, after evaluating each theory. It will be evident that the theoretical perspective in which aggression and aggressive behaviour are best understood is underpinned by the nurture perspective. The theoretical focus was re-examined by drawing from it the relevant theory. Hence, it provided more depth as to why the concept of aggression or aggressive behaviour is studied from this theoretical angle.

Marais and Meier's (2010:1) research project, on "Disruptive behaviour in the Foundation Phase of schooling", holds weight as it leans towards my study of aggression and the importance of why parents and learners require guidance and support with aggressive behaviour. Learners in this phase are in a developmental stage where they need to become skilled with the laws of society and learn to abide by sets of rules and conduct themselves using appropriate behaviour. This developmental stage overlaps with the beginning of formal schooling when the learning environment is controlled according to the rules pertinent to formal schooling. Lastly, this stage is also the fitting time to focus on managing disruptive behaviour as a means of assisting learners to nurture a self-disciplined lifestyle. Grade R is the first year in the Foundation Phase and this is the time to address problematic behaviour and provide guidance.

Taking the above paragraph into consideration, it is important to position parents as primary socialisation agents before a learner enters the learning environment. Thus, learners are at the start of their academic journey where they exhibit behavioural patterns that are built on their observations and modelling from their role models, i.e. their role models are their parents, caregivers, siblings and media icons. I used Albert Bandura's SLT as it clarified aggressive behaviour from the nurture perspective.

2.2 BIOLOGICAL AND GENETIC THEORIES

According to Imtiaz, Yasin and Yaseen (2010:99), it is alleged that aggression is due to both genetic (biological) factors and social (learned) factors. Biological factors alone do not influence the development of aggression. The social environment of the individual is a potent regulator of neurobiological processes and behaviour. In other words, aggressive behaviour is the product of the regulation of external and internal stimuli by living beings.

Kessenich and Morrison (2016:2), state that a primary point to consider is that the seventeenth century English philosopher John Locke depicted a young child's mind as a tabula rasa (blank slate) upon which the child's experiences are written. Kessenich and Morrison (2016:2), furthermore mention that Jean Jacques Rousseau, an eighteenth-century French philosopher, also contended that human development was mainly a function of experience. Kessenich and Morrison (2016:2), also suggest another position to view this from is that of the nineteenth century scholars such as Gregor Mendel, Charles Darwin and Sir Francis Galton who drew attention to the importance of heredity in shaping development. While all these scientists afforded meaningful insights into the role of heredity and the environment, modern researchers have sought to additionally explore the dynamic interactions between nature and nurture that shape human development. The twentieth century saw the evolution of a range of theories of development that differentially called attention to the role of biological versus environmental factors. One key educational issue associated with this topic is the question of whether a learner's entrance age, or maturational level, is crucial for school success. For this and other important educational questions, nature and nurture intermingle in complex ways to shape a learner's academic growth (Kessenich & Morrison, 2016:2).

2.2.1 Nature perspective

In this segment my discussion is premised on the genetic inheritance and biological approach. Biological maturationist theories embody the contrasting swing of the theoretical pendulum. This framework posits that biologically and genetically predetermined patterns of change have a greater impression on development than environmental influences (Kessenich & Morrison 2016:2). Kessenich and Morrison (2016:2), state that the proponents of this approach became audible during the early twentieth century.

Kessenich and Morrison (2016:2), mention that there were theorists such as Freud and Arnold Gessell who propositioned that experiential influences were secondary to instinctive maturational mechanisms. This perspective regained popularity in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries as a result of major advances in genetic research, as well as the establishment of twin studies and behavioural genetics (Kessenich & Morrison, 2016:4). Thus, the major advances are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

Human aggression/impulsivity-related traits have a complex backdrop that is greatly influenced by genetic and non-genetic factors. Highly conserved brain regions, including the amygdala, which controls neural circuits and activates defensive, aggressive, or avoidant behavioural models, regulate the relationship between aggression and anxiety (Pavlov, Chistiakov & Chekhonin, 2011:1). The dysfunction of neural circuits accountable for emotional control was shown to represent an etiological factor of violent behaviour (Pavlov, Chistiakov & Chekhonin, 2011:1). In addition to the amygdala, these circuits also involve the anterior cingulated cortex and regions of the prefrontal cortex. Excessive reactivity in the amygdala coupled with inadequate prefrontal regulation serve to augment the likelihood of aggressive behaviour (Pavlov, Chistiakov & Chekhonin, 2011:1). Developmental alterations in prefrontal-subcortical circuitry as well as neuromodulatory and hormonal abnormality appear to play a role. Imbalance in testosterone/serotonin and testosterone/cortisol ratios (e.g., increased testosterone levels and reduced cortisol levels) enhances the proclivity toward aggression because of condensed activation of the neural circuitry of impulse control and self-regulation. Serotonin facilitates prefrontal inhibition and thus deficient serotonergic activity can increase aggression (Pavlov, Chistiakov & Chekhonin, 2011:1). Given these factors, according to Jalain (2014:11), researchers began to realise that serotonin played a key role in regulating aggressive behaviours in the mid-1970s. Hence, it is evident that the latter is directly related to the nature perspective as it relates to the biological approach. As my study focused on the nurture perspective, it is this perspective that will be implicit in the effects it has on Grade R learners' aggressive behaviour.

Theories of aggression from a biological perspective suggest that the evolution of the human species plays a significant role in human aggression. These theories maintain that aggression and violence are the natural consequences of evolution (Willemse, 2008:28).

Geen (2001:20), however takes the biological approach into account and states that brain mechanisms and the activity of hormones have also been linked in human aggression as background factors. Both the limbic system and the cerebral cortex are linked to aggression, the former as a primitive centre of emotional reactivity to provocation and the latter as a higher centre exercising cognitive controls over emotional responding. In particular, dysfunction in the frontal-lobe region of the cortex is correlated with aggressive behaviour and mood. The activity of the neurotransmitter serotonin is involved in aggression, in that relatively low levels of serotonin activity such as may be induced through damage to the limbic system or inhibiting drugs are associated with high levels of aggression. Whereas Bandura (2001:21), elucidates that aggression, is allegedly genetically programmed as a biological universal, He further states that wide intercultural diversity challenges the view that people are inherently aggressive. There are fighting cultures that breed aggression by modeling it pervasively, attaching prestige to it and according it functional value for gaining social status, material benefits, and social control.

2.2.2   Nurture perspective

In the following section my discussion focuses on environmental contributions that pertain to the nurture perspective as my study embraces this perspective. Environmental conditions can be defined as parenting practices, community environments, culture, peers, exposure to violence and socio-economic levels, all of which are environmental modifiers which impact on aggressive behaviour (Anderson & Huesmann, 2003:308). In respect of family, community and cultural environment, children hear beliefs expressed by parents and peers observe parental and peer behaviours. From both types of observations, they draw inferences about the acceptability of aggression and violence (Anderson & Huesmann, 2003:308). Community and culture also exert influence through parents and peers and through direct connections to the child such as church, school and mass media (Anderson & Huesmann, 2003:308). Observation of violence in the mass media not only stimulates aggressive behaviour in the short term by priming aggressive scripts and schemas, but also stimulates aggressive behaviour in the long run by changing schemas, scripts and beliefs about aggression (Anderson & Huesmann, 2003:309). Many social environments foster the development of an aggressive personality which includes poverty, living in violent neighbourhoods, lack of safe child recreational areas, bad parenting and lack of social support (Anderson & Huesmann, 2003:311).

In all of these cases, observational learning plays a major role in the development of various knowledge structures that support aggression (Anderson & Huesmann, 2003:308). Essentially, it seems that aggression is most probable when the individual has no self-control over those environmental stressors (Warburton & Anderson, 2015:378).

Imtiaz *et al.* (2010:100), concurs with Anderson and Huesman in that according to the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Centre (2001 cited in Imtiaz *et al.* 2010:100), environmental factors thus contribute further to our knowledge about aggression and aggressive behaviour in that the presence of a single factor in an individual does not, by itself, cause violent behaviour. Rather, multiple factors combine to contribute to and shape behaviours. Environmental factors such as poverty, media exposure to violence, and general environmental apathy play an essential role in creating conditions that can contribute to a culture of violence (Imtiaz *et al.* 2010:100). Given these points, aggression or aggressive behaviour can be defined as the consequence of external provocations (Imtiaz *et al.*2010:100).

All things considered; the nature perspective can be defined as our genetic make-up that influences our personality traits. Whereas, the nurture perspective, focuses on environmental stressors. One of the advocates who stipulated that the environment is the main influence on behaviour is Albert Bandura. Much of the early psychological theorizing was founded on behaviouristic principles that embraced an input-output model linked by an internal conduit that makes behaviour possible but exerts no influence of its own on behaviour. In this view, human behaviour was shaped and controlled automatically and mechanically by environmental stimuli (Bandura 2001:2). Bandura's SLT and SCLT will be deliberated in-depth further in the chapter as it played a substantial role in this study. The nature perspective is important but was not pertinent to my study and I therefore, focused on the nurture perspective of aggression as this perspective held more ground for my study.

2.3   BEHAVIOURISM

Berk (2007:22) posits that North American behaviourism originated in the early twentieth century with the work of Watson (1878–1958). Watson (1914:2), states that Psychology as the behaviourist views it is a purely objective experimental branch of natural science.

Its theoretical goal is the prediction and control of behaviour. Other advocates of behaviourism were Ivan Pavlov and B. F. Skinner (Berk, 2007:22). Behaviourism, also recognised as behavioural psychology, is a theory of learning established upon the notion that all behaviours are attained through conditioning. Conditioning transpires through the interaction with the environment. Behaviourists deem that our responses to environmental stimuli shape our actions (Cherry, 2015:3)

Neither aggression nor aggressive behaviour is clearly defined under behaviourism (Warburton & Anderson, 2015:374). However, in research relating to aggression it has been revealed that learners can be taught to behave aggressively through rewarding aggressive behaviour (positive reinforcement) or removing a painful consequence after aggression (negative reinforcement) (Warburton & Anderson, 2015:374). In addition, learners learn to discriminate between circumstances where aggression has a beneficial outcome and when it does not, and they can generalise this knowledge to new situations (Warburton & Anderson, 2015:374).

However, the criticism of the theory is that philosophers believed that it fell short by disregarding some important influences on behaviour. Freud is a case in point. He was of the opinion that behaviourism is futile by not accounting for the unconscious mind's thoughts, feelings, and desires that wield an influence on people's actions.

Other thinkers like Carl Rogers and the other humanistic psychologists believed that behaviourism was too rigid and limited, failing to take into consideration things like free will (Cherry, 2015:4). On the flip side, behaviourism contributes to our knowledge about aggression and aggressive behaviour in that it is the earliest theory of learning in modern psychology which explains behaviour in terms of classical conditioning – learning to associate one thing with another (Warburton & Anderson, 2015:374). Pioneered by Pavlov, this approach suggests that once people mentally pair things together, they become 'conditioned' to anticipate those things to always occur together (Warburton & Anderson, 2015:374). This theory was later supplemented with theories of operant conditioning developed by Thorndike and Skinner, which recommended that people are more likely to replicate a behaviour that has been rewarded and less likely to repeat a behaviour that has been punished (Warburton & Anderson, 2015:374).

On the whole and taking into account the points of view in favour of behaviourism and the drawbacks of the latter, evidence shows that behaviourism could not be used as a basis for this study as it does not characterise learning that is realised in natural environments. (Eyyam, Doğruer & Meneviş 2016:49). Furthermore, the behaviourist learning theory placed an emphasis on the effects of external conditions such as rewards and punishments in determining future behaviours of students (Morrison, Ross, & Kemp 2004), The theory focused mainly on objectively observable behaviours and, consequently, discounts mental activities. This approach emphasized the "acquisition of new behaviour" (Bednar, Cunningham, Duffy, & Perry, 1992). According to Weegar and Pacis (2012:9), behaviourists believed that all behaviour is the result of an individual's responses to external stimuli. In other words, behaviourists believed that the external environment contributed to the shaping of an individual's behaviour. Behaviourists also believed that the environment triggered a particular behaviour, and whether the behaviour occurs again is dependent upon how an individual is affected by the behaviour (Weegar & Pacis 2012:9). Therefore, my study is partial to Bandura's SLT as behaviourism falls short in explaining how individuals come to behave in particular ways when they have received no previous reinforcement for that behaviour (Lansford, 2012:176) where SLT emphasis that learning by demonstrating that aggressive behaviour could be learned even in the absence of any rewards and solely by observing the behaviour of an adult model (Bandura, Ross, & Ross 1961) (Lansford, 2012:177).

2.4   COGNITIVE THEORIES

Many of the theoretical advancements in the field of cognitive psychology have come from the research of two men, Aaron Beck and Albert Ellis (Richmond, 2017:3). The emergence of cognitive psychology inspired a plethora of new approaches to aggression by social psychologists. Early in this period, researchers explored the way people make meaning of physiological arousal, a known precursor to aggression (Warburton & Anderson, 2015:374). The flowing together of computer availability and the growing supremacy of cognitive approaches to psychology in the 1980s heralded a major change of course in social psychological aggression research. For the first time, researchers started to conceptualise the acquirement of social behaviour in terms of computer like processes – inputs, outputs, and the processing of information.

Two significant theories of aggression emerged – the Social Information Processing (SIP) theory of Dodge (1980) and Script theory from Huesmann (1982). SIP theory emphasised the way people perceive the behaviour of others and make attributions about their motives.

A key construct in SIP theory is the hostile attributional bias – a propensity to construe ambiguous events (such as being bumped in a corridor) as being motivated by hostile intent. This bias has been expansively studied and has been found to reliably forecast aggressive behaviour (Warburton & Anderson, 2015:375).

With reference to script theory, when a person confronted with a particular situation initially considers a script applicable to that circumstance, assumes a role in the script, assesses the appropriateness or probable outcome of enacting the script, and, if judged appropriate, then behaves according to the script. If a person habitually responds to conflict by using scripts that include behaving aggressively, these scripts may become more easily brought to mind (i.e. chronically accessible), become automatic, and generalise to other situations, escalating the likelihood of aggression in a growing number of spheres of life (Warburton & Anderson, 2015:375). This relates to the factors that lead to aggression and aggressive behaviour of Grade R learners.

- *Brain development and neuroscience*

Over the past two decades, information-processing research has expanded in another way: A new area of investigation has arisen called 'developmental cognitive neuroscience'. It brings together researchers from psychology, biology, neuroscience, and medicine to study the affiliation between changes in the brain and the developing person's cognitive processing and behaviour patterns (Cabeza, Nyberg & Park, 2005; Johnson, 2005 cited in Berk, 2007:21). Enhanced methods for analysing activity within the brain while learners and adults execute various tasks have greatly enhanced knowledge of relationships between brain functioning and behaviour (Cabeza, Nyberg & Park, 2005; Johnson, 2005 cited in Berk, 2007:21). Hence, the advantages of the cognitive theory are that a great strength of the information-processing approach is its commitment to rigorous research methods because it has provided accurate accounts of how learners and adults tackle many cognitive tasks (Berk, 2007:21). The disadvantage of the cognitive theory is that the information processing has fallen short in some respects.

Although good at analysing thinking into its components, information processing has had difficulty putting them back together into a comprehensive theory (Birney *et al.* 2005 cited in Berk, 2007:21). Also, much information-processing research has been conducted in laboratories rather than in real-life situations. Hence, this would have implications for my research problem as it is based on the realities that school-based staff and parents experience.

Recently, investigators have addressed the above concern by studying conversations, stories, memory for everyday events, and academic problem-solving (Berk, 2007:21). Hence, cognitive theory was not relevant to my study because, as the name implies, cognitive psychology focuses on the way we think and feel in the present. My study focused on SLT, which employs the observation of behaviour and the modelling of it. My experience as an educator and previously Head of the Foundation Phase exposed me to more negative behavioural patterns of learners throughout the Foundation Phase. One common thread of some of the learners was that most negative behavioural patterns that were displayed were modelled through the observation of their environment and their role models. states Thus, the impact of the Bobo doll study has been widespread and long-lasting as Bandura and his colleagues demonstrated clearly that it was possible to learn new aggressive behaviours solely through imitation, with no reinforcement or punishment attached to the behaviours for either the adult models or the child. This breakthrough finding led to the formulation of SLT, with the major tenets that people learn from observing, imitating, and modeling other people (Bandura, 1977) Lansford (2012:179).

2.5   SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

This theory was used in the study. The main proponent of the Social Learning Theory (SLT) is Albert Bandura. In the social learning system, new patterns of behaviour can be acquired through direct experience or observing the behaviour of others (Bandura 1971:3). Bandura's SLT has been very instrumental in the study in respect of how people learn aggressive behaviour by observing others. This theory was relevant as it has motivated research on the effects of observing violence in the mass media, and also the effect of physical punishment by parents for the child's aggressive behaviour (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994:93). (Bandura 1971:8), elaborates that according to SLT, behaviour is learned in rough form before it is performed.

By observing a model of the desired behaviour, an individual forms an idea of how a response components must be combined and temporally sequenced to produce new behaviourally configurations.

SLT can be defined as a theory that focuses on learners who observe the consequences of the behaviour of significant others and learn which behaviours to use, even socially inept ones, to attain desired results without drawing a negative sanction.

When inappropriate behaviours are modelled for young learners, especially if reinforced elsewhere such as in the media, these patterns of interaction can become ingrained and will be simulated in other social interactions (Cunningham, Jaffe, Baker, Dick, Malla, Mazaheri & Poisson, 1998: ii). Consequently, learners' behavioural patterns are learnt through observation and modelling and the SLT concepts draw awareness to the social learning aspects.

According to Bandura (1971:3), during the course of learning, people not only perform responses, but they also observe the differential consequences accompanying the various actions. Hence, my understanding of SLT, is that aggressive behaviour can be described as an approach of acquiring aggression through observing others (Bandura 1971:3). Learners become aware of the consequences/rewards granted to those displaying aggression. This becomes their green light towards negative behaviour.

Warburton and Anderson (2015:374), state that Bandura propositioned that social behaviours, including aggression, could be learned through observing and imitating others (i.e., via observational learning). In Bandura's classic experiments, learners observed a film of an actor hitting a 'Bobo Doll' in several novel ways. The learners later imitated the behaviour in the absence of any classical or operant conditioning. Warburton and Anderson (2015:374), further state that Bandura also developed the concept of vicarious learning of aggression and indicated that learners in all probability would imitate models that had been rewarded for behaving aggressively. Bandura hypothesised that the manner in which people mentally compose their experiences is crucial. People may see one individual strike another but will also decide how skilful they feel to do the same and will make conjectures about what constitutes a normal way to respond when someone provokes you (Warburton & Anderson, 2015:374).

Warburton and Anderson (2015:374), further state that by making inferences about observed aggression not only escalates the probability of imitating it, but also expands the range of situations to which that response might be generalised

According to Bandura (1971:9), reinforcement in observational learning is a matter of contention. Observational learning can occur through observation of modelled behaviour and accompanying modelled activities without extrinsic reinforcement (Bandura 1971:9).

Knowing that a given models behaviour is effective in producing valuable rewards or averting negative consequences can enhance observational learning by increasing observer's attentiveness to the model's actions. Moreover, according to Bandura (1971:9), anticipated reinforcement could strengthen retention of what has been learnt observationally by motivating people to code and rehearse modelled responses that have high value.

An advantage of SLT arose from the fact that the learners imitated aggressive behaviour matching that of the models, showing that learning of aggression had taken place from the models, thereby supporting social learning as an explanation for acquiring aggressive acts. This is a major strength as it explains how behaviour may be learnt in the absence of any direct reinforcement, which traditional learning theories could not fully account for. Vicarious learning can account for the absence of any reinforcement, which suggests the explanation has validity (Devshi, 2014:7). Another major advantage of SLT is that it can account for distinction in aggressive and non-aggressive behaviour both between and within each individual. People learn that aggression is rewarded in particular situations and not others and context-dependent learning takes place, which explains differences within individuals.

SLT undertakes that whether or not people select to perform what they have learnt observationally, is strongly influenced by consequences of such actions. (Bandura 1971:10). However, behaviour is regulated not only by direct experienced consequences from external sources but by vicarious reinforcement and self-reinforcement (Bandura 1971:9).

2.5.1 Social Cognitive Learning Theory

Social cognitive theory is founded in an agentic perspective (Bandura, 1986; 2001a) (Bandura 2001:2). People are self-organising, proactive, self-reflecting, and self-regulating, not just volatile organisms shaped and shepherded by environmental events or inner forces.

Human self-development, adaptation, and change are embedded in social systems (Bandura 2001:2). Therefore, personal agency operates within a broad network of socio-structural influences. In these agentic transactions, people are producers as well as products of social systems (Bandura 2001:2). Personal agency and social structure operate as co-determinants in an integrated causal structure rather than as a disembodied duality. Seen from the sociocognitive perspective, human nature is a vast potentiality that can be fashioned by direct and observational experience into a variety of forms within biological limits (Bandura 2001:2). Social cognitive theory accords a central role to cognitive, vicarious, self-regulatory, and self-reflective processes (Bandura 2001:2). An extraordinary capacity for symbolisation provides humans with a powerful tool for comprehending their environment and creating and regulating environmental events that touch virtually every aspect of their lives (Bandura 2001:2). Most external influences affect behaviour through cognitive processes rather than directly. Cognitive factors partly determine which environmental events will be observed, what meaning will be conferred on them, whether they leave any lasting effects, what emotional impact and motivating power they will have, and how the information they convey will be organised for future use (Bandura 2001:2). It is with symbols that people (Bandura 2001:2) process and transform transient experiences into cognitive models that serve as guides for judgment and action. Through symbols, people give meaning, form, and continuity to their experiences (Bandura 2001:3).

In the context of the study, his SCLT influenced many areas of inquiry: education, health sciences, social policy and psychotherapy among others (Nabavi, 2012:4). Nabavi (2012:10) additionally mentioned that SCLT is a learning theory, which presents the idea that individuals learn by observing what others do and that human thought processes are central to understanding personality. By the mid-1980s, Bandura's research had taken a more holistic bend and his analyses tended towards giving a more comprehensive overview of human cognition in the context of social learning.

The theory he expanded from SLT soon became known as social cognitive learning theory (Bandura, 1999; Nabavi, 2012:11). This theory afforded a framework for understanding, predicting and changing human behaviour (Green & Peil, 2009; Nabavi, 2012:11).

In this study, the concepts of aggression and aggressive behaviour are understood from the nurturance perspective (Berk, 2007:26). I concur with Edinyang (2016:1), that social learning theories deal with the ability of learners to digest and display the behaviours demonstrated within their environment. In the society, learners are encircled by many influential models, such as parents within the family, personalities on mass/social media, friends within their peer group, religion, other members of the society, and the school (Edinyang, 2016:1). This bears reference to the nature of aggression and aggressive behaviour in Grade R as Edinyang (2016:1), states that learners are attentive to some of these agents of socialisation and absorb the behaviours exhibited.

At a later time, they may imitate the behaviour they have observed irrespective of whether the behaviour is appropriate or not, but there are a number of processes that make it more probable that a child will replicate the behaviour that its society deems suitable for its sex and age

In this summary, this study values a context perspective, with the focus on the environment, its social actors and mediational tools to afford children the opportunity to learn certain behaviours. Banduras ideas in social learning were key to analysing the data.

2.6   BIO-ECOLOGICAL MODEL

Another theory that was used in this study was that of Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological model. It afforded a lens of the systemic perspective related to building the support and guidance model (Krishnan, 2010:7). The context, according to Bronfenbrenner, concerning the bio-ecological model, comprises of four distinct concentric systems: *micro, meso, exo*, and *macro*, each having either direct or indirect influence on a child's development. The prominent elements of the four systems are explored here. A fifth system, *chrono*, was later added to integrate the aspect of time as it relates to a child's environment (Krishnan, 2010:7). This will be further elaborated on in Chapter 7. A graphic representation of the key features in Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological model is represented below.
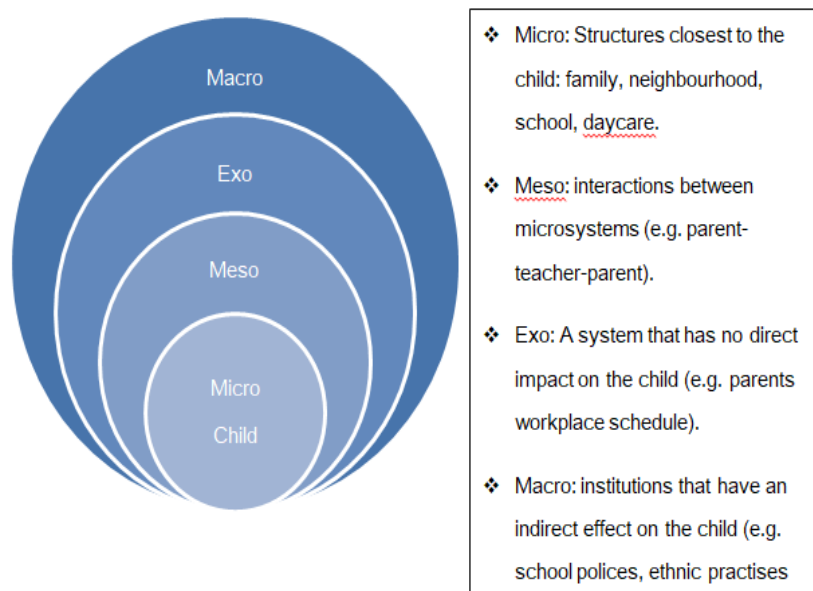
Figure 2.6.1: Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological model of child development

Adapted from: Krishnan (2010:7)

Krishnan (2010:7), states that the *microsystem* is the innermost level, the one that is closest to the child that the child is in direct contact with. The microsystem consists of such contexts as family, playmates, day care, school, and the neighbourhood wherein the proximal processes occur. This layer has the most immediate and earliest influence on the child. The next circle, according to Krishnan (2010:8), explains the *mesosystem* as the second immediate layer and contains the microsystem. It focuses on the links between two or more systems, fundamentally different microsystems, such as home, playmate settings, school, etc. Krishnan (2010:8), informs that the *exosystem* is the third layer. Even though the child does not directly encounter the exosystem, it has a bearing on his development. The system contains micro and mesosystems, and thereby impacts the well-being of all those who come into contact with the child. Moreover, the policies and decisions that are made at a wider level can also indirectly impact the child. For example, a parent's workplace schedule (e.g., shift work) can influence the proximal processes that occur and subsequently the development of the child. In cases where a parent cannot get time off to attend to a parent-educator meeting, the parent will have limited interaction with the educators, thereby influencing a child's development adversely. A school's policies on special needs learners or learners of different racial and ethnic backgrounds can all be considered as exosystem influences on the child.

The outermost context layer is the *macrosystem*. This societal blueprint influences all lower layers of the ecosystem (Krishnan, 2010:8). In summary, the systems theory surmises that human development must move beyond examining a child's biology. The Bio-ecological theory forms the basis that learners do not develop in isolation but develop instead in a variety of contexts or environments in which they interact continuously. Development is not only shaped by the immediate environment, but also by the interaction with the larger environment (Krishnan, 2010:9).

2.7   CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to establish the type of theory that is most suitable for a study of aggression and aggressive behaviour in Grade R within a South African context. There were two theories that were used in this study. Bandura's SLT and SCLT were pertinent to this study as they promoted the nurture perspective.

This perspective can be described as the complex forces of the physical and social world that influence our biological makeup and psychological experiences before and after birth (Berk, 2007:7).

In order to make systemic sense of the model that is developed in this study, I used the Bio-ecological Model as posited by Bronfenbrenner. Chapter 3 will focus on the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to present the research design and methodology. This study was informed by an interpretivist paradigm. The epistemology and ontology of this paradigm are explained and the justification for a qualitative research approach is presented. The differences between qualitative and quantitative approach to research is outlined. I discuss the context of the study - three schools in the Johannesburg area, north of Gauteng, which comprised the case (also referred to as the bounded setting). Schools are referred to as School A, B and C. A small sample of 22 participants was selected as it addressed the research objectives. Data for this study were produced through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and paired interviews. Data analysis is explained in terms of transcribing, checking, coding and theming. Ethical considerations are explained and the definitions of ethics and trustworthiness in qualitative research are explored. Towards the end of this chapter the limitations of the methodology and challenges experienced in the field are highlighted.

3.2   RESEARCH PARADIGM

3.2.1   Background to the theory

A scientific paradigm is *"a set of facts and convictions which is systematically presented, that is presented as a theory whose function is to initiate theoretical productions, and practical research in certain fields thereafter, so that it appears in this sense as a source of some future or already existing theoretical composition"* (Hafner, 1998:458). The sociological paradigm executes significant functions in a qualitative sociological analysis (Hafner, 1998:458).

All research is constructed on some fundamental philosophical postulation about what comprises 'valid' research and which research method(s) is/are apposite for the development of knowledge in a given study.

The choice of research methodology (Antwi & Hamza, 2015:217), depends on the paradigm that guides the research venture. The term 'paradigm' stems from the Greek word *paradeigma* which means 'pattern' and was first used by Kuhn (1962 cited in Antwi & Hamza, 2015:218) to denote a conceptual framework shared by a group of scientists which afforded them with an opportune model for scrutinising problems and discovering solutions. According to him, the term 'paradigm' refers to a research culture with a set of beliefs, values, and conjectures that a community of researchers has in common regarding the nature and conduct of research (Kuhn, 1977 cited in Antwi & Hamza, 2015:218).

Adopting the paradigm for a study is informed by the research process which has three major scopes as stated by TerreBlanche and Durrheim (1999; Thomas 2010:292), namely, ontology, epistemology and methodology. According to these authors, a research paradigm is an all-inclusive system of interconnected practice and thinking that defines the nature of enquiry along these three components (Thomas 2010:292). Scotland (2012:9), adds an additional dimension 'methods' and states that a paradigm consists of the following components: ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods. Each component is explicated, and then the relationships between them are explored.

In making the choice for a paradigm, I examined the theory I used in the study and its ontological and epistemological, methodology and methods dimensions. In this study Bandura's SLT and SCLT together with Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological theory were used. Ontological assumptions are concerned with the nature of reality, in other words what is. Researchers need to take a stance regarding their views of how things genuinely are and how things genuinely work. Epistemological assumptions are concerned with how knowledge can be created, acquired and communicated, in other words what it means to know. Guba and Lincoln (1994:108), enlightened that epistemology enquires what is the nature of the relationship between the would-be knower and what can be known (Antwi & Hamza, 2015:218).

The interpretative paradigm (Antwi & Hamza, 2015:218), which was selected for this study, is concerned with the perception of the world as it is from prejudiced experiences of beings. They use meaning (versus measurement) oriented methodologies, such as interviewing or participant observation, that rely on a subjective bond between the researcher and subjects.

The interest of interpretivists is not the generation of a new theory, but to judge or evaluate, and enhance interpretive theories. I found that the researchers within the interpretivist paradigm are naturalistic since their research is founded on real-world situations as they evolve naturally. More explicitly, they tend to be non-manipulative, unobtrusive, and non-controlling (Antwi & Hamza, 2015:219). In this study I relied on the meaning making of the research subjects. Hence their positioning as knowers of their reality and their interpretations of social reality was imperative.

3.3   RESEARCH APPROACH

The choice of a research approach for this study was enlightened by the distinct differences between quantitative and qualitative research. The former will be discussed in detail. According to Antwi and Hamza (2015:220), authentic quantitative research relies on the gathering of quantitative data (i.e. numerical data). Genuine qualitative research depends on the collection of qualitative data (i.e., non-numerical data such as words and pictures).

I discovered that quantitative research often utilises what could be called a "narrow-angle lens" because the focal point is on only one or a few causal factors at the same time (Antwi & Hamza 2015:221). Quantitative researchers attempt to steer under the supposition of objectivity. They presume that there is a reality to be observed and that rational observers who look at the same phenomenon will basically agree on its existence and its characteristics. They try to remain as impartial or value-free as they can and they attempt to leave alone human prejudice whenever possible. In this sense, quantitative researchers attempt to study the phenomena that are of interest to them "from a distance". Standardised questionnaires and other quantitative computing apparatuses are often used to gauge carefully what is observed. In experiments, researchers frequently use random assignment to place participants into different groups to eradicate the possibility of human bias while forming the comparison groups. In evaluating results, statistical criteria are used to shape many deductions (Antwi & Hamza 2015:221).

This implores the question: Is the above approach advantageous and what would be the drawback of this approach for my study? According to Everest (2014:9), quantitative research is supportive in testing and endorsing theories; testing hypothesis; replication of findings; allowing quantitative predictions; is less prolonged; and findings are independent of the researcher.

But the approach is not very worthwhile when human subjects have to lay bare their subjective meaning-making for theory generation. I therefore opted for a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is performed in a natural setting and seeks to explore human behaviour within the perspective of a bounded setting if the settings are viewed as a case. The qualitative researcher wants to answer the "what" and the "how" questions. The "what" question may involve an observable fact, a person, or a programme; whereas, the "how" question looks at the effects of the study focus on all stakeholders within a bounded system (Robertson 2007:47). According to Everest (2014:9), qualitative research is useful in describing phenomena; enables cross-case comparisons; is beneficial in interpreting and understanding people's experiences; provides individual case information; and is valuable in explaining intricate phenomena. However, it's not useful in making quantitative predictions; consumes more time; findings are subjective, and data is mammoth.

In making a distinction with quantitative research, qualitative research uses a wide- and deep-angle lens, probing human choice and behaviour as it transpires naturally in all of its elements. Qualitative researchers do not want to intrude in the natural flow of behaviour. Qualitative researchers study behaviour naturalistically and holistically. They try to comprehend multiple dimensions and layers of reality, such as the types of people in a group, how they think, how they interact, what kinds of agreements or norms are present, and how these dimensions come together holistically to portray the group (Antwi & Hamza 2015:221). These ideas made the qualitative method of research more appealing and it was more in keeping with the intellectual puzzle that I was working with. Judgement was based on a method which is centred on non-numerical data. I conducted individual in-depth interviews and paired interviews, and some participants completed questionnaires and the data are in the form of words (Antwi & Hamza 2015:221). As the researcher, I asked the questions to gain more clarity, collected data, made interpretations and recorded what was observed (Antwi & Hamza 2015:223).

Qualitative research is also used when there is not ample research about a topic or phenomenon. I view my study as filling the gap in the literature in terms of a guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour. Whilst I am aware of the value of qualitative research, I am also sensitive to the criticisms that have been levelled against it.

According to Hammersley (2007:287), qualitative research is substandard, but more usually the criticism is that there is no obviously distinct set of quality criteria available for reviewing it, so that it is of uncertain quality. There are two assumptions underpinning these criticisms that need to be attended to. Firstly, what is involved here is a comparative assessment: it is assumed that clearly defined criteria of quality are already available for quantitative research. Secondly, there is the postulation that unambiguous assessment criteria are needed, and two main reasons seem usually to be involved. It is believed that unless researchers operate on the basis of such criteria, their work will be of inferior quality. Additionally, it is contended that users of research require some unswerving means of judging its quality, and that a set of criteria would meet this need.

For this study the above was addressed in the following manner. The findings are supported by data/study evidence (i.e. the reader can see how I arrived at my conclusions; the 'building blocks' of analysis and interpretation are evident), that my findings 'make sense' and have a rational logic (Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis & Dillon 2003:9). Regarding how effectively the evaluation addresses my original aims: a clear statement of the study aims and objectives are made in the first chapter. There is also a discussion of the limitations of my study (Spencer *et al.* 2003:10).

3.4   A CASE STUDY APPROACH

A case study approach was adopted based on its usefulness and appropriateness for this study. According to (Yin, 1994; Robertson 2007:47), a case study is a special kind of qualitative work that investigates a contextualised, contemporary phenomenon within a specified boundary. Hence, with this in mind, my case study involved three schools as a bounded setting as it examined a particular subject bounded in time and space and provided a detailed description of the contextual material of the case setting. I gathered extensive material from multiple sources (principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents) to provide an in-depth setting of the case and I was personally responsible for data collection (Creswell, 1998; Robertson 2007:47).

3.5 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted at three schools in the Johannesburg area and geographically situated in the province of Gauteng North. School A is a private pre-school in Johannesburg East district, School B is a private nursery school and School C is a government primary school and both are located in the district of Johannesburg North. The population of Grade R learners in school A was 110, School B had 154 and School C had 178. The total population of learners at the school was comparatively different. School A had 217, School B had 276 and School C had a total of 1320 learners (Refer to Appendix M Table 3.5.1.1: Individual School Profiles). The socio-economic class of the learners in School A and B was middle to upper class whereas a clear distinction was made in School C where the learners fall into the bracket of the middle and lower socio-economic spectrum.

In terms of the resources and personnel at the schools, all three schools had resources for the functioning of the grade. However, School A and B could from a financial perspective afford more resources that cater to the development of learners and had more outdoor play equipment. Taking all three schools into consideration, all Grade R educators who were interviewed believed that parents needed to be more supportive of educators.

3.6 SAMPLING

Sampling is defined by Gentles, Charles, Ploeg and McKibbon (2015:1775) as the collection of distinct data sources from which data is collected to address the research objectives. I expressly used sources that were rich in providing me with information and thus enabled my main research question to be answered, "What does the experiences of principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents suggest about the nature of aggression and aggressive behaviour in Grade R, and what are the implications of this for a school-based model for addressing aggression and aggressive behaviour aimed at parents and learners?" The objectives of the study were also addressed by my choice of sampling.

3.6.1 Sampling procedure

Although sampling procedures in the social and behavioural sciences are often separated into two groups (probability and purposive), there are in fact four broad types: probability, purposive, convenience and mixed methods (MM) sampling strategies.

Probability sampling techniques are principally used in quantitatively oriented studies and involve "selecting a relatively large number of units from a population, or from specific subgroups (strata) of a population in an arbitrary manner where the probability of inclusion for every member of the population is determinable" (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003a:713; Teddlie & Yu 2007:77). However, as my research was based on a qualitative approach, I selected a purposive sampling technique. The latter is primarily used in qualitative studies and may be defined as selecting units (e.g., individuals, groups of individuals, institutions) based on specific purposes connected with answering a research study's questions (Teddlie & Yu 2007:77). Purposive sampling is most apt as I was intentionally seeking the point of view of participants who were knowledgeable in their field and their experience, I envisaged would impact my study directly.

The samples that I selected are represented below (Sample per school and participants linked to each school) (Appendix M: Table 3.6.1.1 and 3.6.2.2). However, the analysis of the data of the principals, phase heads, educators, support staff and parents which is represented in a table format can be referred to in Appendix M.

Table 3.6.1.1: Sample per school

School	A	B	C	Total
Principal (Interview)	1	0	1	2
Headmistress (Interview)	0	1	0	1
Phase Head per school (Interview)	0	0	1	1
Grade Head per school (Interview)	1	1	0	2
Educators interviewed per school (Paired Interviews)	2	2	2	6
Support staff per school (Questionnaire completed)	1	1	1	3
Parents per school (Questionnaire completed)	2	4	1	7

3.6.2 Participants

My study was based on purposive sampling at three schools in Grade R classes. An in-depth investigation of an individual's experience is the objective rather than being concerned with the ability to simplify their experiences to a larger populace (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Alexander, 2004:41).

Therefore, I targeted a sample of two principals, one headmistress, one phase head, two grade heads, six Grade R educators, three members of the support staff team and seven parents as they had rich information that was relevant to the study. The judgement behind this decision was to acquire an in-depth understanding of participants' perceptions of their experiences of learners who display aggression or aggressive behaviour (Alexander 2004:41).

For the purpose of confidentiality, the three schools involved in the study are referred to as School A, B and C respectively. The principals that participated in the interviews are referred to as Principal 1 and 3. School B has a Headmistress and is referred to as Principal 2. The phase head is referred to as Phase Head 1 and grade heads are Grade Head 1 and 2 respectively. School A and B only had grade heads and not phase heads as they are nursery schools. The six Grade R educators who participated in the paired interviews are referred to as Educator 1 to 6.

The support staff members who participated in the study and completed the questionnaires are referred to as Support Staff Member 1 to 3. The seven parents who participated in the study and completed the questionnaires are referred to as Parent 1 to 7.

Table 3.6.2.2: Participants linked to each school

School A	School B	School C
Principal 1	Principal 2	Principal 3
Grade Head 1	Grade Head 2	Phase Head 1
Educator 1	Educator 3	Educator 5
Educator 2	Educator 4	Educator 6
Support Staff Member 1	Support Staff Member 2	Support Staff Member 3
Parent 1	Parent 3	Parent 7
Parent 2	Parent 4	
	Parent 5	
	Parent 6	

3.6.3   Analysis of the data: The Principals

When analysing reports of the principals (Refer Appendix M: Table 3.6.3.1), I found that that all of the participants were white females who are qualified in education.

Principal 1 has a certificate in Education, Principal 2 has her Honours in Education and Principal 3 has her Higher Diploma in Education. Their working experience in education ranges from 34 to 44 years. Principal 1 has more than five years' experience and Principal 2 and 3 have more than ten years' experience in their roles of managing the school.

It is evident from Appendix M: Table 3.6.3.2 that Principal 1 and 3 were in the age group of 55-65 and Principal 2 was in the age group of 45-55. Furthermore, Principal 1 and 2 are English-speaking and Principal 3 Afrikaans-speaking.

3.6.4   Analysis of the data: The Phase Heads

With regards to the participants who were involved in the study, I found that that all of the participants were white females who are qualified in education (refer to Appendix M: Table 3.6.4.1).

Grade Head 1 has a Higher Diploma in Education for Pre-Primary and Primary. Grade Head 2 has her Diploma in Foundation Phase and a Higher Diploma in Special Educational Needs, and Phase Head 1 has her Master's in Education. Their working experience in education ranges from 18 to 27 years respectively. Grade Head 1 has one year's experience and Grade Head 2 has three years' experience in managing a grade whereas Phase Head 1 has 7 years' experience in her role as managing the phase. It is evident from Appendix M: Table 3.6.4.2 that Grade Heads 1 and 3 were in the age group of 45-55 and Grade Head 2 was in the age group of 35-45. From the table it can be deduced that Grade Heads 1 and 2 are English-speaking and Phase Head 1 Afrikaans-speaking.

3.6.5   Analysis of the data: The Educators

With regards to the participants who were involved in the study (Refer to Appendix M: Table: 3.6.5.1) all of them were white females who are qualified in education. Educators 1, 4 and 5 have ten and more years' experience in education, Educators 3 and 6 have four- and six-years' experience respectively whereas Educator 2 has 25 years of experience.

With reference to the educators' age and home language (Appendix M: Table 3.6.5.2), Educators 1, 4 and 5 were in the age group of 35-45, Educator 2 was in the age range of 45-55 and Educator 3 and 6 were in the age group of 25-35.

It can be deduced that Educators 1, 3 and 4 are English-speaking; Educator 4 speaks English and Spanish whereas Educators 5 and 6 are Afrikaans-speaking.

When educators were interviewed, I adopted the paired interview approach. Wilson, Onwuegbuzie and Manning (2016:1551), lucidly explain that paired depth interviews entail the researcher interviewing two people at the same time and in the same place so that the two interviewees can interrelate during the interview. Paired depth interviews have logical appeal because they have the prospect to lead to the collection of data in a more cohesive way whenever the participants form natural pairs in the context of the research question(s). Wilson *et al.* (2016:1565), further state that the use of paired depth interviews would lead to an interview process that is more unvarying, iterative, cooperative, vibrant, holistic, and, above all, synergistic. Moreover, to some extent, paired depth interviews mirror what occurs in assisting professions such as counselling and education, wherein, for instance, counsellors counsel couples (e.g., marriage counsellors) and educators talk simultaneously with mothers and fathers about their learner's educational progress during parents' meetings.

3.6.6 Analysis of the data: The Support Staff

The analysis of the data of the support staff revealed all of the participants were white (refer to Appendix M: Table: 3.6.6.1). Support Staff members 1 and 2 are female and Support Staff Member 3 is male. Support Staff Member 1 has her Master's in Counselling Psychology, Support Staff Member 2 has her Master's in Educational Psychology and Support Staff Member 3 has his Doctorate in Education. Support Staff Members 1 and 2 have four- and six-years' experience in their field whereas Support Staff Member 3 has 12 years' experience.

It is evident from Appendix M: Table 3.6.6.2 that Support Staff Members 1 and 2 were in the age group of 25-35 and Support Staff Member 3 was in the age group of 45-55. From the table it can be deduced that Support Staff Members 1 and 2 are English-speaking and Support Staff Member 3 is Afrikaans-speaking.

Retrieving data from the participants centred on questionnaires. Kazi and Khalid (2012:514), state that a questionnaire is one of the most critical techniques to collect data. A questionnaire is an instrument to acquire knowledge from respondents, thus making it an efficient way to collect data.

The language of questionnaires should be parallel to the understanding of the participants. As the researcher, this was taken into account when providing the support staff and parents with questionnaires.

3.6.7   Analysis of the data: The Parents

The analysis of the data of parents (Refer Appendix M: Table: 3.6.7.1) revealed that all of the participants were white females besides Parent 7 who is an African male. Parents 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7 are married and Parents 4 and 5 are divorced. Parents 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 were in the age group of 35-45, Parent 2 in the age group of 45-55 and Parent 7 was in the age group of 25-35.

3.7   DATA COLLECTION

I utilised three forms of data collection, namely, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and paired interviews. The most general format of data collection in qualitative research is interviews. Semi-structured interviews are those in-depth interviews where the participants have to respond to stipulated open-ended questions (Jamshed, 2014:87).

According to William (2008:66), semi-structured interviews grasp the participants' points of view and permit their voices to be heard, thereby necessitating qualitative methods, specifically interviewing, to be utilised to answer the research question in this study. With the latter being my point of reference, it is for these reasons, that I selected interviewing as the major data collection tool and interviews were conducted by means of in-depth interviews with three principals and one Foundation Phase head and two grade heads. I selected the format of semi-structured, in-depth interviews as they are utilised extensively as an interviewing method with individuals. I interviewed six participants individually that being the three principals, one Foundation Phase head and two grade heads. The interviews were conducted once with the individuals for the duration of 30 minutes.

The semi-structured interviews were based on semi-structured interview guide, which was a schematic presentation of questions that were required to be explored.

To achieve optimum use of my interview time, the interview guide served the useful purpose of exploring the views of the six participants more systematically and comprehensively and it kept the interview focused on the preferred line of action. The questions in the interview guide encompassed the core question and many associated questions related to the central question (Jamshed, 2014:87).

During the semi-structured in-depth interviews, a set of interview questions (Appendix C and D) was used to explore incidents of aggression and aggressive behaviour that the principals and phase heads experienced in school. Interview questions asked participants what their conceptual understanding was of aggression and aggressive behaviour and what were the factors that lead to aggression and aggressive behaviour at school and at home (William, 2008:66).

Paired in-depth interviews involved the researcher interviewing two educators at the same time and in the same place so that the two interviewees could interact during the interview (Wilson, Onwuegbuzie & Manning, and 2016:1551). As a rule, interviews must be conducted carefully to ensure a dependable case (Dodge, 2011:52). Hence, I used the paired in-depth interview approach for the six Grade R educators from the three schools that formed the case. This approach worked positively as the educators were able to relate to each other's experiences and their voices could be heard. The set of open-ended interview questions (Appendix E) was used to lead educators in explaining how they deal with aggression and aggressive behaviour by describing the approaches they used.

They had to further elaborate which approaches were successful and which were unsuccessful. As the educators voiced their methods, it allowed the other educator an opportunity to possibly implement a different approach in her classroom.

Hence, three members of the support staff and seven parents completed a semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix F and G). This approach was conducive to my study as, whilst still having a structured sequence and a focal point which was predetermined by me, the questionnaire was based on open questions allowing participants the liberty to respond in their own words and therefore to offer greater qualifications in their responses The University of Sheffield, (2014:1). Support staff members afforded insight into how the school can support parents to deal with learner aggression and aggressive behaviour and what a school-based parent guidance and support model for addressing aggression looks like. The parents were eloquent in their responses as to how the school can best support them as parents to deal with learner aggression and aggressive behaviour. The reason for selecting the semi-structured interview technique is essentially due to my aim of encouraging the interviewees to discuss at liberty their own opinions (Grimsholm & Poblete, 2010:16).

In totality, twenty-two participants were interviewed for this research (three principals, one phase head, two grade heads, six educators, three support staff members and seven parents) as they were "key informants". Key informants are particularly conversant with the inquiry setting and articulate their knowledge. Their insights were beneficial as they assisted me as the researcher and observer to grasp events that had transpired and the reasons those events ensued (Dodge, 2011:54).

Thus, questions for all three types of data collection were constructed in such a manner that, as the researcher, I was able to retrieve the necessary information from the participants as they were open-ended questions. The question format did not allow for 'Yes/No' responses. Had the questions been the latter (closed-ended, it would not have provided me with information on 'how' the participants thought). Therefore, the information gathered would not have enhanced the research. Handwritten notes were taken during each interview, which permitted me to track key points to return to later in the interview or to highlight ideas of particular value or significance (Dodge, 2011:53).

3.8   DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis details the methods used to organise and condense raw data into consequential pieces, and to transform the meaningful pieces into results. Qualitative data analysis is the relatively methodical process of coding, categorising and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest (Robertson, 2007:68).

Alexander (2004:47) mentions that data analysis in qualitative research has a two-fold purpose: (a) to understand the participants' perspectives and (b) to answer the research question. I used my research questions and subsidiary questions to guide the data analysis process.

This was approached through the adaptation of the works of two researchers. The first one was from the 2015 work of Jane Sutton and Zubin Austin in their journal article titled: Qualitative Research: Data Collection, Analysis, and Management in the *Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy*. Their method consisted of data collection, data analysis and management, interpretation of data, transcribing and checking, reading between the lines, coding, theming, data synthesis, planning and writing the report. The second work that I examined was from the 2010 thesis of Pelleth Yohannan Thomas titled: *Towards Developing a Web-Based Blended Learning Environment at the University of Botswana.*

The research design used for this study was a descriptive and interpretive case study which was analysed through qualitative methods. Questionnaires were used to evaluate the participants' responses to the questions. In person interviews, paired interviews and questionnaires were used as data collection methods and trustworthiness of the research and triangulation were also employed.

The first step involved data collection which comprised of interviews (person interviews, paired interviews) and questionnaires which were used to evaluate the participants' responses to the questions. The process for the second step was transcribing and checking. Terre Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim (2010:321; Daries, 2017:84) note that starting early with the transcribing of data is helpful especially to look for "thick descriptions, through a thorough description of the characteristics, processes, transactions, and contexts". The third step involved the data analysis and management. For the data analysis method, I checked all of the research interviews and then the coding process began. My field notes that were compiled during the interviews were a useful complementary source of information that facilitated this process. Notably, coding refers to the identification of topics, issues, similarities, and distinctions that are revealed through the participants' narratives (Sutton & Austin, 2015:228).

To accomplish this task, I read and re-read interview transcripts while searching for similarities and differences in themes (Alexander, 2004:47). This process enabled me to begin to understand the subject at hand from each participant's point of view. With this in mind, coding was done by hand on a hard copy of the transcript, where notes were made in the margins and the text was highlighted (Sutton & Austin, 2015:228). Code names were assigned to those themes that were detected (Alexander, 2004:47), and then organised into categories of related topics, patterns, concepts, and ideas that emerged from participants' perspectives (Alexander 2004:48). The fourth step pertained to the interpretation of data. The preferred way of displaying the data was in a table format (Refer to Appendix M) which were all designed to (Daries, 2017:84) synthesise information in an organised manner which was easily accessible and understood. These are all analytical activities which are done as the data is displayed (Miles & Huberman, 1994:11; Daries, 2017:85). Displays are used to integrate information into an accessible summary to facilitate later conclusion drawing (Alexander, 2004:48). The fifth step comprised of coding, theming and data synthesis. The process of transcribing, coding and analysing data is an intense but systematic and unremitting search for meaning.

It is *"a way to process qualitative data so that what has been learned can be communicated to the research community"* (Creswell, 2014:195; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011:538; Daries, 2017: 85). This is done by breaking the data down in categories, codes and themes and building it up again in novel ways by elaborating and interpreting the data. In this study, I read and re-read the transcripts bearing in mind the research questions. I constantly had to move back and forth through the data from the semi-structured interviews and the visual material to create units of meaning. The units of meaning were clustered together if they showed linkages. Patterns in the linked data were identified for sub-themes and theme development. The themes were then clustered into a narrative that best answered the research questions. Three chapters were created to discuss the findings. The chapters are as follows: Chapter four: The concepts of aggression and aggressive behaviour and the types of aggressive behaviour. Chapter five: Factors leading to aggression and aggressive behaviour. The final findings appear in Chapter six: Lines of intervention for dealing with aggression and aggressive behaviour **(**Daries, 2017:85). As the researcher, for the process of data reduction, I selected simplified and extracted themes and patterns from written field notes, transcripts, and other available resources. The final step of data analysis is planning and writing the report.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994; Alexander, 2004:48), this consists of drawing initial conclusions based on cross-case data displays and then subjecting these initial conclusions to verification procedures. These measures are intended to substantiate that findings are apposite before they are labelled as conclusive results. In qualitative research, results are verified and deemed appropriate by evaluating (Alexander, 2004:48) their trustworthiness. The following section will discuss the creation of trustworthiness of results (Alexander, 2004:49).

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.9.1 Definition of ethics

Ethics is a philosophical term drawn from the Greek word *ethos*, denoting character or custom and connotes a social code that expresses moral integrity and consistent values (Partington, 2003:22). More in relation to the ethics of science, Mouton (2001:238) is of the opinion that the ethics of science is connected with what is wrong and what is right when conducting research.

To this end all researchers, despite research designs, sampling, techniques and choice of methods, are subject to ethical considerations (Gratton Jones, 2010:121; Vosloo, 2014:351). According to Nind (2008:8), protecting the anonymity of research participants is an elementary ethical principle in qualitative research, but managing it is not always clear-cut.

In qualitative research the most familiar tools used for data collection are interviews and participant observation. The participants were known to me and anonymity is this context was not possible. For that reason, I assured participants that their identities would not be exposed to the reader and that the raw data collected would not be released to any third party (Parahoo, 2006; Ryan, Coughlan & Cronin 2007:741). Both interviews and observations in qualitative research can give rise to ethical dilemmas (Ryan *et al.* 2007:741). Participants had the right to give informed consent regarding their participation in the research study. Consequently, the participants were fully aware of the purpose of the study, what sort of information was being required, how it would be used and the implications for them as contributors to the research.

This moral principle is known as 'autonomy' (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001; Ryan *et al.*2007:741); it also implied that participants had the right to withdraw from the research at any time (Ryan *et al.* 2007:741).

In qualitative interviews the task of the interviewer is to encourage participants to 'open up' and discuss their experiences of the phenomenon. In doing this, participants can unconsciously discuss personal information that they had not planned to reveal, or that may rekindle tragic or distressing experiences related to the topic being studied. Process consent involves repetitively negotiating with participants to ascertain whether they are contented in progressing with the interview or would prefer to discontinue participation (Polit & Beck, 2006; Ryan *et al.* 2007: 741), and can be a useful tool in these situations. However, discontinuing participation alone can be insufficient to meet the principle of non-maleficence, so psychological support should be in place to manage any emotional distress that may result from the interview (Smith, 1992; Ryan *et al.* 2007:741).

The following ethical aspects were adhered to in this study and they are informed by the ideas of Vosloo (2014:351); a thorough, prescribed application was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee of the University of South Africa for approval to conduct the research (Appendix A), and the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) provided consent to conduct the research (Appendix B).

This letter was presented to the participants with the questionnaires to encourage their participation. Information was also provided to the participants concerning the nature of the study, participation requirements (e.g., activities and duration), confidentiality and contact information of the researcher; permission was obtained from the provincial Departments of Education (DOE), district offices. Permission and approval for the research was obtained from the Principal and School Governing Body (SGB) of the selected schools (Appendix I, J and K for schools A, B and C respectively). At the initial phase of the research, it was deemed that only two schools would encompass the research process. However, upon deliberation, the research would have proved to be more viable if three schools formed part of the research. Thus, even though the Appendix (I, J, K and L) states that research 'will be conducted at two private schools in Gauteng', research was done at three schools and permission for this was obtained from the GDE (Appendix B) and the DOE.

Informed consent was obtained from participants which comprised of the principal, Foundation Phase head, grade heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents (Appendix L). Appendix I, J, K and L mention the 'observation of the children'. However, on completion of the research, this was not included as it did not add value the study.

The participants were not subjected to any risk of unusual stress, embarrassment or loss of self-esteem; the researcher ensured that participants would remain anonymous; the right to professional privacy and confidentiality of information obtained was guaranteed by a written statement in the cover letter and the research was conducted in accordance with the ethical requirement to report the findings in a comprehensive and honest way (Vosloo, 2014:352).

3.10   TRUSTWORTHINESS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Trustworthiness has become a term used within qualitative research in order to describe the strength of the claims that are made (Hammond & Wellington, 2013:146). A trustworthy account is one that is confirmable, credible, transferable and dependable. The word 'confirmability' is generally taken as a degree of how well the findings are supported by the data (Hammond & Wellington, 2013:147). In qualitative inquiry, I collected the data. I carefully reflected on, dealt with, and reported potential sources of bias and error. Credible research necessitated that I remained neutral at all times with regard to the study of aggressive behaviour. I entered data collection with no predetermined outcome theory and used the participants' voices for validation.

Furthermore, I was steadfast on reporting results accurately with the sole purpose of fully understanding the study under review (Robertson, 2007:67).

In the study once participants' responses were noted verbatim, they were read to them to ensure participant validation and confirmability and to maintain the principle of ethics. In this way, I ensured that data was not included that the participant was uncomfortable with or felt misrepresented them (Nind, 2008:8). Dependability was also met as care was taken to certify that the research process was logical, traceable, and clearly documented in a reflexive manner by giving a detailed account of the research process (Vosloo, 2014:330). Transferability will be met as the completion of the research will be made available to other researchers.

I added to the validity of this study through data triangulation by conducting in-depth interviews with the participants, paired interviews and the completion of questionnaires. Results were reported in a thorough manner noting all processes for gathering, analysing, interpreting and reporting data (Robertson, 2007:67).

In the interest of full admission and of guarding against unethical or unintentional influences on my interpretation of how schools and parents manage aggressive behaviour, the following discussion outlines my personal experiences relevant to this study (Dodge, 2011:63). I was at my previous school for twelve years, eight of which as an educator and for six of those years I was the grade head. My teaching experience and position as deputy head for three years provided me with comprehensive information of aggression and aggressive behaviour exhibited by learners. My shift in roles from educator to grade head and then deputy head came with its challenges. The challenges were that, as opposed to dealing with only Grade R learners, I was responsible for Grades 1-3 learners as well. As they developed emotionally, they required different skills to regulate their behaviour. I was also exposed to different teaching styles that could either contribute or provide support to learners who displayed the aforesaid behaviour. I was privy to the different parenting styles that were mentioned during parent-educator meetings and I was cognisant of the challenges that educators and parents face and of the support that is needed.

3.11   LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY

This study explored the experiences of principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents relating to the nature of aggression and aggressive behaviour in Grade R.

The implications of the latter for a school-based model for addressing aggression and aggressive behaviour aimed at parents and learners' was explored. This was with the view to developing a school-based guidance and support model to assist parents and learners. The study is limited because it was conducted on a small scale. Hence, the results should not be generalised. The study comprised of a limited sample as indicated previously. To include a larger sample would have entailed more time in the field and would have impacted on completing my PhD within the set time frame and imposed financial limitations. Thus, the latter would not have been a viable approach.

3.12   CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED IN THE FIELD

In the study there were several challenges. Challenges experienced in the field stemmed from gaining access to the site. Initially it seemed insurmountable to gain access, but the manner in which I sought permission to gain access addressed this challenge. I first approached the school principals.

This involved the building of rapport and trust with the principals before doing so with the actual participants. The challenges were addressed by providing the principals with sufficient authentic documents as proof of the research and what value the findings would hold. It was emphasised that all data collected would remain anonymous. Once this was accomplished, it was equally important to work with people with firsthand contact with learners (phase heads, educators, support staff and parents) (Nind, 2008:9).

Almlund (2013:39), describes power relations in qualitative research as the unequal power relation. In the final analysis of qualitative research, it is an aspect that must be taken into consideration. With this in mind, I prepared the interviews with the expectation to understand the participant in question, and not with the intention to deliberately control the research. Given that the participants had taken the time to provide information and enter into dialogue with me, I valued their contribution, knowledge and insights and I expressed my gratitude toward them.

The power relation in qualitative research arises because the researcher always sets the agenda and makes the final interpretation. This relation displays permanence: as the researcher I initiated the research, decided the main topic and set the overall agenda. In addition, I carried out the final interpretation and conclusion.

All of these steps represented some of the explicit elements that are important to accomplish qualitative research in general. These elements especially raised the question of responsibility in the final interpretation because most people can handle an appalling experience during an interview or when they meet a less than stellar qualitative researcher, but they would most probably respond with dissatisfaction if they appeared in a negative light in a published interpretation (Almlund, 2013:40).

Thus, I took these elements into account which corresponded to creating greater general awareness of the power relations, which in turn was enhanced as I examined how my specific position as the researcher made the specific interaction in qualitative research an unequal power relation. I was aware of this unequal power relation particularly concerning the final interpretation as I had to be aware of my methods and how I reflected on my interpretation.

I realised that empathy, open-mindedness, and a respectful focus on the subject assisted me to analyse and interpret the data in a respectful manner (Almlund, 2013:41). I also entered into dialogue with my supervisor who alerted me to the issues related to my assumptions that stemmed from my position as a researcher.

3.13   CONCLUSION

This chapter illustrated the research design and methodology. A specific, related research design was used to guarantee the attainment of the set objectives for this study (Vosloo, 2014:352). I outlined the paradigm in which my theories were located and made salient the use of interpretivism. The subjective meaning making behind the social action was of importance in this study (Antwi & Hamza, 2015:219). For the research approach, I employed a qualitative method with a case study design. The context of the study was narrowed to three schools in the province of Gauteng and the small sample of information-rich participants comprised of two principals, one headmistress, one phase head, two grade heads, six Grade R educators, three members of the support staff team and seven parents. The total number of participants was 22. Data collection was collected using semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and paired interviews. Coupled with these types of collection methods were ethical considerations which formed a stringent feature wherein trustworthiness was imperative. Limitations of the methodology including challenges experienced in the field were explained. The ethical issues show how key aspects were addressed. The next three chapters focus on the findings in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONCEPTS OF AGGRESSION AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR AND THE TYPES OF AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I answer the following research questions: "What do the participants understand by the concept of aggression and aggressive behaviour?" I also make salient the types of aggressive behaviour prevalent in Grade R according to the perceptions of the participants. I concur with Yoleri (2014:11), who eloquently and boldly stated that, during the decisive first six years of a child's life, it is significant to know a child's features, scrutinise their behaviour, and take appropriate measures necessary to secure learning in their development. Behavioural problems that exist in the preschool period have demonstrated volatility and can impinge on later social and academic functioning. In order to intervene, there is a need to identify learners who are at risk. Therefore, in the course of this study and through the use of data from interviews and questionnaires, I position principals, phase heads, educators, support staff and parents as active agents who construct and deconstruct their knowledge regarding the notion of aggression and aggressive behaviour (Daries, 2017:91).

4.2 CONCEPTS OF AGGRESSION

In this theme, I present the findings of the concept of aggression. I do so by using the idea of dimensions and issues. I begin with participants' notions of aggression as related to the emotional dimension of aggression. This is followed by the physical and then the verbal dimension which was also dominant.

In the literature review for Chapter 2, I brought into focus the nature versus nurture debate. I delineated the two perspectives under the banner of biological and genetic theories wherein the nature and nurture perspectives were dissected, and the following were deemed relevant in the ensuing discussion: behaviourism, cognitive theories, SLT and SCLT.

In addition, the concepts of aggression and aggressive behaviour were understood from the nurture perspective. I selected the nurture perspective as the inference can be made that the nurture aspect is prevalent in both behaviourism and SCLT (Berk, 2007:26). However, the fundamental element relevant to the study is Bandura's SLT and SCLT.

The findings in this study show that the concept of aggression was understood from various dimensions. There was reference to the emotional dimension of the concept of aggression. All participants related aggression with negative emotions. Principals 1 and 3 viewed aggression as a concept connected to feelings. Principal 1 believed that *"It is uncontrollable feelings"* and Principal 3 was of the opinion that *"It is a feeling of frustration and hostility".* Grade Head 1 stated that *"It is internal anger."* Educator 6 mentioned that aggression is *"A result of not being able to deal with it (feelings) in an appropriate way and the release is aggression; a trapped feeling inside of you."*

According to Tahirović (2015:158), young learners with inadequate emotional regulation are more likely to be fearful or to respond with exasperation to others` distress or react angrily or aggressively when frustrated. They struggle with adapting to classroom routines as well as in communication with educators and peers. When emotional self-regulation has matured well, young people acquire a feeling of being in control of their emotional experience.

The above draws awareness to the physical dimension and other possibilities that form triggers that provoke aggression. Phase Head 1 stated that aggression is "*a physical display of some sort of problem that a person is experiencing whether it is conflict be it intrinsic (problems at home) or extrinsic (external trigger to a situation or an emotional reaction)."* Principal 2 went beyond just the physical and the verbal to include body language. Grade Head 2 concurred by stating that aggression meant that the child is *"not being able to control anger and outbursts"* and added that *"learners act out"* as well. Educator 5 in describing aggression stated that it arises "*When you are not provoked but you respond aggressively to something that was done or said to you."* In the study, aggression was also related to the interpretive aspects which created possibilities for acting out. For example, Educator 1 stated that *"aggression is more an 'action'. Learner would read a story and focus on bad incidents. It is attention seeking".*

Both the active and passive aspects emerged in participants' understanding of the concept of aggression. Educator 3 explicitly noted that *"learners lashing out physically and verbally, but they are also being passive aggressive."* According to Miller (2008:13), there is a distinction between active and passive aggression. He defines active aggression as taking the initiative to construct an inhibition that thwarts the victim from fulfilling a goal, taking action to hurt another, etc. In other words, it requires some degree of determination on the part of the aggressor to deliver noxious stimuli to the victim. In Walther (2011:31), the author states that physical aggression is a noxious stimulus that inflicts physical pain or injury on a victim and verbal aggression is a noxious stimulus communicated orally, inflicting psychological pain.

Waddell (2012:9), states that learners must attest their worth through the means of physical and/or verbal aggression, especially in the context of bullying. It was interesting to note that in the paired interviews Educator 2 stated that, *"It is acting out towards others. Girls are more verbally aggressive, and boys are more physically aggressive."*

Taking the above excerpt into account, Yoleri's (2014:1) research provided insight into gender related aggression and the aim of her study was to inspect the relationship between gender and the temperamental distinctiveness of learners between the ages of five and six, as well as to evaluate their behavioural problems. Yoleri's (2014:5) study was constructed on a quantitative approach. The data showed that the reactivity scores of learners are extensively related to gender, with the reactivity levels of boys found to be higher than those of girls (Yoleri, 2014:5).

This now leads to Bandura's experiment and the behaviour pattern of the girls and boys. The objective of the Bobo study was to clarify whether young children imitate aggressive adult models. Twenty-four preschool children were assigned to each of three conditions (Bandura, Ross & Ross 1961:582). One experimental group observed aggressive adult models; a second observed inhibited nonaggressive models; while subjects in a control group had no prior exposure to the models (Bandura, *et al.* 1961:582). Half the subjects in the experimental conditions observed same-sex models and half viewed models of the opposite sex.

Subjects were then tested, for the amount of imitative as well as nonimitative aggression performed in a new situation in the absence of the models (Bandura, *et al.* 1961:582).

Comparison of the subjects' behaviour in the generalisation situation revealed that subjects exposed to aggressive models reproduced a good deal of aggression resembling that of the models, and that their mean scores differed markedly from those of subjects in the nonaggressive and control groups (Bandura, *et al.* 1961:582). Subjects in the aggressive condition also exhibited significantly more partially imitative and nonimitative aggressive behaviour and were generally less inhibited in their behaviour than subjects in the nonaggressive condition (Bandura, *et al.* 1961:582). Imitation was found to be differentially influenced by the sex of the model with boys showing more aggression than girls following exposure to the male model, the difference being particularly marked on highly masculine-typed behaviour (Bandura, *et al.* 1961:582). Subjects who observed the nonaggressive models especially the subdued male model, were generally less aggressive than their controls (Bandura, *et al.* 1961:582).

According to Hay (2007:2), different hypotheses about the materialisation of sex differences in aggression can be advanced. They are as follows: girls never acquire a penchant for aggression, and engage primarily in prosocial or passive behaviour; boys and girls at the onset display comparable levels of aggression, but, starting in infancy and early childhood, boys' use of aggression spirals, while girls cease more precipitously and more successfully; boys and girls play with other learners in different ways but boys' mode of play is more expected to lead to physical aggression, while girls continue to be just as aggressive as boys are, but their behaviour is more clandestine and less probable to occur under the eyes of adults, so their aggression is qualitatively distinctive, being more verbal and more prone to involve the manipulation of interpersonal relationships (Hay, 2007:2).

All educators made mention of physical aggression in some form. Educator 1 related this to boys. It was pointed out that boys engage in verbal aggression but also physical aggression such as pushing and hitting. She noted that learners can be mean to other learners verbally by making fun of others by saying they are *"smelling"* and using facial expressions to convey this. Learners are also very sneaky, and Educator 1 believed that the language comes from the home.

Educator 6 conveyed novel information that *"in certain cultures facial expressions are used as a symbol for swearing. They press each other's buttons and swear mothers for a reaction."* Educator 1 also stated that *"frustration is often displayed"* and the learners' *"role-models have a higher verbal language and he models their behaviour."*

The role of parents as models cannot be discounted. Gonzalez (2013:2) puts forth a key point when she states that parental responses to child behaviour can have a vital influence on later behavioural outcomes. Learners with Disruptive Behaviour Disorders (DBD) often engage in externalising and disruptive behaviours, which typically trigger pessimistic responses from parents. Boys are more frequently diagnosed with these disorders, resulting in a scarcity of literature on parental responses to girls with DBD. She further elaborates that studies have found that parents react more disapprovingly when girls participate in disruptive behaviour, possibly because it is divergent to societal gender expectations. Burkhart (2012:13), on the other hand, states that parental modelling is perhaps the most important direct parental influence on the development of the child. The theoretical background of Tahirović (2015:162), maintains that dysfunctional families with marital problems, pressure and the use of physical punishment can make learners feel insecure; if they appraise this environment as being hostile and learn aggressive behaviour from their parents, learners may model this externally.

Tremblay (2002:5) argues that if learners are encircled by adults and other learners who are physically aggressive, they will in all probability learn that physical aggression is part of daily social interactions. In contrast, if the child resides in an environment that does not tolerate physical aggression and rewards pro-social behaviour, it is likely that will attain the practice of using means other than physical aggression to achieve what they want or for conveying frustration. What needs to be taken into consideration is the child's early childhood development and, as Tahirović (2015:162) explains, aggressiveness is not just a behaviour that threatens physical harm to others but one that impacts a child's development.

There was also evidence that the concept of aggression was related to normal growth and development in early childhood when support staff members articulated their insights. The "normal" thesis of aggression was put forth as follows by:

Support Staff Member 1: *"Aggression in early childhood is often considered a part of growing up."*

Support Staff Member: *"Aggression and anger could be seen as a normal developmental phase that a child goes through."*

Farmer (2011:104), states that aggressive behaviour is a natural and often adaptive part of human existence, but it is also one of the most disruptive types of behaviour in which a child can engage. Measurement and treatment are impeded by the fact that aggression is a multifaceted construct. According to Anderson (2007:23), while some demanding behaviours are actually developmentally appropriate, others may be associated with the child's characteristics or other debilitating conditions. Correspondingly to Anderson (2007:23), Tahirović (2015:153) is of the view that some forms of aggressive behaviour in early childhood development are to some extent "normal." He further elaborates that in early interpersonal conflicts learners use this behaviour to learn social strategies for building their position in their environment or to meet their desires. The stage from infancy to when a child starts crawling include temper tantrums that are initiated by a feeling of bodily discomfort, desire for attention or food, etc. Very often these forms of aggression emerge along with a child's difficulty with sleeping or eating. After the first year of life, instrumental forms of aggression are often related to taking toys from other children or frustration caused by unfamiliar situations or people. With increasing agility, the child may show signs of hyperactive behaviour which increases the risk of later aggressive behaviour such as rebuffing authority. Lack of self-control in early development and the presence of stressful situations are often the cause of attacks of rage which come to an end at the age of three and a half. In the phase between three- and five-years physical aggression diminishes in most learners because learners of this age increase the ability to self-regulate and speech development also moderates the need for aggressive behaviour in conflict resolution.

Most aggression displayed by learners aged two through six is instrumental, with the majority of explosions occurring in clashes over materials and toys. Toddlers and preschoolers are impulsive, have restricted language skills and are egotistical. Consequently, they may strike, snatch, kick, or bite to get what they require.

Learners alter their aggressive behaviour when they mature cognitively, with experience and guidance from adults who model non-aggressive behaviour (Kostelnik, Purcell, Nelson, Krumbach, Hanna, Durden, Defrain & Bosch 2010:4).

In the study Support Staff Member 2 drew attention to when aggression is not part of normal growth and development. She stated that *"It could be seen as problematic if it affects their daily functioning, i.e. academics, social and emotional functioning. Support and intervention is then recommended."*

This is supported by a finding from Anderson's (2007:87) study, which relates to the association between the strategies suggested for managing physical aggression, verbal aggression and non-compliant behaviour. Modelling apt behaviours and precluding challenging ones are the tactics that are most probably recommended for all three types of challenging behaviour, while the use of suspension or expulsion is least expected to be suggested when taking in hand each of the behaviours independently. A report of the noteworthy findings correlated to each challenging behaviour follows. According to SLT, the basic factors that affect learning are the qualities of the observer or the one who models, qualities of the individual who is observed or taken as a model, and the qualities of the behaviour which is observed or taken as a model. Because of this rationale, the line of reasoning stated by Eyyam *et al.* (2016:57), should be taken into consideration in order to be more successful in education and to ensure a more efficient education: individuals can also realise learning indirectly, and the models that are observed are mostly prominent, influential and dominant people, especially people who learners imitate and take as a model. For this reason, the individuals who are taken as a model (educator, parents) should demonstrate appropriate behaviours in order to have learners exhibit suitable behaviours, appropriate behaviours should be reinforced in class and learners should be made to observe that those learners who display appropriate behaviours are reinforced. It should also be borne in mind that behaviours rather than words are effective in modelling, and there should be uniformity between words and behaviours, as aggressive behaviours can be effortlessly and rapidly attained through modelling. Thus, according to Bandura (1973; Kantz, 2006:2), patterns of behaviour can be acquired by observing the behaviour of others. It is evident from informal observations that human behaviour is socially transmitted through the behavioural examples provided by influential models.

Furthermore, Bandura (1973; Kantz, 2006:1) elaborated that people learn through modelling and direct experience and modelling influences can be especially important in the use of aggression.

Participants also alluded to the socio-cultural dimension of aggression. A proponent of the socio-cultural theory was Vygotsky and, according to Shabani, Khatib and Ebadi (2010:237), Vygotsky is possibly best recognised for his general genetic law of cultural development. We can articulate the general genetic law of cultural development as follows: every function in the cultural development of the child emerges on the stage twice, first on the social plane and then on the psychological plane, i.e. first amid people as an intermental category and then within the child as an intramental category.

This pertains equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, to the formation of concepts and to the development of will (Vygotsky, 1997:106). In the study the social-cultural aspect was viewed as an important aspect to take into account when making sense of the aggression. The excerpt below by Support Staff Member 1 illustrates this:

> "*One needs to look at the social-cultural individual aspects of aggression as well as the meaning. The intent to cause harm. It is suggested that all children from all cultures should display some aggression as a part or process of development...*"

According to Göncü and Gauvain (2010:2), learners' engagement is facilitated through artefacts such as language and technology and guidance that can extend from playing to observational opportunities and unambiguous instruction. By participating in cultural activity mediated as such, learners bargain with the association of their culture by being compliant, rebuffing, or altering them (Göncü & Gauvain 2010:2). To make obvious the progression of socialisation, Hammond (2010:16) is of the opinion that from the initial moments of life learners begin a process of socialisation wherein parents, family and friends convey the culture of the mainstream society and the family to the new-born. They lend a hand in the child's development of his or her own social construction of reality, which is what people label as factual because of their background assumptions and life experiences with others.

The latter statement by Hammond (2010:16) can hence be filtered through to the sociocultural theory as illuminated on by Göncü and Gauvain (2010:2).

According to SLT, behaviours and feelings may vary through observation and taking someone as a model. Most of a person's behaviours are shaped by means of observing others, seeing how their ideas and the guidance effect these ideas (Eyyam *et al.* 2016:48). The deep-seated concepts in SLT can be illustrated in that learning occurs in three different ways which are observational learning, learning through modelling and indirect learning (Eyyam *et al.* 2016:50). Since learning does not become apparent unexpectedly, observational learning is composed of four consecutive important processes which entail processes of paying attention, retention, creating behaviour and motivation. Hence, it is a theory that is grounded in interpersonal social communication (Eyyam *et al.* 2016:50).

According to Bandura, (1971:6), SLT assumes that modelling influences produces learning principally through their informative functions and that observers require mainly symbolic representation of modelled activities rather than specific stimulus-response associations (Bandura, 1969a, 1971a). In this formulation, modelling phenomena are governed by four interrelated subprocesses.

For attentional process, a person cannot learn much by observation if he does not attend to or recognise the essential features of the model's behaviour (Bandura 1971:6). Retention course infers that a person cannot be much influenced by observation of a model's behaviour if he has no recollection of it. If one has to construct a model's behaviour when they are not present to serve as a guide, the response pattern must be represented in memory in symbolic form (Bandura 1971:7). Observational learning involves two representational forms: imaginal and verbal. (Bandura 1971:7). During exposure modelling stimuli produce through a process of sensory conditioning relatively enduring retrievable images of modelled sequences of behaviour (Bandura 1971:7). Under sequences where events are highly correlated, when a name is unswervingly associated with a given person, it is fundamentally impossible to hear the name without experiencing imagery of the person's physical characteristics (Bandura 1971:7). The second representation system which accounts for the significant speed of observational learning and long-term retention of modelled contents by humans involves verbal coding of observed events. Most of the cognitive processes that regulate behaviour are primarily verbal rather than visual (Bandura 1971:7).

Specifically, as highlighted by Eyyam *et al.* (2016:53), individuals are predisposed to diverse people and words, take them as a model and include them in their existences throughout their lives from childhood to old age. In this framework, there are three types of modelling. The first type is Live Models: These are people who are surrounding the individual. This group is composed of individuals who the individual communicates with in their daily lives such as parents, siblings, relatives, neighbours and friends. The second type is Symbolic Models: These are illustrious people who are known, read and seen through films, songs, television and books. This group encompasses individuals such as famous sportsmen, singers, and presenters of TV programmes, artists, film or novel characters and actors.

Finally, the third type is Verbal Instructions: These are directives often used in society and are verbally common rather than another individual who can be modelled by the individual. "Girls should not look directly," "the customer is always right," "men do not cry," "girls should stay at home" and such other directives comprise this group.

Sociocultural views and Bandura's SLT do not see development as preset. The social world affords the developing mind with a dynamic and mutually generated context that originates in and is sustained by the input and goals of the participants (Göncü & Gauvain, 2010:2). This 'social world' that Göncü and Gauvain make reference to is what puts across the view of Support Staff Member 3 who raised an important point that "*Pre-schoolers who have not successfully developed coping (social) skills will find it hard to display socially acceptable behaviour.*" I concur with her and I believe it is best expounded through Bandura's SLT which suggests that learners learn social skills from their parents. Warm parents likely spend more time with their children which increases the opportunities for the child to observe and learn social skills (Marshall, 2015:35). Conversely, low parental engagement and poor attachment are likely to curtail the opportunities for their child to learn and practice social skills with the parent. Furthermore, if children witness their parents using negative conflict strategies, SLT suggests that they are likely to imitate these negative behaviours in their peer relationships (Bandura, 1989; Grusec, 1992; Miga, Gdula & Allen, 2012; Marshall, 2015:6).

In summary, the findings of this study show that the concept of aggression has different elements such as the emotional, physical, verbal and socio-cultural. For participants in this study the emotional element highlights uncontrollable feelings, frustration, hostility and emotional regulation which were brought to the fore.

The physical element highlights the intrinsic or extrinsic trigger and further elaborates that it could be an emotional reaction that is displayed physically. Embedded in the discussion of the concept of aggression is the highlighting of several important issues to consider for building a model of guidance and support to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour. At the outset, the message is clear that we should be looking at not just five- and six-year olds in typical ways but also as boys and girls. The pull of the idea of normal development and growth featured as an importance issue but was also tempered with views on the socio-cultural dimension of influence in understanding the concept of aggression.

4.3   CONCEPT OF AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

When the concept of aggressive behaviour is posited, Sijtsema (2010:9) is of the view that it relates to antisocial behaviours. These are classified as behaviours that harm others, things, relationships, or another person's social status. In defining aggressive behaviour, it becomes evident that there is quite some heterogeneity in its manifestation. Thus, authors such as Artz and Nicholson (2002), concur with Sijtsema that aggression is defined as harmful to *'others' and 'things'*. It can be inferred that *'others'* refer to humans and animals where *'things'* can refer to objects. Thus, in this section I highlight physical aggressive behaviour towards humans, animals and objects. This is followed by a discussion on the participants' views on how the physical and emotional states intersect with the verbal to create aggressive behaviour. I then examine the concepts of frustration, bullying and self-regulation as noted by participants to focus on the behaviours associated with aggression.

In the study, aggressive behaviour was understood by making reference to certain states of being which were counterproductive to healthy social and emotional development. In the study, three participants (Grade heads and phase head) were in agreement about the types of physical aggression, namely from hitting, punching, biting, smacking, throwing objects and impulsive behaviour to not being able to wait for their turn in a line-up or at the jungle gym. When questioned about the type of aggression displayed at home, Grade Head 1 stated that the learner is capable of: *"The destruction of property. Learners place themselves in harm's way. The killing of pets (a dog). They have disrespect towards adults,"* and Parent 4 similarly stated that her child is "*Very impulsive, even with animals. He walks past them and punches and kicks them for no reason. Sometimes punches and kicks his sister which is sometimes provoked, sometimes not."*

The correlation between cruelty to animals in childhood/early adolescence and adult violent criminal behaviour has been a subject of interest for decades (McDonald, 2011:1). Although there are conflicting studies, an emergent body of research does disclose that individuals who perform actions of cruelty towards animals seldom cease there. The commission of these acts can be a forewarning of yet to come violent behaviour, and may prophesy later violence towards people (McDonald, 2011:3).

In recent years, a solid association has been made linking animal abuse and domestic violence. In fact, cruelty to animals is considered to be a noteworthy predictor of future domestic violence. Because abusers target the powerless, crimes against animals, spouses, children and the elderly often go hand in hand (McDonald, 2011:4).

The Grade 1 Head stated that "*This (cruelty towards humans and animals) could be due to a chemical imbalance".* Linsley (2013:9) indicates that research conducted on both people and animals has indicated the important role of neurotransmitters, particularly serotonin and noradrenalin, in regulating violent and aggressive behaviour. For instance, studies have revealed that very minimal levels of serotonin are linked to impulsive behaviour and consequently greater risk of aggressive behaviours. What is more is that Kempes, Matthys, de Vries and van Engeland (2005:12), state that research has concentrated on the measurement of neurotransmitters like serotonin and psycho-physiological stimulation. One of the most reliable findings regarding these two types of aggression concerns the measurement of serotonin metabolites in the cerebrospinal fluid. Subjects demonstrating impulsive aggression have lesser serotonergic activity than do non-impulsive individuals as implied by low levels of these metabolites. With this being said, biological paradigms tend to have a one-sided view of the causal mechanisms of behaviour. They elucidate behaviour through unconscious drives or biological determinants such as hormones and genetics respectively (Willemse, 2008:34). While this may be true, the SLT places the individual within an environment where both the environment and the individual reciprocally influence each other (Willemse, 2008:34). In addition to Willemse, McCain (2013:35) elaborates that, based on the idea that learning is a social experience that occurs under various circumstances, learning and the subsequent modelling of certain behaviours are a direct result of ongoing and reciprocal interaction between a person, the social environment, and previously learned behavioural patterns of both the person and the group.

Principal 1 believed that the concept of aggressive behaviour is illustrated by *"Lashing out either by hitting (physical) and shouting (verbal)'"*, while Principal 2 stated that it is *"How a child behaves in Early Childhood Development (ECD), use of their hands, verbally abusive and frustration'"*. Principal 3, however, believed that it is *"When a person finds it difficult to control their feelings/emotions and react impulsively on their anger.'"* Support Staff Member 3 agreed with Principal 3 in terms of 'impulsivity' and stated that "*Impulsivity, language delays and anger, fear and depression,"* are displayed by Grade R learners at school. Thus, aggressive behaviour was understood as intersections of physical, emotional and verbal aggression. Grade Head 1 also agreed with Principal 3 that aggressive behaviour involves the expression of anger.

Grade Head 2 concurred with Principal 1 and 2 and stated that learners react physically and verbally. She had the following to say about aggressive behaviour:

> "*Acting out on annoyances as a result of a trigger but not all the time by punching, kicking and intimidation, dragging and throwing sand. Verbally by saying mean words and denying it.*"

Phase Head 1 on the other hand saw it as the:

> "*Manifestation of whatever it is, e.g., incident of road rage. In the younger group the aggressive behaviour is hitting, biting, smacking, temper tantrums and verbal outbursts.*"

The golden thread from the responses of all six educators was that verbal and physical aggression is most prevalent. Educator 3 further expounded that learners are "*unable to control emotions and feelings at that point in the day"*. Educator 4 pin-pointed that *"it is behaviour that expresses their aggression"*. Educator 6 saw *"pushing and grabbing in moments where learners are frustrated and have emotional outbursts"* as *"a physical release of aggression."*

Support Staff Member 2 highlighted the aspect of lashing out whilst Parent 6 noted the source as linked to frustration. The following excerpts illustrate this:

> Support Staff Member 2: "*Children struggle with impulse control thus, struggle to regulate themselves appropriately. They will then get easily frustrated and act out/lash out at peers or authoritative figures such as parents and teachers.*"
> Parent 6: *"It is from a place of frustration."*

In Gasa (2005:23), regarding the genetic and biological theories of aggression, another Freudian process involved in aggression is the defence mechanism of displacement. When applied to frustration, this process is sometimes referred to as 'kick the cat' phenomenon. This purports to when a child is frustrated; he cannot retaliate against the person causing the frustration but might elect to kick the cat. The cat might not be the correct object but a symbolic proxy for the correct object of the child's aggression. Freud (1963:314), also launched the idea of catharsis (charge of energy), accentuating that if the strength of the aggressive drive begins to build up, something must be done to release the energy before it becomes so extreme. According to the cathartic hypothesis, the strain associated with the aggressive drive is diminished by any aggressive act, including displacement aggressive responses as well as fantasy modes of aggression (Moeller, 2001:26; Gasa 2005:23).

Support Staff Member 1 drew attention to another aspect to consider in unpacking aggressive behaviour. The intent to frighten and harm was brought to the fore in the following excerpt:

> *"As a broad range of aggressive behaviour is possible in early childhood. Aggressive behaviour can be understood as an act aimed specifically towards a person or object with intent to frighten or harm."*

Mercado (2015:7), states that the intention to instigate harm could be either a reaction to a provocation or a tool to achieve a goal and the two forms of aggression are categorised as reactive and proactive aggression. Reactive aggression refers to an aggressive behaviour in response to a real or perceived provocation, whereas proactive aggression is used as an instrument to achieve specific goals without a provocation.

Thus, (Dodge & Coie, 1987; Peets, 2008:10) mention that proactive aggression is appropriate to the social-cognitive learning theory of aggression as it is a goal-directed harmful behaviour. Furthermore, as stated by (Geen, 2001, Guerin & Hennessy, 2002; Willemse, 2008:5), proactive aggression is acted out without any provocation, for example, bullying. Such aggressive acts are explicitly intended to inflict hurt to another individual and are motivated by obtaining possessions, affirming power, guaranteeing the sanction of peer groups, among other motivations.

Educator 5 brought 'bullying' to the fore by mentioning that learners are *"Verbally abusive and resorts to bullying."* According to Olweus (Sijtsema, 2010:23), in many school classes there exists a certain social hierarchy that is to a degree the outcome of aggression against peers. Bandura (1973; Kantz, 2006:3), believed that in many social groups aggression can have powerful status and have a rewarding value (Kantz, 2006:3). Hence, Olweus (Sijtsema, 2010:23), state that when this concerns recurring acts of aggression, the term 'bullying' is fitting.

More unambiguously, bullying is termed as repetitively aggressive acts in which one or more persons aim(s) to harm or disturb another person physically, verbally, or psychologically. Vambheim (2010:17), states that general findings of the phenomenon of school bullying show that bullying encompasses direct behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and stealing that are instigated by one or more learners against a victim. Mercado (2015:17) supplements this by citing that regularly proactive aggression is related to dominance and bullying and usually occurs without an instantaneous provocation but is done to attain a specific goal. Bandura's SLT places the latter in context. He postulated (1986; Willemse, 2008:32), that the process of social learning depends on the configuration of mental images of events occurring in the social environment. The rewards or punishment that the learner will obtain for his learned behaviour (aggression) are presented in the form of certain expectancies about the possible future outcome of the aggressive behaviour and also the value that the aggressive behaviour may have for the learner. For example, a learner who bullies his peers in order to accomplish certain results will ultimately come to believe that the persistence of his bullying behaviour in similar settings will continue to dispense worthwhile results (Geen, 2001; Willemse, 2008:32). In addition to this, as a result aggression is highly valued by bullying learners and they are expected to replicate the behaviour when appropriate situational prompts are present (Geen, 2001; Willemse, 2008:32).

Additionally, Support Staff Member 1 highlighted the risk the young learner goes through when aggressive behaviour is prevalent:

> "*Pre-school children that have not developed age-appropriate strategies for regulating aggressive behaviour are often at higher risk for engaging in chronic aggressive behaviour, thus the importance of declining with it from an early age. As noted aggressive behaviour – hitting, pushing for example often results from disinhibition of poor self-regulation.*"

Pearson (2013:1) defines self-regulation as the capability to control and deter impulses, direct attention, and modulate emotions. It therefore comprises of behavioural, cognitive, and emotional aspects. At preschool age, this includes a child's calculated attempt to modulate, modify, or inhibit one's actions and reactions toward a more adaptive end. Pearson (2013:3), states furthermore that the implications of self-regulation skills in preschool are extensive.

The ability to self-regulate influences academic achievement and learning because attentional focus, behaviour inhibition, and sociability constitute standards in the pre-school classroom. Factors that interrupt a child's developing capabilities to regulate behaviour and attention in pre-school pose significant problems for adjustment such as following directions, controlling attention, being proficient to communicate effectively, and sensitivity to others' feelings. Self-regulation is best illustrated through the principle of the SLT which explains it as people having the capacity of controlling, influencing and directing their own behaviours. People themselves organise a lot of behaviours around how much they will talk, how much and when they will eat, the responsibility to do homework, and so on. Although learning may ensue by means of observing others, people themselves are accountable for their own behaviours. Self-regulation maintains that people modify their behaviours to the rules they themselves set, and, after exhibiting the behaviour, to review the behaviour to see if it is appropriate or not and then opt if they will take it as a model or not (Eyyam *et al.*2016:57).

In summary, the findings on the concept of aggressive behaviour reveal that the intersections of physical and emotional states in context create aggressive behaviour. Studies have established that aggressive behaviour is a function of social learning and that individual aggressiveness is learned behaviour associated with aggression levels of group members (Boxer, Guerra, Huesmann & Morales, 2005; Doran, 2014:3).

Participants from the study noted that aggression is projected onto humans, animals and objects. The concept of aggressive behaviour is connected to bullying, frustration, anger and issues with self-regulation.

4.4   TYPES OF AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOURS

In this section, I deepen the understanding of aggressive behaviour by focusing on the types that the participants found significant. According to Ramirez and Andreu (2005:1), the various descriptions of aggression may be clustered according to whether the prime purpose is distress or harm, focusing primarily on the target infliction of harm, or on the prejudiced intention of harming. Most classifications in the literature show two kinds of aggression, even if different names are used: Hostile aggression (also known as 'reactive', 'impulsive', or 'affective') is an action primarily oriented to hurt another individual; and instrumental aggression (also known as 'proactive', 'premeditated', or 'predative') is a means or instrument for resolving problems or for acquiring a variety of objectives.

I begin by discussing aggression from an instrumental perspective (physical and verbal, active and passive, and direct and indirect aggression which the previous sections highlighted). I move on to discuss hostile aggression, followed by empirical data that supports relational aggression based on which gender is more prone to using it. Founded on the participants' articulations, temper tantrums and sibling rivalry are also connected to aggressive behaviour.

Instrumental aggression is often elucidated by SLT in that it is driven by anticipation of rewards (Bandura 1973; Brown, 2006:15). Bandura (1977; Brown, 2006:15), assert that after observing and learning behaviour people will execute behaviours that have worth or are rewarding as opposed to those that have punishing effects. It is imperative to realise that Bandura's theory implies that people can learn behaviour without directly experiencing any rewards; however, rewards are critical in motivating people to later perform the behaviour (Pervin, 1996; Brown, 2006:15). After the Bobo doll experiment, the authors (Bandura, Ross & Ross, 1963; Brown, 2006:15) concluded that rewards without a doubt prejudiced the performance, but not the acquirement of behaviour. With respect to instrumental aggression, individuals are performing a learned behaviour intended to harm another person in order to obtain rewards.

Principal 2 stated that the types of aggression displayed at school are, *"Physical and verbal"* whereas Principal 3 mentioned that they are *"Physical: hitting, kicking and biting"* and *"verbal: nasty remarks."* Support Staff Member 1 stated that at school:

> *"Instrumental and physical expression of aggression, snatching toys, pushing, hitting, and kicking. Girls tend to engage in relational aggression. Whereas males tend to display overt aggression. Both forms are, however, equally hostile."*

Kempes *et al.* (2005:12) also stated that, according to the SLT of Bandura, aggression is deemed to be an acquired instrumental behaviour that is controlled by an anticipated reward. In this theory the originating feature is the projected success of the behaviour rather than the punishment.

Felson and Tedeschi, (1993:98; Gasa 2005:28), enlightened and expanded on the types of instrumental aggression. They stated that physical aggression consists of inflicting pain on another organism. Verbal aggression is explained as an oral response that transports noxious stimuli in the form of rejection and threat. They mention that direct aggression transpires in the company of and is intended for the victim. Whereas indirect aggression consists of injuring the victim from a distance, for example, spreading brutal rumours or slitting the tyres of a victim's vehicle. Active aggression requires an instrumental response that delivers the noxious stimulation to the victim and passive aggression involves an action that blocks the target person from attaining a preferred aim.

Although Buss accepted that capricious frustration may sometimes lead to aggression, he also recognised that the individual may learn almost any other response to frustration. He pointed out some factors contributing to aggressive behaviour as precursor experiences distinctively related to frustration by others, and the personality of the individual. He was confident that the previous encounters of the individual are the primary cause of the behaviour exposed at that time (Felson & Tedeschi, 1993:101-103; Gasa, 2005:29). Bandura had his own reflection process surrounding 'frustration' as (Engler, 2014 cited in Mercado 2015:11) put forth that Bandura's work swung attention away from frustration, biological factors, and reinforcements as causes of aggression. Instead, Bandura looked to clarify how aggressive behaviour is learned and focused on "the process of learning through observation or by example either intentionally or accidentally".

Crick and Grotpeter (Sutch, 2005:5**),** identified a closely related form of indirect aggression called 'relational aggression'. Relational aggression affects the target child's relationship among peers, friends and social groups. The instigating child would harmfully affect the targeted child's relationships through the acts of excluding the target child from the play group, spreading rumours so others will rebuff the target child and initiating and perpetuating the rejection of the target child while maintaining anonymity. In addition, relational aggression, like social aggression, was believed to be a form of aggression more significantly used by younger, adolescent girls. In the study there were references to relational aggression. For example, Educator 5 stated that, *"Girls exclude each other and won't play together."* According to Sutch (2005:5), even though relational aggression does not manifest itself with physical pain and injury, the emotional distress and harm to the intended child have been well documented.

Principals pinpointed different categories of people toward whom different types of aggressive behaviour were directed. Principal 1 commented that *"physical aggression is not only towards peers but is directed to the educator as well."'* Aggression directed towards peers is the purposefulness to physically, emotionally or relationally harm another individual that is of the equivalent social status or group, or is close in age (Hall 2016:16). This is different to bullying: a specific type of aggression that repeats the intent to harm over time within a power differentiated dyadic relationship of aggressor and victim (Hall 2016:16).

Furthermore, Principal 1 and 3 both mentioned that tantrums were evident. Regarding aggression in the home, Principal 1 and 3 have the same point of view regarding tantrums, aggression towards parents and siblings. Principal 1 stated that *"They display tantrums, sibling rivalry, aggression towards parents"* and similarly Principal 3 stated, *"Inappropriate tantrums when the child does not get his/her way. Aggressive behaviour towards parents and siblings."* Support Staff Member 1 pointed out that:

> "*For example temper tantrums had during the 'terrible two's", such as kicking and throwing things tends to be better tolerated. Aggression can be seen as inherent – a personality trait, adaptive function, a syndrome as part of pathology, e.g., autism, environment and aggression further as a result of poor impulse control, language delays or poor emotional regulation.*"

Furthermore, Principal 3 emphasised that in her experience children throw, *"tantrums that are not age appropriate"*. Parent 5 stated that her child engages in, *"Temper tantrums – hitting walls, lashing out/verbal (screaming, crying, etc.)."*

A good number of learners throw tantrums in a specific place with a specific person. They generally are a public display after the child has been told "no" to something he or she wants to do. The tantrum more often than not ceases when the child gets his or her wish. What happens with the temper tantrum hinges on the child's level of energy and the parent's level of patience and parenting skill. There can be numerous reasons for temper tantrums.

Some of the causes are indicators of family problems: inconsistent discipline, criticising too much, parents being too protective or neglectful, learners not having adequate love and attention from parents, problems with the marriage, interference with play, emotional problems for either parent, meeting a stranger, rivalry with siblings, having problems with speech, and illness. Other widespread causes of temper tantrums include being hungry or tired. Learners who have temper tantrums often have other problems like thumb sucking, head banging, bed wetting and problem sleeping. At times temper tantrums in preschool learners are the onset of patterns that lead to learners becoming increasingly defiant, unmanageable and belligerent as they mature and grow up (Fetsch & Jacobson, 2013:1).

Sibling rivalry is an additional type of aggressive behaviour that was mentioned in the study. Research on sibling rivalry is quite varied. (Moser, Jones, Zaorski & Mirsalimi; Maiorano, 2010:1) used the work that studied jealousy, envy, guilt, and resentment between siblings and discovered that rivalry stems chiefly from competition over attention from the caretaker. Once there was an additional child added to a family, the mother's love had to be shared between multiple children which caused discord. The only child becomes the older child and (Maiorano, 2010:5) moves from the central point of interest to one which entails sharing. This is clearly illustrated by Parent 6's response:

> *"She used to be very jealous of her younger brother, but that has improved. She would get very upset/angry if she wasn't the centre of attention or didn't get her way. She would often have major meltdowns and sulk for a long time."*

The competitive nature of siblings is viewed as a negative. But, sibling rivalry could have positive outcomes because learners often learn skills from siblings such as sharing and compromising (Maiorano, 2010:6). Parent behaviours were seldom alluded to as sources of conflict. This could suggest that sibling rivalry is not primarily influenced by parental love but that siblings have their own issues that are detached from those involving their parents. Some other factors that might be expected to affect sibling conflict are age, gender and biological kinship (Maiorano, 2010:6).

Pike, Coldwell and Dunn 2005; Maiorano (2010:8), further explicate sibling rivalry by how the parents' relationship with their children impinged on the siblings' relationship (Pike, Coldwell & Dunn 2005; Maiorano, 2010:8). It was hypothesised that if the parent/child relationships were positive, then sibling relationships would be warmer with a reduced amount of conflict. Also, it was envisaged that positive sibling relationships would result in elevated levels of prosocial behaviour. The results revealed that the value of the sibling relationship was related to the older child's family adjustment but not the younger siblings' adjustment (Maiorano, 2010:8).

Principal 2 mentioned that there is verbal aggression in the home and verbally aggressive mothers act out this negative behaviour towards other parents at school. The learner witnesses this. Children witness what behaviour their parents' model to them and subsequently O'Connor and Scott (2007:6), state that according to Bandura's SLT, learners' real-life experiences and exposures directly or indirectly inform behaviour. The model suggests that learners learn approaches about managing their emotions, resolving disputes and engaging with others not only from their experiences, but also from the way their own reactions were reacted to and, in the case of the example above, how their parents react to others when different settings arise. For younger learners, particularly, the major source of these encounters is in the framework of what parents put on offer in the environment that they insert themselves into where their children are implicated (O'Connor & Scott, 2007:6).

Phase Head 1 added that "*oppositional defiance*" is evident as well. Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) is a very familiar psychiatric disorder among learners. It is characterised as a pattern of negativistic, hostile, and deviant behaviour that is grave enough to mar the child's functioning for at least six months.

Certain indicators of ODD take account of learners not following rules and becoming easily angered over what appears to be nothing. They are habitually disrespectful and swift to blame (Rogers, 2013:6) others for their mistakes, and decline to accept accountability for their actions. It is accurate that most learners display these symptoms intermittently, but it is essential to note that learners with ODD show signs of these symptoms to an extent and regularity that it affects their functioning in all major life areas - home, school, community, and school/work (Children with Oppositional Defiant Disorder, 2011 in Rogers, 2013:7).

Most published studies illustrate a solid association between ODD and ADHD, although it is not noted how these two disorders are associated. The only noted correlation is that learners with ADHD also display some signs of ODD. Other disorders that can be found in combination with ODD are learning disabilities, mood disorders, including depression and bipolar disorder, and anxiety disorders. With this being stated, Support Staff Member 3 stated that depression exists in Grade R learners. Today, ODD is categorised as a disruptive behaviour disorder. Lots of learners with ODD have comparable cognitive and social shortfalls along with the same behaviour disorders as learners diagnosed with ADHD and CD (Rogers, 2013:7).

Support staff members recorded the following aggressive behaviours that are displayed by Grade R learners at home and these are encompassed in definitions of ODD and ADHD (Ross, 2017:9). ODD can be defined as *"a pattern of angry/irritable mood, argumentative/defiant behaviour, or malice lasting at least six months and exhibited during interaction with at least one individual who is not a sibling"*. For the ODD diagnosis to be reliable, the child's behaviour needs to be disrupting the current level of functioning and this disruptive behaviour is shown across several settings, such as home, school and community. ODD can also be found to be overlapping with ADHD and/or CD. ADHD can be defined as *"a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development"* (Ross, 2017:9). Support Staff Member 2 drew attention to *"Defiant behaviour, angry/irritable moods, argumentative, vindictiveness and does not acknowledge their role in creating the situation".* Support Staff Member 3 highlighted *"Impulsivity and hyperactivity, language delays, anger and anti-social behaviour."*

In summary, the findings on the types of aggressive behaviour show that multiple behaviours emerge. Hostile aggression and instrumental aggression are brought to the fore in that hostility is used to hurt an individual. An instrument is used to resolve conflict.

Relational aggression and tantrums were elucidated upon. In the family context sibling rivalry also featured as a type of aggressive behaviour. Participants were also able to identify behaviours associated ODD and ADHD.

4.5   CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to answer the research questions regarding the concepts of aggression and aggressive behaviour; how they are understood by the participants and the types of aggression that learners demonstrate.

The findings for the concept of aggression illustrated that it had various dimensions such as the emotional, physical, verbal and socio-cultural. The participants' viewpoints regarding emotions emphasised uncontrollable feelings, frustration, hostility and emotional regulation. The physical drew attention to the intrinsic or extrinsic trigger and additionally detailed that it could be an emotional reaction that was displayed physically. The findings also brought to the fore that gender needs to be placed under the microscope as well. The socio-cultural dimension of influence in understanding the concept of aggression needs to be appraised.

The findings based on the concept of aggressive behaviour show that the overlap of physical and emotional states crosses with the verbal to create aggressive behaviour. Humans, animals and objects are at the receiving end of aggression. Neurological aspects of development could lead to aggressive behaviour over which learners have no control. Frustration is a key element in aggressive behaviour and what can also be deduced from the participants is that bullying is a factor as well. The question lies in that, if self-regulation and attachment are achieved, early childhood experience in terms of behaviour would be constructive.

Finally, the participants noted different types of aggressive behaviour that were coming to the fore. There was hostility with the intention to harm. Relational aggression and tantrums featured as behaviours that needed intervention. Sibling rivalry was also identified as problematic. Behaviours associated ODD and ADHD were linked to aggression.

In summary, the findings on the concepts of aggression, aggressive behaviour and types of aggression shed light on what to consider from a conceptual perspective and theoretical perspective for the construction of the guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour. The next chapter will present the findings and discussion on factors leading to aggression and aggressive behaviour.

CHAPTER FIVE

FACTORS LEADING TO AGGRESSION AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

5.1   INTRODUCTION

There is a constellation of factors that lead to the aggressive behaviour of Grade R learners. Gardner and Shaw (2008:883) state that preschool behaviour problems are predisposed to both biological and environmental factors. They manifest in individual distinctions in child characteristics (e.g., temperamental dimensions of activity, sociability and attention) and are influenced by the messages of the care-giving environment embedded in specific contexts. Bearing the above in mind, the main aim of this chapter is to identify the contributory factors that lead to aggression and aggressive behaviour of Grade R learners at school and at home. Specifically, I answer the question, "*What are the factors that lead to aggression and aggressive behaviour of Grade R learners?"* Principals, phase heads, educators, support staff and parents participated in the study. The evidence associated with these factors adds knowledge to the broader concern about the nature of aggression in Grade R.

5.2   FACTORS LEADING TO AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

In this section I discuss the findings on two major points of departure leading to aggressive behaviour which are genetic and environmental factors. Thereafter frustration and verbal delay, social skills and academics are elaborated upon.

5.2.1   Genetic factors

For the purpose of this study, neurological aspects were delved into under the banner of genetic factors. According to Raaijmakers (2008:10), a number of biological factors appear to be linked to aggressive behaviour in childhood. She further stated that a genetic susceptibility towards aggression is often symptomatic of a family or larger environment in which aggressive behaviour is repeatedly shown. The genetic predisposition and the aggressive environment both escalate the risk for the child to behave aggressively.

To draw a distinction, a very supportive and non-aggressive environment might compensate for the genetic predisposition of the child (Raaijmakers, 2008:11).

5.2.1.1 Neurological

Raaijmakers (2008:133) asserts that even if parenting practices change, some aggressive child behaviour difficulties might persist due to factors other than parenting, i.e., neurobiological correlates such as impairment of inhibitory control, which are more complicated to amend and, as an end result, some behaviour problems might continue to persist. With this being said, Educator 2 indicated that, *"Neurological factors as sometimes the chemicals in the brain can alter behaviour"* and this she noted leads to aggressive behaviour.

According to Gardner and Shaw (2008:884), disruptive behaviour, sometimes referred to as externalising or "acting-out" problems, comprises of attentional and oppositional problems and their comparable disorders. ADD, ADHD and CD were briefly mentioned in Chapter 1 and ADHD, CD and ODD was further expounded on in Chapter 4. Some of the symptoms of ODD were described by Rogers (2013:6) as learners who break the rules and are angered easily over inconsequential matters. Some symptoms of ODD include learners not adhering to rules and becoming effortlessly angered over what seems to be nothing. They are often insolent and swift to accuse (Rogers, 2013:6). Participants noted that oppositional defiance is apparent in the classroom and also brought to the fore that depression is visible in Grade R learners. Rogers (2013:7) also stated that depression can be found in ODD as well. Wang (2013:8), states that aggression and conduct problems are symptoms generally found in learners with ODD and CD.

According to Wang (2013:8), inattention and hyperactivity are symptoms commonly found in learners with a diagnosis of ADHD. In Chapter 4 support staff members commented that the following behaviours are rife: defiant behaviour, angry/irritable moods, argumentative, vindictiveness and do not concede their role in creating the situation, impulsivity and hyperactivity, language delays, anger and anti-social behaviour.

Principal 3, Grade Head 2 and Support Staff Member 2 all concurred that ADHD is a factor influencing aggressive behaviour. Principal 3 stated, *"ADHD causes aggression and frustration and oppositional defiance disorder (ODD).*

Medication makes a difference as the brain can focus on what to do." Grade Head 2 mentioned that, *"Sensory overload, ADHD, immaturity, impulse reaction"* are factors.

Support Staff Member 2 noted the following:

> *"Research has proven that the majority of children with anger difficulties and aggressive outbursts struggled with an underlying disorder such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Impulsivity is one of the biggest factors that lead to aggressive and uncontrolled behaviour."*

Walumoli (2016:20) sums up that the importance of disposition lies in the conjecture that it shapes personality development and affects developmental outcomes. The connection between temperament in early childhood and later behaviour patterns has been recorded. For instance, dimensions associated with challenging temperaments like emotionality and impulsivity are predictive of behaviour problems.

According to Cosser (2005:72), medications most commonly used in the treatment of ADHD learners are stimulant drugs and it is estimated that about 85 to 90 percent of learners with ADHD are taking stimulant medication such as Ritalin to manage their behaviour. Approximately 70 percent are assisted by means of the drug. Ritalin is a stimulant; in most individuals it speeds up the nervous system and behaviour. Ritalin aids ADHD learners to better focus their attention and makes them less distractible and disruptive. Significant side benefits of this increased attentional focussing are that both academic and peer relations are expected to improve. It has been contended that stimulants do little more than subdue ADHD symptoms while perchance producing such grave side effects as reducing appetite, disrupting sleep cycles and diminishing the learner's desire to play and to acquire any number of skills that are not taught at school. In the study Phase Head 1 noted that, *"Our culture perpetuates no medication and parents don't want to use Ritalin".* The reluctance towards medication is understandable given the side effects.

On the other hand, Schneider's (2014:24), research findings enlightened readers that while his participants took different actions initially after their child was diagnosed, all consulted a doctor who suggested psychotropic medication. Most parents commenced using medication on their children with the greater part seeing positive results; however, parents who used behavioural interventions as an alternative likewise reported a reduction in symptoms. When making a judgment of whether they would use the same approach if given a second chance, the participants offered mixed reactions of confidence and hesitation. The most effective treatment interventions were medication, therapy and behavioural interventions in that order or combined.

In summary, the findings show that one of the contributory factors of aggressive behaviour is linked to genetics. Participants in this study bring chemical deficits to the fore which in turn highlights neurological effects that compound aggressive behaviour. An important point to note in the discussion of factors that lead to aggressive behaviour is that ADHD and ODD are factors. The use of Ritalin as medication was mentioned as a method for controlling behaviour although it was noted that this was not the favoured response.

5.2.2 Environmental factors

The second point of departure is environmental factors that lead to aggression. According to Raaijmakers (2008:12), numerous environmental factors are related to the advent and persistence of aggressive behaviour. For some learners aggressive behaviour might be reflected on as part of the setting in which they are raised (Raaijmakers, 2008:12). For this reason, a person's environment plays a significant part in the foundation of an individual's beliefs and actions. Environments may consist of a range of settings including school, home and work. The social cognitive theory states that cognitive processes evolve through environmental influences (Bandura, 1999; Stenger, 2007:6). Observing a peer engaging in an activity within a socially acceptable environment can help mould the observer's idea of what is within acceptable limits (Stenger, 2007:7).

To completely comprehend environmental factors, it would be advantageous to engage with the point of view of Walumoli (2016:14), who states that family and society in general lead to an increase in aggressive behaviours. Learners model the aggression from their environment thus becoming aggressive.

Equally, the environment can prompt frustrations in the learner thus causing aggressive behaviours. What is more, Stenger (2007:7) eloquently states that people can observe others in a variety of environments. One such environment is the forced environment (Bandura, 1999; Stenger, 2007:7).

For instance, a forced environment is when the observer is placed in a setting whether equipped or ill-equipped and has slight control over what happens. Another type of environment, the selected environment, occurs when an observer is selected and placed within an environment with specific activities (Bandura, 1999; Stenger, 2007:7). A third type of environment is a constructed environment (Bandura, 1999; Stenger, 2007:7). The latter occurs when a person creates the environment to fit the requirements of the observer. To illustrate a constructed environment for a child would be one which is planned to produce a specific feeling or emotion. Depending on the type of environment in which the observer is placed, distinctive reactions and feelings determine what conventional behaviour is (Stenger, 2007:7).

All three support staff members were in agreement that *"environmental factors contribute to aggression."* Walumoli (2010:92), states that other factors are societal, where the environment is aggressive or multiplies the chances of aggression, for instance prolonged poverty. In what follows, a discussion ensues through the focus on the themes of family, divorce, attachment, parenting styles, modelling and media.

5.2.2.1 Family

The family and the experiences created for the learner during primary socialisation are important to consider in a study of aggressive behaviour. Walumoli (2016:92) highlights the fact that family plays a contributory role and that there are several dimensions in understanding the family factor as a contributor to the child's aggression and aggressive behaviour.

Parental self-efficacy is defined as one's belief in his or competency as a parent. According to Bandura's theory, a parent's belief about his or her ability to parent successfully is a crucial element in the actualisation of this goal and duty (Gandy, 2014:2). Thus, poor parenting characterised by poor discipline methods and poverty can intersect to provide familial conditions that lead to aggression and aggressive behaviour.

Phase Head 1 recognised that "*The socio-economic circumstances at home*" are influential in shaping behaviour. Educator 6 noted how the wider environment must be taken into account, *"The social economic climate of the area must be taken into consideration."* In poverty-stricken environments there are multiple problems stemming from the stresses experienced.

Settle (2010:6), suggests that, the more stressful life events learners in violent homes experience in addition to family violence, the more likely it is that they will develop internalising behaviour problems. Settle (2010*:7),* goes on to indicate that family stress factors may include mother-child conflict, parental alcoholism or drug abuse, family size, and low socio-economic status. These problems mean that less time is spent on supporting the child. SLT assigns a prominent role to the perceived efficacy of families to manage the different aspects of familial relationships and the quality of family life (Bandura, 1997, 2006b; Bandura, Vittorio, Barbaranelli, Regalia & Scabini, 2011:423). Furthermore, Michels *et al.* (2012; Alm, 2015:22) posits that stress arises when the demands of a situation exceed an individual's ability to cope with and resolve the problem. Thus, (Bandura, 1998; Alm, 2015:23) states that such feelings may imply low levels of self-efficacy which is a central concept within SCLT.

Managing demands from both work and family life makes many parents feel time pressured and stressed (Beshara *et al.* 2010; Alm, 2015:22). Time was recognised as a critical factor by Phase Head 1 who stated the following was important*: "The amount of quality time spent in the evening with children or as a family"*. Educator 5 felt that, *"Parents don't spend enough time with their children"*.

The extent to which the family is unified, the closeness of the bond between the parent and the child, the nature (Kwizera, 2014:16) of sibling connections and family management practices are related to the development of aggressive behaviour. Learners from families that experience extensive dissension and whose parents are distant and cold, are comparatively likely to exhibit aggressive behaviour (Kwizera, 2014:17). It is generally acknowledged that children imitate their parents' behaviour, and this is, primarily, one way in which they may learn.

When children show evidence of aggressive-like behaviour they have observed, we would not know if the children's behaviour is truly aggressive with an objective to do harm or just solely imitation (Altin *et al.* 2011:4). Thus observational learning is the process through which vicarious experience happens, attention, retention, production, and motivational processes govern observational learning (Bandura, 1986b, 1997; Whyte, 2015:52). The latter has been elaborated upon in Chapter 4.

Principal 3 and Phase Head 1 both believed that, "*Family problems*" contribute to aggressive behaviour. Phase Head 1 additionally stated that when there is conflict in the family,

> "*Children verbalise when they come to school. e.g., Daddy slammed the door and the glass broke. Mummy and daddy fought last night.*"

5.2.2.2 Divorce

According to Settle (2010:2), domestic violence is not simply a problem between men and women; the children of these relationships are also victims. Learners growing up in this unstable and abnormal environment are in jeopardy of experiencing dysfunction in a number of domains. Learners' reactions to domestic violence are pre-schoolers who tend to be more irritable and are often reluctant to separate from their mothers and they fear being alone. They may demonstrate a regression of the most recent developmental milestone and experience sleep disturbances. Pre-schoolers who witnessed domestic violence had higher levels of problematic behaviours and social deficits.

Preschool aged boys showed the highest rating for aggressive and somatic difficulties when compared to females (Settle, 2010:4). Furthermore, school aged learners have learned that violence is an apt way to settle conflict. These learners have problems with schoolwork, including poor academic performance, not wanting to go to school, and concentration difficulties. They fight with their peers, rebel against adults, and are disinclined to cooperate with instruction or authority. The outcome of most studies of this age group verify that males continue to exhibit externalising behaviour problems, whereas females more frequently experience internalising problems.

However, both genders tend to show reduced levels of social competence, and they grapple with being enthusiastic to please and feeling aggressive (Settle, 2010:4).

Grade Head 1 and Phase Head 1 both commented on *"Divorce is a factor".* According to Settle (2010:10), it is speculated that all of the learners may experience elevated internalising and externalising behaviours post-divorce.

However, due to the pre-divorce violence and the ongoing conflict between parents, it is hypothesised that the girls exposed to high conflict will show greater internalising symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and physiological complaints. The boys from high conflict families will display more externalising behaviour problems such as aggressiveness, disobedience and destructiveness.

With learners residing in two different homes, there is bound to be rules that differ between parents as sometimes parents have different parenting styles. Grade Head 2 cited that divorce is a factor due to *"different rules between the two homes".* Settle (2010:9), remarks that among families with young children, a crucial component of parental conflict and paternal involvement following divorce is the gate keeping that occurs between parents. Gate keeping refers to the cooperation and inhibitory functions that may be put into effect by one or both parents that ascertain who will have access to their child. Maternal gate keeping has been defined as a *"set of beliefs and behaviours that inhibit collaborative efforts between fathers and mothers by limiting the men's opportunity for caring (for) and rearing of their children".* As the mother is as a matter of course the primary caretaker, she becomes the monitor, permission giver, and controller of the father's involvement with the child and the form of that involvement. Stringent gate keeping may result in a reduced amount of involvement by the non-residential parent, more primary parent-child conflicts, and learners' feelings of insecurity regarding their less-seen parent.

5.2.2.3 Attachment

Attachment is a concept that has been studied since the 1960s. (Bowlby, (1969/1982; LaMont, 2010:6), reports that a psychiatrist used his observations of infants who were separated from their mothers to record the "grief reaction" that the infants appeared to display with the separation.

(Bowlby, 1969/1982; LaMont, 2010:6) theorised that the infants' behaviours were an indicator of an emotional bond between infants and their mothers which he described as mother-infant attachment. (Bowlby, 1973; LaMont, 2010:6), defined attachment as the close emotional relationship between two persons, symbolised by shared affection and a desire to sustain propinquity. The primary attachment relationship between a mother and her infant, (Bowlby, 1973; LaMont, 2010:6), postulated, is formed in the first years of life and stays relatively stable throughout childhood, adolescence, and adulthood (LaMont, 2010:6).

According to Stern (2016:3), a securely attached learner may be more probable to expect distress to be met with compassion and care, to formulate accurate attributions about others' intentions, and to effectively regulate their emotions, which together sustain the capacity to empathise. Hunter (2003: ii) defines empathy as a concept that plays a focal role in the growth of interpersonal relationships and thus the individual's ability to function socially and often professionally. According to Bandura (1977; Ringshaw, 2015:25), disparities in empathic capability and prosocial behaviour could also be described by Bandura's SLT which proposes that behaviour is modelled on observations of others and learned within a social context (Bandura, 1977; Ringshaw, 2015:25). Due to the fact that children imitate their parent's modelled behaviour, it is reasonable to accept that the child would be largely influenced by the parents' degree of participation in childcare and the demonstrated degree of empathy. According to the postulation of SLT, greater parent participation in childcare would allow a salient parent child relationship and increased modelling of the parents' empathy by the child. Therefore, if parents were extremely empathetic, the child would be more empathetic than if the parent were low in affective empathy and vice versa (Hunter, 2003:35-36).

In contrast, insecure learners may presume distress to be met with avoidance, rejection, or hostility, to make negative attributions about others' intentions, and to use less adaptive emotional regulation strategies, inhibiting empathy and potentially causing aggression. Hence, Support Staff Members 1 and 3 responded in the following manner: "*poor emotional regulation*" and *"emotional dysregulation"* respectively are factors of aggressive behaviour that hold significance.

Grade Head 1 pointed out that a learner in her class felt *"rejection"* as he was *"in a care group at the age of 3 months as mum is career orientated"* and he developed *"attachment issues."* Coupled with this he also, *"Experienced a loss in personal his life (parents' divorce, continuous changing of schools, grandmother passed away and then au pair resigned). All female figures in his life leave. No attachment to females and disrespect them. He never connected or bonded with a female as his mum was a void in his life."*

Thus, attachment theory is significant and LaMont (2010: iii), expounds that *s*ecure mother-child attachment has been found to be a principal factor in the healthy emotional development of learners and has been revealed to have effects on child, adolescent and adult behaviour.

5.2.2.4 Parenting styles

Aggressive behaviour problems are inclined to develop and continue in the context of callous, inconsistent parenting and low levels of positive parenting. Ineffective parenting practices, such as physical punishment, vague limit setting, poor parental supervision and lack of parental responsiveness and affection escalate the risk of the development of aggressive behaviour or Disruptive Behaviour Disorder (DBD) (Raaijmakers, 2008:12). Phase Head 1 stated that:

> "*Parenting styles and types of parenting"* are factors as, *"Parents don't want to accept that their child has a behavioural problem. They self-reflect and see it as their fault. Some parents are supportive whilst others are not."*

According to Feldman (2015:5), parental discipline and quality of parent-child interactions have been shown to be dominant influences on child development. All three principals in the study were unified in their response that one of the factors that led to aggressive behaviour is a lack of discipline at home. Principal 1 felt that, *"There is no discipline at home".* Principal 2 mentioned, "*Boundaries are a factor as over the years children don't trust parents to discipline them and set boundaries".* Principal 2 further stated that, *"parents give in to children's demands as they don't have the time to discipline."* Principal 3 raised the issue of conflicting responses to discipline in the home and school and he put it in this way: *"Discipline is a factor as if there is no discipline at home but there is discipline and structure at school it causes frustration as learners are not used to rules and structures."*

The Grade Head 1 indicated that a factor that leads to aggressive behaviour is *"lack of structure at home."* Educator 1 stated:

"No control or structure at home causes negative behaviour. Routine, diet and structure at home are factors and this information helps to understand home life."

Educator 4 mentioned:

"Boundaries and consistent consequences. Consistency affects behaviour. There is no consistency at home, but there is at school as well as rules."

Educator 5 developed this statement further by stating that:

"Lack of structure and boundaries at home. Teachers are able to implement it at school and make progress by Thursday and Friday and on Monday we are back to square one. It's like farming: plough first, plant the crop and when the sprouts start to show you plough again. After the holidays, there is no routine and structure at all."

Gardner and Shaw (2008:885) noted that research has unswervingly authenticated associations among low-quality parent-child relationships in the early years, the use of unresponsive or harsh parenting practices and disruptive behaviour in preschool and later years. Positive parenting skills (e.g., predicting the child's troublesome moments, affording joint play activities) may be acutely essential in the toddler years, as they can help to redirect learners from problem behaviour at an age when learners have limited skills for self-management of boredom and tempting impulses. Rather different parenting skills become important in middle childhood, where increasing independence requires greater monitoring of learners across multiple settings and planning for preventing problems that may occur in the parent's absence.

Participants in the study brought up the important factor of parents being scared to be assertive with their child and that this was leading to a lack of vigilance of aggressive behaviour of their child. Although parents 'fearfulness' could be a possibility, it could also be understood from the viewpoint of parental self-efficacy which has already been defined in this chapter.

Albert Bandura's SCLT described high self-efficacy as a powerhouse behind motivation (Crain, 2010; Bond, 2013:8), closely linked to positive perceptions of success (Bandura, 1989; Bond, 2013:8). Comparatively, when parents have low self-efficacy, he or she may be more prone to become depressed and have self-doubts (Crain, 2010; Bandura, 1989; Bond, 2013:8). Low parental self-efficacy in this case has even been identified as a potential risk factor predicting poor results (Salonen, Kaunonen, Astedt-Kurki, Jarvenpaa, Isoaho & Tarkka, 2009; Bond, 2013:8-9).

Furthermore, according to Bandura (1977; Bond, 2013:14), what needs to be taken into account is that a parent might not feel as though they are a "good parent" at all times and in all circumstances, but can be redefined as a "good enough parent", reflecting these contextual influences. Therefore, a more holistic investigation of self-efficacy as a construct is necessary (Bond, 2013:14). Educator 3 noted the following:

> *"Parenting style that is not effective and this leads to aggression. Parents are too scared to put consequences in place. No expectation is set by parents and rules at home differ from that at school."*

Thus, a parent with low self-efficacy regarding their own parenting ability, may be less motivated to alter negative circumstances, or engage their child in developmentally appropriate interactions and activities (de Montigny & Lacharite, 2005; Bond, 2013:9).

Educator 5 believed that "*Parents lack parenting skills"* which in turn is a factor of aggression. Educator 6 said the following:

> *"Parenting as well. Having children is like a fashion statement: parents first take the time and effort and then they don't care. Parents want to be friends with their children and don't want their children to hate them. "*

Principal 3 raised the issue of parent guilt when he said the following:

> *"…parents feel guilty and overindulge their children. Children manipulate parents so they can see the parent's reaction."*

Phase Head 1 elaborated on types of parents and their relationship with their child: *"Parenting styles and types of parenting,"* is also a factor and adds that there is a difference between the *"Older parents vs. younger parents and old-school parenting vs. the modern-day approach. Parents hover over their children (helicopter parents). Parents overcompensate."*

5.2.2.5 Modelling

Shalash (2011:2) notably states that interparental conflict resolution, or the way in which parents resolve conflict, is another variable impacting conflict in the sibling relationship by both the harshness and manner in which parents argue. Taking this statement into perspective and applying it to the family environment where siblings form bonds, the following statement by Yeh (2001:13) holds a point of departure. Yeh postulates that, (Bandura, 1997; Yeh, 2001:13), based on SLT siblings serve as an exceptional source of direct imitation, reinforcement, and vicarious learning for a variety of behaviours. By observing siblings' behaviours and knowing the consequences of the behaviours, they may form similar behavioural repertoires, form and adopt certain beliefs and expectancies, and change the probability of experimentation with regard to particular behaviours (Yeh, 2001:13). Hence the statement made by Educator 1 that another factor for aggressive behaviour is *"copied behaviour due to older siblings."* The latter is a direct confirmation of Bandura's SLT in terms of sibling modelling of behaviour.

The SLT (Bandura, 1977; Doran, 2014:39) which emerged from Bandura's work on overt aggression (e.g., physical) is grounded in the belief that people learn and vicariously imitate behaviour through the process of observational learning. Apart from this, Schneider (2012:3), states that an additional aspect under social learning theories, the intergenerational conduction of violence, is the abuse that a learner endures and later uses that learned behaviour (violence and aggression) in conflict situations. (Bandura, 1977; Schneider, 2012:3) explained that during exposure, observers acquire mainly symbolic representations of the modelled activities, which serve as channels for fitting performances. The

representation behind aggression is the intimidation and compliance that the learner observes. This leads into Educator 4's statement:

> *"Children don't have their own internal monitor or judgement for behaviour and the behaviour that parents' model is watched by children. Thus this display of behaviour is then copied by children."*

In sum, these behaviours have the possibility to shape a child's cognitions and later they emulate the behaviour they observed as a child. According to the social learning perspective, people differ in what they teach, model and reinforce with their learners (Bandura, 1977 in Schneider, 2012:3).

In a study conducted by (Bandura, Ross, & Ross 1961; Romanchych, 2014:9), 72 young learners were exposed to a physically aggressive adult model, a non-aggressive adult model, or no model. The learners who were exposed to the aggressive model behaved more aggressively compared to the learner who observed a non-aggressive model and the learner who did not observe a model. In addition, the learners who imitated the aggressive model also imitated the model's verbally aggressive behaviour. This study illustrates the effects of modelling on learners' development of physically aggressive behaviour and offers support for Bandura's SLT (Romanchych, 2014:9).

Based on the SLT and as noted in Chapter 4, it is indicated that problem behaviour is first learned in the home, before learners are exposed to deviant peer groups, implying that learners' interactions with their parents might be very influential in their development of early problem behaviour (Romanchych, 2014:9). Parent 1 stated that the factor for aggressive behaviour in one home is, *"His dad is also short-tempered."* Educator 5 stated that:

> *"At the Fantasy Area children model their parent's behaviour as they use the bowling skittles to represent beer and sticks for cigarettes. Role models are a factor as children watch how their parents behave at home and copy verbal and physical aggression."*

Educator 6 further expounded the idea of acting out what they witness in the homes:

> *"During the discussion of Occupations as a theme one of the children wanted to be a gangster and it was because a gangster was being glorified at home. Children model the parties that parents have at home and the behaviour that children are exposed to."*

5.2.2.6 Media

In today's society, media has become a powerful influence on our lives. By the time learners begin school, they have spent substantial amount of hours watching television, movies, and videos; listening to the radio and CDs; reading magazines, newspapers, and books; playing video and computer games and surfing the Internet. The potential danger of ample ingestion of television is the exposure to this symbolic world may make the televised images appear to be the true state of human affairs. This outcome can be detrimental to those individuals who have no other models that they can observe. In the absence of a parent, guardian or peer who is able to give an explanation of reality from fiction, the child may be more liable to attend and reproduce the modelled behaviour seen on television. Hence, Bandura and other researchers have concluded that the mass media not only creates personal attributes but also can alter pre-existing ones based on exposure. Exposure plays a huge role in the process of SLT (O'Rorke, 2006:73). As Deckman, Pond and DeWall (2015:1), state that one simply has to switch on the television or open an Internet browser to instantly acquire access to violent images.

The exposure that one encounters through television is often a contributing factor toward behaviour, but this does not diminish the fact that even learners who do not watch television or listen to the radio are affected by the mass media (O'Rorke, 2006:74). According to authors Strasburger, Jordan and Donnerstein (2010:758), studies indicate that media have an effect on youth, not only by taking the place of time they spend doing homework or sleeping but also by influencing beliefs and behaviours. According to Strasburger *et al.* (2010:758), SLT, learners and adolescents learn by observing and imitating what they see on the screen, particularly when these behaviours seem realistic or are rewarded (Strasburger *et al.*2010:758).

Principal 1, Principal 3, Grade Head 2, Educator 6 and Support Staff Member 1 agree that the media is a contributory factor which incites aggressive behaviour. This is confirmed by Prokarym (2012:1), who noted that studies have concluded that there is a connection between media and aggressive behaviour. According to Habib and Soliman (2015:250), a child's brain in the early ages always seeks out new experiences; that is why what is conveyed in a cartoon gets toddlers glued to their chairs while watching an animated series.

A well written setting, right audio and visual effects and a respectable looking character, are all the main factors for explaining why young learners get mystified by the cartoon hero and are enough for his/her brain to automatically begin following his path and trying to imitate even the finest details.

Principal 1 stated, *"News and media depicts too much violence. Television is a huge contributing factor. The use of IPhones and violence in cartoons."* Socially, a positive cartoon could be used to teach a child how to manage his rage, abide by his parents, speak in a well-mannered way, aid the poor, support the old, give assistance to the young and co-operate in a group without feeling hatred or jealousy from his peers. Speaking about the skills, positive cartoon content could teach a toddler how to be a leader, how to evaluate problems in a scientific manner, how to deal with a risk, think about acting and even cause a child to love a sport. Concerning life experience, a well-made cartoon scenario could educate a child about hazards of the surrounding environment like the risk of heights, fire associated with the oven, the danger of electricity, and the care needed crossing the streets. It could also teach him Scouts skills, like how to act in the wild, heal a wound, deal with a broken arm, know the way of the wind, make a compass, build a small boat, erect a tent and correctly untangle a rope. All these and many more are the skills that could be depicted in a cartoon and absorbed by the child's brain if they are presented in an accurate, appealing manner. A cartoon hero could be the child's model for years. A cartoon hero is created by an illustrator as well as the scenario, so all negative side effects that could occur in real life, that could be presented in a character or in a situation, could be evaded, causing the child to receive pure content consisting of good deeds and messages to correctly sculpture his brain.

On the other hand, the negatives outweigh the positives. A cartoon could be much more perilous than any other experience a child could witness before the age of twelve. It could contain subject matter that would perplex the child with what he experiences in real life; it could contain commands that oppose the parents' orders. A blemished cartoon could lead a child to have a different unfavourable viewpoint of his parents, his friends, his educator and even his Lord. Negative content, deliberate or mismanaged, could lead a child to question his raising, his skills, way of thinking and lifestyle that he has grown up with according to his family or his religion.

A character with a negative attitude and manners that appears on the screen as a hero could model a way of life that is opposite to the child's current understandings of his life and his surroundings and change his behaviour in a negative manner (Habib & Soliman, 2015:256).

Principal 3 mentioned that, *"The media has caused huge problems in schools."* The Grade Head 2 added that, *"too much television as behaviour is caused by watching certain programmes/movies on television, e.g., Deadpool. Parents do not implement the Parent Guidance (PG) rating."* Support Staff Member 1 simply stated, *"too much screen time" is* a factor.

Habib and Soliman (2015:248), corroborate the above by stating that the factors that fashion a learner's way of thinking are found mostly in the environment where they were raised. These include daily events, unforgettable experiences and crowning feelings. Cartoons are one of the daily habits for our learner; studies have proved that an average child with a TV and a satellite connection at his home views approximately 18,000 hours of television from kindergarten to high school graduation. Educator 6 extended her response by saying that not only *"Media is a factor"* but *"music videos are provocative"* are too.

Video games are becoming a leading source of media consumption in today's society and they should be seen as an evolution of the interest in the relationship between media and aggressive behaviour (Prokarym, 2012:1). The increase in video game usage is distressing and is motivation enough to study the effects of video games on children, especially considering that learners are considered to be the most impressionable (Prokarym, 2012:2). On the positive side, according to Prokarym (2012:23), the effects of video games that are valuable to the individual and society takes into account improved cognitive outcomes and

increased social skills such as teamwork. The evidence for positive effects is limited, but can be located in non-violent games (Prokarym, 2012:24), that are intended for educational use. These types of games, such as Brain Age and Tetris, are created to boost learning, and enhance vocabulary and spatial abilities. Suspected positive outcomes from video games include increased hand-eye coordination and sharpened reaction times. Ultimately, the research on positive effects is not as extensive as research on the negative effects of video games (Prokarym, 2012:24).

SLT has been studied for decades and its conclusions can be related to video game violence and resulting aggression. The increase in the amount of video games available to children and the amount of aggressive acts carried out by young people have fuelled this ongoing research. Psychologists have completed many experimental studies that prove that violent video games cause aggression, at least in the short term. This conclusion coincides with Bandura's SLT and his Bobo doll study (Bandura *et al.* 1961; Ryan, 2010:24). Video game characters are models that people look up to, much like the adult models in Bandura *et al's* study (Ryan, 2010:24).

The negative effects of video games are detrimental either to the individual or to society. This incorporates aggressive acts and negative social skills such as a decreased ability in school or employment. The majority of studies have identified the relationship between video games and the negative effects on players. These studies have unearthed evidence to support the hypothesis that exposure to violent video games is linked to aggressive behaviour, feelings and thoughts. Suspected negative outcomes from video games include desensitisation, a diminished empathy, attention deficits and a decline in school performance (Prokarym, 2012:24).

5.2.3   Frustration and verbal delay

Learners' language development is a multifaceted process. This process cannot be understood without considering its relationship to other developmental domains. Language development in preschool years is related to the development of motor skills and behaviour problems (Wang, 2013: iii). The acquisition of language is a key developmental task of learners in the preschool years. Well-developed language skills assist learners in interactions with peers and adults. In the long-term learners' language skills during preschool lay the foundation for later accomplishment both socially and academically (Wang, 2013:1).

According to Wang (2013:8), one recommended mechanism explaining the association between language and aggression is peer rejection. Aggressive learners are frequently found to be less socially competent and rejection from peers leads to a reduced amount of language experience and can also lead to frustration and aggression.

Principal 2, Educator 1, Educator 2 and Support Staff Member 1 were unanimous in claiming that language delay causes frustration. Principal 2 stated it as follows:

> *"Three-year olds fight as they cannot express themselves by talking. They cannot communicate and this causes frustration. Language and learning barrier is a factor."*

Educator 1: mentioned that, "*One of the factors is frustration depending on verbal ability."* Educator 2 expanded on that:

> *"Delayed verbal skills cause frustration as learners are unable to express themselves verbally. Learners then 'speak' in a non-verbal manner as they started talking later. They use repetitive words to be understood and hence educators know when he is upset. When the learner started attending Speech, he was able to express himself better and the aggression subsided a lot."*

To further emphasise the triangular link between frustration, aggression and verbal delay, Wang (2013:36) states that the relationship between language and aggression is in compliance with theories of social adaption, where aggression is thought to be a social consequence of language delay. Learners with language delay cannot meet the communicative demands of their peers and other persons in their environment and this leads to frustration and peer rejection. Learners get into a 'negative social spiral', where language delay makes learners aggressive and the lack of learning opportunities caused by peer rejection further influence language development negatively. Thus, Support Staff Member 1's comment that factors for aggressive behaviour are, *"frustration, language delays"* supports Wang's research.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Bandura's work moved away from 'frustration' as his focus was on the environment and on social processes and this is evident in Samkange's (2015:1860), statement that Bandura focused on observable behaviour, as such recognising the role of the environment in learning and language acquisition and that he focuses on social cognitive principles of learning which are also relevant to the learning of language. Learners pay attention to some of the people they come into contact with and imitate their behaviour through observation. In observation, language is attained through the influence of others who are models (Samkange, 2015:1860).

Another perspective to see this from is from a South African one. One should first make note of the fact that with the onset of the dawn of democracy and the re-birth of South Africa in the early 1990s this led, whether by choice or circumstances, to the influx of numerous learners whose home language is an African one into school environments where the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) was English. When the LoLT differs from learners' home languages, this difference can be an educational barrier (MacKay, 2000:15) as these learners are encountered with the task of grasping the curriculum subject matter while concurrently learning English in which it is embedded and instructed (MacKay, 2000:i). As mentioned in the above paragraph, Bandura took into account the 'environment' in learning and language acquisition. Therefore, the SLT holds prominence in this respect as where such problems in learning English as a second language emerge in a school environment where English is the LoLT, this can become an obstacle and barrier to learning generally and learning support is therefore required. A classroom educator is primarily responsible for the identification and addressing of such barriers to learning because, according to MacKay (2014:12), "identification and intervention lie at the heart of inclusive education and must always be accompanied by appropriate support for the learner" (Department of Education, 2006:52 cited in MacKay, 2000:12).

Samkange (2015:1860) concurs with MacKay and solidifies the role of the educator in language development and acquisition whose undertaking is to reward and motivate learners to attempt what they observe. Samkange boldly makes this statement by using the foundation of the SLT. The educator should be a good model for learners to learn language skills from the educator and others within the school environment. In many instances failure to be successful in their schoolwork leads to frustration and an additional lack of motivation. This

often leads to behavioural problems, which find an outlet in aggression, negativity and destructiveness.

5.2.4   Social skills

Walumoli (2016:34), notably states that the basic issue with aggressive learners is the lack of basic social skills essential for developing a supportive friendship network. Some of the social skills consist of greetings, initiating conversation, understanding the listener, empathising, apologising and problem solving.

Many parents do not practice these skills thus ending up being poor role models to their own children. Consistent with this view, Educator 2 pointed out:

> "*A lack of social skills is a contributory factor as well as they battle to make friends. They are either the 'best of friends' or 'worst of enemies'. He would purposefully break his 'friends' Lego in order to get a reaction.*"

Physical aggression during the preschool years may be an influential factor in the development of the self, cognitive skills and/or social skills, which may subsequently serve to contribute to the manifestation or inhibition of antisocial behaviour and physical aggression during later stages in development (Trainor, 2011:9-10).

Raaijmakers (2008:13) corroborates the latter by stating that learners with aggressive behaviour or DBD often exhibit inadequate social skills and, as a result, are regularly rejected by peers, ultimately resulting in social isolation. Social isolation might lead to associations with delinquent or antisocial peers, which is regarded as an important predictor of DBD or aggressive behaviour, particularly in adolescence. Deviant or delinquent behaviour might be learned by imitating antisocial peers and is facilitated by reciprocal encouragement.

5.2.5   Academics

Walumoli (2016:6) contends that one of the contributors to poor academic performance is an aggressive tendency socialised in these learners. Walumoli (2016:14), states that learners may also demonstrate aggressive behaviours by fighting, bullying, biting others and interrupting activities, among others. When learners are aggressive, they are likely to have

poor relationships with educators and peers. This will negatively influence their academic progress.

Poor relationships between the educator and the learner lead to lower levels of scaffolding thus poor acquisition of key concepts. On the same note, aggressive tendencies may give rise to low task completion, poor class activity and higher absenteeism. This makes the education progress of the learner to be poor and leads to education wastages. Poor educator-relationships and low academic performance may cause more aggressive behaviour tendencies.

Principal 3 noted that the policy of inclusion in South Africa is creating problems for learners as they are placed inappropriately into the academic mainstream:

"Inclusion in mainstream should not happen and Technical schools should be opened for those that are not academically inclined so learners can find a skill that provides positive outlet for them. There is no scope for artistic learners or skills-based learning such as electricians, plumbers. Aggression leads to frustration by Grade 1".

Phase Head 1 believed that,
"The inability to cope with the curriculum leads to immense frustration. There is no retention in Grade R however suggestions are made for learners to repeat and parents don't accept it. Hence the problem persists in further grades. The language of the school is not the same as at home. A child's emotional intelligence versus a child's intellectual intelligence."

Aggressive behaviours in learners do not to a great extent lower their performance. However, there is an indication that aggressive behaviours affect their general academic progress. Task completion and class participation are negatively affected. Aggressive learners' academic performance was average, and they showed low class participation and task completion (Walumoli, 2016:78).

Educator 1 was of the opinion that *"Another factor is an inability to perform, avoidance of task leads to aggressive behaviour."* Educator 1 and Educator 6 noted that *'attention'* is a factor.

Educator 1 believed that when they were unable to perform, *"They are then attention seeking and if no attention is received, they move to negative behaviour."* Educator 6 had a slightly different take on attention. She noted that a *"Lack of attention is a factor and then children resort to negative attention as it is still attention for them."*

Severely disruptive social behaviour and particularly aggression in the early years has been alluded to as a primary cause of both early and later occurring academic underachievement, the need for special education, and problems with truancy and school dropout. Highly aggressive learners are perceived as less academically successful, more behaviourally disruptive and less motivated in class (Walumoli, 2016:30).

5.3   CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to identify the contributory factors that lead to aggressive behaviour. The voices of the participants, using empirical data, integrated with literature and theory suggested factors belonging to two broad domains, namely the biological and the environment. The biological factors identified include genetics and neurological aspects. The environmental factors include family, divorce attachment, parenting styles, modelling and media. Coupled with these factors were frustration and verbal delay, social skills and academics that play a role as well. In view of the findings presented and linking them to the existing literature regarding the factors that lead to aggressive behaviour, they run parallel to each other. The findings are located in the South African context.

This study illustrates that multiple factors are contributing to the nature of aggression. This directs to the complexity of dealing with aggression and disruptive behaviour. The findings show that participants consider both biological and environmental factors as leading to aggression and aggressive behaviour of Grade R learners. They also suggest the necessity to have a team of professionals working with parents to address the issues of aggressive behaviour. The participants such as principals, phase heads, educators and support staff together with the parents should comprise of the team. This means that dealing with anger and aggression is intricate and requires efforts from teams for a holistic approach. Multi professional teams need to be knowledgeable and skilled and they need to understand each other's disciplinary perspectives for an effective and holistic school-based model. Hence, if this is taken into account it can only be successful if multi-professional teams work in partnership with each other and, according to (Sandall, McLean, & Smith, 2000; Anderson,

2007:38), multidisciplinary consultation and collaboration also are necessary as specialists in various fields can assist uniquely in managing learners' behaviour. Learners exhibiting challenging behaviours may be more likely to respond positively to interventions that consider a range of perspectives.

Principals, phase heads, educators and support staff together with the parents embody their own set of knowledge and skills. The team needs to pool its resources to create a holistic approach. The principals are the heads and their perspectives on aggression and aggressive behaviour are important, as there are strategies that the principal and phase head can implement from a managerial side.

The educators' knowledge, skills and experience in working with learners will complement the team. The support staff are central participants in the team as they are the major role players in the initiation, development and implementation of guidance workshops and counselling sessions for parents and learners. Parents are of vital importance in this structure as they are the figures for primary socialisation and are able to provide pertinent information on their children, which will assist all role-players involved in secondary socialisation (Daniels, 2013:43). Thus, the team should comprise of multiple actors working together to create a holistic support approach.

The next chapter will delve into the approaches, methods and lines of intervention for aggressive behaviour. Furthermore, it will enquire into how the school can support parents to deal with learner aggression and aggressive behaviour from the participants' perspective.

CHAPTER SIX

LINES OF INTERVENTION FOR DEALING WITH AGGRESSION AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

6.1   INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to explore the lines of intervention for dealing with aggression and aggressive behaviour. There are three themes that are discussed in this chapter. It begins with parents' needs and vulnerabilities. This is followed by types of interventions deemed appropriate and the last theme focuses on techniques and behaviours for dealing with aggression and aggressive behaviour. The voices of the participants are used to explore the issues that are important to consider for the development of school-based interventions for the guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour.

6.2   PARENTS' NEEDS AND VULNERABILITIES

Finding a line of intervention for dealing with aggression and aggressive behaviour is complex and requires multiple intervention routes and, as noted in the last chapter, a holistic response. Walumoli (2016:15) believes that with appropriate interventions children who are aggressive can also excel in their education. Child care programmes, social skills development, parent and community training, and guidance and counselling programmes can overturn the destructive effects of aggressive behaviours of the children if they are well thought through. This can lead to enhanced class activity participation, improved task completion, reduced dropout rates and absenteeism. Class performance of these learners can also be improved (Walumoli 2016:15).

In this study parents were valued as primary educators who set the parameters for aggression and aggressive behaviour that is influenced by both genetic and environmental factors. School-based staff felt that parents needed to be less emotional and pay more attention to their children's behaviour and request assistance when required. In the study parents were amenable to the idea of support and guidance.

Parent 1 mentioned the following:

> *"I wouldn't mind anyone offering guidance on how as a parent I can help my child. Often you are so lost in the day to day running of a household especially as a working parent I can use the advice, etc. "*

Similarly, Parent 3 expressed her need for help in specific aspects in the following excerpt:

> *"Social skills for kids, discussion for what is causing the triggering of aggression and solutions, discussion on what parents can do at home to teach kids appropriate reactions and acknowledge that this is stressful for parents who do not condone or encourage this behaviour."*

With regard to social skills, Walumoli (2016:34) contends that some of the social skills that learners lack includes greetings, initiating conversations, comprehending the listener, empathising, apologising and problem solving. Parents may not essentially practice these skills and thus end up being inadequate role models to their own children (Walumoli, 2016:34). According to Solt (2017:5), role-models, most often parents, are vital in the process of teaching children how to communicate and resolve conflicts. It is therefore imperative that the programmes in training and counselling learners in developing social skills be initiated and followed through. Baer and Bandura (1963:592; Solt, 2017:8), wrote *"children frequently reproduce entire parental-role behaviours – including the appropriate mannerisms, voice inflections, and attitudes"*. Hence, if this intrinsic motivation to reproduce behaviours from parental role-models has already been established outside of conflict times, then it holds much weight that children would model their parent's actions during times of conflict as well. Many scholars have applied social learning theory to teaching and managing conflicts in children.

In the study parents were seeking consistency in the approaches that were used by the school to help their children. Parent 2 had the following to say:

> *"School should at all times be consistent. Staff should treat pupils/other staff with the same respect that they believe the pupils should treat them with. Children pick up on double standards very quickly and don't handle hypocrites well. So, if my kids are taught to have good manners then same should true of how I/we did with them."*

Parents were also struggling to serve as role models. Educator 4 and Educator 5 recognised modelling as key to optimal child development and therefore the need for interventions if this was at risk. They stated their ideas as follows:

> Educator 4: "*Remind parents to be good role-models in everyday life (everyday behaviour). Between the ages of four and Grade 1 they are in the middle of their emotional development,*"

> Educator 5: *"Being good role models to children and not fighting in front of them."*

O'Rorke (2006:72), states that according to Bandura, in social situations people often learn much more speedily simply by observing the behaviours of others. Humans seem to acquire large sections of new behaviours all at once through observation alone (O'Rorke, 2006:72). With this having been said, it is imperative that parents model appropriate behaviour for their children as, according to the SCLT, learners develop cognitive patterns that support the employment of aggression as a conventional means to achieve preferred results through observing others being triumphant at using aggression, direct tuition, or through mastery experience. First, parents can act as aggressive models but, later on, other similar peers serve as the most influential figures for the child. Additionally, friends can be particular, powerful models and strengthen each other's aggression-encouraging cognitions and aggressive behaviour (Card & Hodges, 2006; Peets, 2008:11).

Parents can be a stumbling block to helping their own children. Educator 2 raised the point that, *"Parents should be open to accept advice"*. Educator 3, however, commented on parents' resistance to accepting responsibility for their children's aggressive behaviour. The excerpt below illustrates the blame-game and shifting of responsibility by parents who fear being isolated:

> *"Parents don't accept that their children have aggressive behaviour and they don't want to be alienated by other parents. Parents tend to pass the blame to the teachers. However, they have been the primary caregiver for five years before their child has started school. It is easier to blame other children or the teachers than themselves. Thus parents need to attend workshops to assist them."*

Parents were also taking an aggressive stance and some participants felt that the school was encouraging this behaviour. Educator 3 pointed out that, *"The school enables negative parent behaviour by allowing them to be aggressive and to bully teachers"*. Educator 4 felt that there was the erroneous belief that this was helpful. This was expressed as follows: *"The school believes that they are supporting parents by giving in to their demands, but it is a false sense of support."*

Educator 4 strongly stated that, *"Parents are in denial and don't accept feedback. Parents need to be more accepting of guidance and support that is offered by teachers."* Grade Head 2 concurred by explaining that:

> *"Parents need to be accepting/supportive and open to trying different things/ideas, be open to different types of learning and approaches, and follow a holistic approach."*

Educator 1, however, felt that:

> *"It takes a long time to get support from parents and for them to accept the message from the school. They sometimes only start accepting information after a few meetings. Parents should accept help when they are struggling. Parents are defensive and must be encouraged to become involved in school activities, as they are often not involved.*

Support Staff Member 3 agreed regarding *"continuous parental involvement."*

Participants were sensitive to the fact that parents were feeling vulnerable and inadequate and therefore needed support. Gardner and Shaw (2008:888) put forward that, although augmenting parenting skills is a key part of intervention for behaviour problems, it is imperative to assist the parents to recognise that they are not essentially the foremost cause of the problem, that rather they are the greatest solution. With regard to parent support, Educator 1 had the following to say:

"Parents need to be supported, encouraged and not blamed as they become au fait with the information of negative information for the first time in Grade R and they deny it until the child progresses into further grades where it is a lot more evident. Parents view the child's behaviour as a reflection of their own life and they 'close up' if blame is felt."

Support Staff Member 2 also supported a humane and compassionate approach:

"Reminding them that they too are human and may need a moment to calm down and re-direct their frustration towards the child's behaviour. Unconditional understanding towards the child and parents are needed."

Thus, it can be surmised that parents needs and vulnerabilities form an important aspect for consideration in any intervention model. Parents mentioned that they would appreciate guidance on behaviour management for them to implement at home and social skills to be taught at school for their children. Consistency at school should form a baseline in terms of how staff relate to each other and towards learners. Educators on the other hand believed that parents should be role models for their children and be involved in school activities. On the flip side it was mentioned that parents need to be supported as well and should not have to take all the responsibility for their children's behaviour.

6.3   TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS DEEMED APPROPRIATE

In the study different type of interventions were seen as appropriate for working with parents and their children. The first type of intervention identified was parental meetings which were regarded as an important method of communication with parents. Support Staff Member 1 felt that there should be meetings for communication of information. Grade Head 1 and 2 noted that meetings with parents were important to bolster communication.

Grade Head 1: "*Regular meetings need to be held to keep parents informed and updated on behaviour. "*

Grade Head 2: *"Quite a few meetings need to be held".*

The second type of intervention identified was in assisting parents to comprehend that the learner's behaviour is beyond their control, an assessment is an important type of intervention that assists in providing clarity. A preschool ADHD intervention provides an excellent example of this approach. The first part of the intervention entails helping parents to understand and empathise with the individual temperamental characteristics of the child with ADHD. According to Gardner and Shaw (2008:888), it is important to weigh up how some of the parents' expectations and skills may need to be tailored to fit better with the child. Following this, parents work on setting new expectations and limits, and practice strategies to manage the child and change symptomatic behaviour. As the greater part of learners with ADHD present comorbid conduct problems, such approaches are also pertinent to changing oppositional behaviour. Following assessment, intervention focuses on applying cognitive–behavioural parenting principles in an individualised manner to the child and family (Gardner & Shaw, 2008:889). Therefore, it is important to take cognisance of how ADHD learners should be managed. Parent 6 made the following comment about her daughter who she said is on "*the extreme side of ADHD":*

"She is now on 20 mg of Ritalin, so hopefully this helps with the social interaction. Our daughter was very anxious, and this caused her to lash out. So if the anxiety plus poor concentration and impulsivity is under control, the social interaction should improve."

The third type of intervention identified was counselling as it also features as an important intervention to help learners with aggression and aggressive behaviour. Both behaviour modification and parental guidance feature as important. Principal 1 and 2 concurred that counselling is a positive route. Principal 2 placed on record that, *"continuous parent counselling and group counselling"* is an approach that was used and it was a successful method. Principal 2 further stated that the school can support parents by way of, *"counselling and it must be from a behaviour modification expert and not the principal."* Walumoli (2016:36) argues that school administrators should always rally parents and the community

when dealing with behaviour deviancy among learners. Whilst this is the case, it has to be acknowledged that they would not have specialist knowledge and approaches that include a multiple team approach. Principal 3 mentioned that, "*approaches that were successful are counselling to parents*". The latter was further supported by Support Staff Member 3 who believed that, "*behaviour modification and parental guidance*" is a valuable approach.

The fourth type of intervention identified was workshops which would be directed towards parents also featured as an important way to connect with parents whose children display aggression and aggressive behaviour. Educator 1 was aware of the resistances and isolation experienced by parents and therefore noted the importance of "*Talking to targeted parents through a workshop so that parents feel that they are not the only ones experiencing it.*" It was also stated by Educator 1 that:

> "*Educators require advice from researchers that have researched aggressive behaviour. Researchers can also provide parents with assistance.*"

There was recognition that workshops needed to be used in combination with other types of interventions. Educator 3 stated that children with aggression and aggressive behaviour would benefit from both "'*parenting workshops and family therapy,*" Support Staff Member 1 was of the same opinion and indicated that the school should "*run workshops*" and furthermore "*offer support such as therapy (Psychotherapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy)*". Educator 3 mentioned that the specific aspects that needed to be addressed such as, "*Equipping parents with the skills to enforce boundaries and discipline in the home. Emotional support for the parents and parent workshops.*" Support Staff Member 3 noted that, "*It needs to be based on the psycho-educational model and small groups.*"

In the study it was recognised that specialists should be running the workshops for them to be of value and accepted as authentic by the parents. The developmental starting point of the workshops was an issue that was raised. Educators felt that it should begin in early childhood. Early childhood is the formative years and if interventions are carried out early, their influence might be greater than in the later years. Neuroscience informs us about the critical periods and according to Yoleri (2014:1), preschool education is a critical period for cognitive growth, school readiness and success, language development, learning motivation, as well as social and emotional development of learners.

In fact, behavioural problems are quite widespread amongst preschool learners, due to the fact that they do not always effortlessly acclimatise to the more structured environment of school. Educator 6 was aware of the importance of intervening early and felt that parental guidance should be starting in the early years with consideration of needs of parents and communities.

When working with learners suitable methods have to be secured. School guidance and counselling programmes for young learners helps them to understand themselves, deal with their challenges and improve their lives. It furnishes educators with the opportunity to understand (Walumoli, 2016:36). Guidance helps to deal with aggression even before the behaviour arises. Guiding learners' behaviour is crucial because it ensures that learners learn well. Moreover, guidance guarantees lifelong success since it lays the foundation for lifelong learning. It averts potential delinquency problems and assists learners to live in civility and be accountable in society (Walumoli, 2016:37). Thus, the fifth type of intervention identified school guidance and counselling programmes for learners.

Educator 3 and Support Staff Member 1 showed sensitivity to young learners' emotionality and communication abilities and thereby advocated for appropriate lines of intervention that are supportive of young learners' development. They had the following to say:

> Educator 3: *"Strategies on how to acknowledge how the other person feels and acknowledge how the learner feels."*

> Support Member 1: *"Aggression is usually a child's only assessable way of communicating something. So what they are trying to say needs to be worked out."*

As noted in the previous findings chapter, tuning into the learners' needs for developing interventions for aggression and aggressive behaviour has to take into account the need for setting boundaries (discussed in Chapter 5) and limit setting (discussed in Chapter 5). According to (Howe, 2005 cited in DiBenedetto, 2016:2), limit setting refers to the capability of parents (or caregivers) to create and maintain parameters around a child's behaviour.

(Sharp, Fonagy & Goodyer, 2006 in DiBenedetto, 2016:2), further postulate that the quality and manner in which limit setting is fostered can affect behaviour and understanding of expectations from parents and other caregivers. Grade Head 2, Educator 5 and Support Staff Member 1 all believe that having boundaries in place is imperative for learners.

The importance of boundary setting is articulated in the following excerpts:

> Grade Head 2: *"It is not about the parents but the child's welfare; parents need to have boundaries and structures in place."*
> Educator 5: *"Routine, rules, boundaries and consistency."*
> Support Staff Member 1: *"I feel that boundaries and discipline at home should be addressed as a precursor to a school-based intervention."*

It was also apparent that parenting practices required broader reflection in relation to contextual influences. Previous research has shown that parenting practices, such as communication, involvement, and limit setting, have the powerful and most direct influence on young learners' problem behaviours. Particularly, the absence of any of these constructive parenting practices may be linked with problematic behaviour in young learners (Romanchych, 2014:10-11). This is, however, not a straight-forward issue. Principal 2 and Grade Head 2 felt that the schooling notions of parenting must be consistent with the parenting styles. They were targeting "sameness" and universalism. This view, however, is very narrow given the multiple parenting styles and how they are influenced by different contexts impacting on the lives of parents and their learners as well as cultural practices. The participants picked up anomalies with divorced parents. The excerpt below by Principal 2 and Grade Head 2 illustrates this:

> Principal 2: *"The same parenting style must be used and use the school's system so that you work as a team."*

> Grade Head 2: *"The same parenting styles as sometimes divorced parents don't have the same routine".*

In Chapter 6, it was clear that lines of intervention are situation-bound and complex and therefore a team response for holistic intervention was advocated as evidence provided for multiple members to be involved. According to Gardner and Shaw (2008:886), from prior dialogue with numerous interacting factors that play a role in behavioural problems in the birth to five period, it will be apparent that intervention requires assessment of the presenting problems from the perspective of family and caregiver influences, as well as the child's development and physical health. The authors also note that intervention begins with broad assessment of the child's health, development and temperament, the overall family and care giving setting, and a meticulous evaluation of the regularity, length and situational determinants of the existing problems.

In particular, assessment should converge on parenting approaches and other situational factors that may elicit or sustain the problem every day. All of this is done with the aim, as noted by Principal 3, "*To guide the parents on how to discipline the child in a positive way.*"

This "leading" is not an easy process. There must be a system that helps to move the different types of intervention in the right direction. Principal 1 spoke about assessments and onward movements of referrals that moved beyond the scope of the educator, *"If it is beyond the Grade Head's expertise then they are referred to therapists,"* and Principal 3 would "*recommend a psychological assessment or counselling".*

The participants were able to share ideas on the ideal type of intervention for aggression and aggressive behaviour which is important for building the model emanating from this study. A systems approach was advocated. This ideally links to Principal 1, Principal 3, Phase Head 1 and Support Staff Member 2's responses respectively:

> Principal 1: "*Need to work with parents that need the help as a lot are in denial."*

> Principal 3: *"The School-based Support Team (SBST) should support teachers in the class and have interviews with the relevant parents."*

> Phase Head 1: *"Approach should be from a multi-disciplinary perspective."*

Support Staff Member 2: *"All role players in the child's life play an integral part of understanding and managing the behaviour. Working collaboratively, i.e. with teachers, parents, child psychologist, psychiatrist (should medical intervention be needed), need to meet regularly to monitor behaviour and learn coping mechanisms to deal with the outbursts."*

Thus, it can be concluded that types of interventions that are deemed appropriate are that communication regarding the behaviour of learners is crucial in building relationships with parents and educators. It was also brought to light that parent involvement, boundaries and limit setting are vital. Parenting styles that are used should be the same between both parents.

Support for counselling sessions and workshops to be held for parents as well as support such as therapy (psychotherapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy) were mentioned. In addition, parents will be exposed to an array of parenting styles and they will be able to implement the ones that they can identify with.

6.4 TECHNIQUES AND BEHAVIOURS FOR DEALING WITH AGGRESSION AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Interventions for aggression and aggressive behaviour required the adoption of certain techniques and behaviours. Participants shared what was proving to be useful. The school managers followed the same protocol when dealing with aggressive behaviour. They noted that remaining calm was critical. Principal 1 stated the following: *"I talk through the situation with them. I use a calming mechanism: learners sit quietly and read."* Principal 3 also picked up on the importance of remaining calm and mentioned the following: *"As an adult you need to calm the child down and don't treat the situation with aggression."* The Grade Head 1 concurred with this view, *"Avoid the 'head to head' contact/conflict."* There was also a parent who referred to the use of calmness to deal with aggression. Parent 2 put it in this way, *"We would discuss it (the problem) calmly."*

The calmness allows for more thoughtful responses to come to the fore. Principals in the study were giving the learners opportunities to explain their behaviour. The use of questions was a key way in which the staff could reflect on their behaviour, interpret the situation and hence provide alternatives to their negative reaction. Principal 1 provided examples of the types of questions she used which were open-ended:

"We then talk through the incident using open-ended questions such as "Why did you do it?" Often the response is, "He hit me first". Another question is, "Would you like it if someone did it to you?"

The Grade Head 2 found that "why" questions were valuable to help learners to talk about their actions and come up with solutions.

"Why do you think I am unhappy?" and talk through the action and asking "why" questions if learners need to verbalise and correct their own behaviour providing their own solutions through teacher guidance."

Phase Head 1 used probing questions to learn and inform:

"Talk through the action, probing questions in a sensitive appropriate way, ask questions and keep the dialogue process open and explain what is unacceptable."

Principal 3 made mention of listening to learners to understand their perspective on what has happened. She had the following to say: "*Listen to the child and try to reason and explain why it is wrong to be so aggressive."* Research in early childhood has shown that listening is an important pedagogy for educators. According to Shaik and Ebrahim (2015:1), learners should be viewed as people, and not as objects of concern. They must be listened to. Furthermore, (Howard, 1991 cited in Njeru, 2012:14), identify several strategies for caregivers that help learners learn positive behaviours and one of these strategies includes listening carefully to learners and helping them learn to use words to express their feelings.

As noted above, the participants were putting effort into getting learners to reflect on their negative behaviour. Reflectiveness is one of the four learning muscles of Building Learning Power. According to Claxton (2014:26), *reflectiveness* encompasses a cluster of habits that permit learners to be self-aware, self-evaluative and self-managing in their learning. Hence, child reflection is about learners having the skill to be self-aware, self-evaluative and self-managing of their behaviour. They have to think about their actions. They also have to engage using their metacognitive skills where they think about their own thinking. In the study it was apparent that parents were sentient of the significance of reflection. The excerpts below show this:

Parent 2: "Give the kids time to reflect on the discussion."

Parent 3: "We deal with unacceptable behaviour by explaining why it is not acceptable."

Parent 4: "Take him aside and talk about good choices and bad choices. Why what he did was not a good idea and consequences."

There were also some popular techniques that were being used by the participants. For behaviour modification the educators resorted to rewards and consequences. Educator 5 explicitly stated that *"We work on reward vs. consequence."* Research has shown that this technique has its advantages and disadvantages. According to Njeru (2012: iii), the use of rewards with preschoolers by both parents and educators influences discipline by promoting respect for school rules. In the same way, the use of punishment to a great extent impinges on discipline by decreasing bad behaviour and encouraging desired behaviour instead. There are, however, a small number of cases in which the use of rewards and punishment does not achieve the preferred result though this is exceptional. To elaborate on the function of rewards and punishment, psychologist Albert Bandura asserts that learners learn aggressive behaviour mainly by observing it. Learners are great imitators, and they replicate the models around them - family, educators, peers, neighbours, television, and so on. Simultaneously, they observe and experience the rewards, punishments, and emotional situations associated with aggressive and anti-social behaviour. When they observe that behaviour is reinforced, they are likely to attempt it for themselves; when they experience the reinforcement directly, they will probably reproduce it (Bandura, 1977; Alvarado, 2011:7).

Munn (1999 cited in Njeru, 2012:32), states that rewards were also seen to influence the other learners to behave well so they can also earn the same rewards. Similarly, if a child who was constantly misbehaving was rewarded for any good behaviour displayed, the result was that the rate of misbehaviour went down and in some instances stopped completely. This was also observed to influence other learners who were misbehaving to change their ways so that the educator can reward them again.

According to Njeru (2012:44), the use of rewards promotes respect for school rules as well as class attendance. It also deters learners from engagement in deviant behaviour. The same case applies to the use of punishment in that its use leads to restriction of deviant behaviour and encouraging respect for school property. This was, however, not the case in all instances as some learners did not react to punishment.

Principal 2 and Educator 1 both believe in positive reinforcement. According to Rumfola (2017:5), it is only when learners have faith in their positive role models that they are able to gain from positive reinforcement in their classrooms. Through research it is verified that learners will benefit from positive reinforcement in the classroom if used effectively by disciplined staff. Rumfola (2017:9), states that this technique of positive reinforcement has learners enthusiastically contributing and learning in the classroom. Grade Head 2 used the *"smiley face system (a smile for good behaviour and a sad face for negative behaviour)."* Support Staff Member 2 stated, "*Praise positive behaviour however still remain firm, a reward system,*" and Parent 4, *"praising good behaviour works like a charm."* The praise given to one learner becomes the goal for another learner (Rumfola, 2017:10).

The rationale of positive reinforcement is to have learners actively benefitting from being present and learning in the classroom (Rumfola, 2017:11). In order for positive reinforcement to become a valuable technique in the classroom, educators *must* know their learners' needs (Rumfola, 2017:18).

Regarding negative reinforcement, Rumfola (2017:20) states that Donald Baer who studies the effects of punishing learners describes punishment as twofold: "a) a presentation of a negative reinforce for a response or b) the removal of a positive reinforce for a response". (Baer cited in Rumfola, 2017:20), states that the extraction of positive reinforcement as a chastising technique is an effective technique that can be employed in a classroom. However, (Dad, 2010:127 cited in Rumfola, 2017:20), states that educators need to continuously assess their punishing behaviour. The purpose is to keep the learners in the classroom and to keep them relaxed while learning. Educators who punish out of rage are less likely to yield any results, and the learners are more likely to bring to a close their relationship with the educator.

Wolf, McLaughlin and Williams (2006:22), explain that the use of time-out as an adequate therapeutic procedure has gained wide acceptance in schools, clinics, and hospitals. Time-out is a behaviour change technique used to lessen the occurrence of a target behaviour and is most effective for behaviours that are preserved either by attention or tangible reinforces and if there is high differentiation between the time-out environment and the reinforcing environment, often referred to as time-in.

The time-out technique involves placing a child in an environment restricted in sensory stimulation. Time-out has been effective in diminishing such behaviours as tantrums, inappropriate social behaviours, yelling, aggression, time spent out-of-seat and inappropriate verbalisations. Principal 3 stated, *"If necessary, the child needs to be removed for a certain time."* Phase Head 1 made the same point in this way, *"Take break away, time out at the "Thinking Desk."* The Grade Head 2 remarked that, *"time-out, take the learner away from that play area for a period of time."* Thus, from the responses of the participants, it is apparent that exclusionary time-out was used as a directive.

The participants shared a collective strategy of using time-out or taking away privileges as a consequence.

Educator 6 recognised that "time-out" was a limiting approach. She had the following to say:

> *"We are limited to the approaches that we can use by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). We use time-out; take away toys, outings and computer lessons as a consequence."*

Parents were also using time-out at home. The following excerpts confirm this:

> *Parent 3: "We deal with unacceptable behaviour by: time-out, occasional hiding, removal of screen time privileges and saying sorry."*

> *Parent 5: "Remove him from the situation. Isolate him and allow him to calm down. There is no reasoning with him when he is in a state."*

> *Parent 6: "Time out to calm her down in her room, very firm talking, crosses on her star chart and punishment (no treats, no TV)."*

As noted previously, structure and consistency were considered to be valuable building blocks for dealing with aggression and aggressive behaviour. Educator 2, Educator 5 and Support Staff Member 2 respectively believed that structure and consistency are key to promoting positive behaviour:

> Educator 2: *"The more structure that is present in the class the better and adult guidance."*

> Educator 5: *"consistency and for the parent and teacher to work on the same strategies even on a weekend."*

> Support Staff Member 2: *"prepare the child for any unscheduled changes in the classroom, structured and predictable for the child."*

Educator 1 believed that, *"Educational psychologists also have a role to play as they can provide help to parents."* According to Settle (2010:22), therapeutic interventions are often sought after by parents, educators, or courts because of parental divorce. It is essential for clinicians to comprehend the outcome of this research as it connects to the learners' behaviour post-separation and divorce. Their results imply that learners exposed to all levels of parental conflict exhibit some form of depression post-separation. Clinicians may overlook many of the behavioural implications resulting from high conflict within the home if the circumstances surrounding the separation and divorce are not further explored. Clinicians have the opportunity to work with learners, parents, and families in order to concentrate on parent communication, child and adult emotional reactions, behavioural plans, structure and consistency. Grade Head 1 further stated that, *"Schools must be in contact with therapists as they offer assistance to teachers."* Grade Head 2 expanded on the latter statement that, *"parents must allow teachers to speak to therapists for recommendations and to be in contact with them for advice and feedback."*

From a therapeutic perspective, the approaches that support staff use to deal with aggressive behaviour was noteworthy. Support Staff Member 1 provided the following description:

> "*Within the playroom, I track and reflect the emotion, address the behaviour, enquire around it and discuss appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. If a boundary needs to set, I set it.*"

Grade Head 1 noted that, "*Choices are given as an option; you can choose to behave; thereafter a consequence is given. Learners lose a privilege.*" This links directly with Glasser's Reality Therapy. In the 1950s, Glasser's Reality Therapy emphasised the use of choice as the cause of behaviour, good or bad, and thus directed educators to guide learners towards making value judgments about their behaviour. By making value judgements, learners would come to grasp the magnitude of "good" choices in behaviour and continually make them again in the future. Therefore, learners were taught the variance between a "good judgement", and a "bad judgement" (Kaliska 2002:8).

Parent 4 and Parent 6 bring to the fore the point that could possibly be overlooked. Parent 4 stated that *"sensory needs"* must be explored and Parent 6 strongly posited that the school should support parents to deal with learner aggression and aggressive behaviour:

> *"To understand where it comes from. That she just isn't naughty. She is frustrated. She has Tactile Defensiveness and Auditory Sensitivity"*.

Correspondingly, Davich (2005: ii), postulates that difficulties with sensory integration can to a great extent affect a child's development, behaviour and performance in the classroom. Learners who are battling with this dilemma may exhibit behaviours such as inattention, disruption, and avoidance of certain activities. Historically, occupational therapists chiefly put into operation sensory integration techniques. However, educators are beginning to identify this problem in the school setting and are requesting information about interventions that can be put into practice in the classroom.

Hence, it can be deduced that techniques and behaviours for dealing with aggression and aggressive behaviour encompass strategies such using a calming mechanism, listening to learners, using open-ended questions and allowing learners to reflect on their behaviour.

Glasser's Reality Therapy was discussed in this chapter under the scope of techniques and behaviours for dealing with aggression and aggressive behaviour. The advantages of rewards versus punishment and positive and negative discipline were also elucidated.

6.5   CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to discuss the approaches, methods and lines of intervention for aggressive behaviour by delineating it into three themes: parents' needs and vulnerabilities, types of interventions deemed appropriate and techniques and behaviours for dealing with aggression and aggressive behaviour. The findings on parents' needs and vulnerabilities show that the latter forms a key component in the development of an intervention model. Parents eloquently put forth that they would value guidance on behaviour management which they could then implement at home. Furthermore, they believed that social skills should be taught at school for their children. Uniformity should be prevalent at school in terms of how staff relate to each other and towards learners.

On the issue of types of intervention deemed appropriate, it was found that communication regarding the behaviour of the learner central in relationships between parents and educators.

It was emphasised that parent involvement, boundaries and limit setting are imperative. Parenting should be a collective effort whereby both parents implement the same parenting styles, especially with regards to divorced parents.

The techniques to be used to support parents were tabled by the participants as calming mechanisms, listening to learners, using open-ended questions and allowing learners to cogitate on their behaviour. Glasser's Reality Therapy was elaborated upon whereby learners were encouraged to make 'value judgements'. The benefits of rewards versus punishment system and constructive and destructive discipline were also elucidated.

The knowledge produced from the preceding chapters (Chapter 4 and Chapter 5) and Chapter 6 will provide beneficial data for my subsequent chapter. Hence, the next chapter will focus on developing a guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A SCHOOL-BASED GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT MODEL TO ASSIST PARENTS AND LEARNERS WITH AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 7 summarises the three findings chapters (Chapters 4, 5 and 6) and shows its relevance to building a model. It presents the model as a "Tree of Nurturance" which is helpful to build a school-based guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour. The model is built on the premise that every child needs constructive support in context to thrive and experience optimal development.

7.2 THE CONCEPTS OF AGGRESSION AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

According to Horton (2010:10), the explanation of aggression, how aggression is maintained, and the choice to use one type of aggression over another can be explained through differing theoretical perspectives. This thesis is grounded in the SLT and SCLT as these theories contend that behaviours are learned through modelling; in order to imitate a model one must observe the model and the reinforcement received, preserve the information gained by the model, have the competence to imitate the model and execute the modelled behaviour (Horton, 2010:11).

We learnt that the concept of aggression is emotional, physical and verbal. The findings in Chapter 4 revealed that the physical and emotional states interconnect with the verbal to create hostile behaviour. Human and animal species including objects face the wrath arising from aggression. Frustration is a key element in aggressive behaviour and what can also be deduced from the participants is that bullying is a factor as well.

Chapter 5 is central to the study as it furnishes the factors that lead to aggressive behaviour. In this chapter the nature versus nurture discussion is dominant and spells out the biological factors which comprise of genetics and neurological aspects and the environmental factors which consist of family, divorce, attachment, parenting styles, modelling and media.

Combined with these factors are frustration and verbal delay, social skills and academics. This study exemplifies the numerous factors contributing to the nature of aggression. This points to the complexity of dealing with aggression and disruptive behaviour.

Chapter 6 outlined the guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour based on the participants' point of view regarding a school-based parent guidance and support model for addressing aggression. The nucleus of the model is the development of social-emotional skills that will equip learners with the tools to regulate their emotions and verbalise them instead of responding in a hostile manner. The findings above helped to develop the Tree of Nurturance model for a guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour.

All three chapters provided multiple dimensions to consider for the building of the site-based model. This is fully explained in the next section.

7.3   THE TREE OF NURTURANCE MODEL
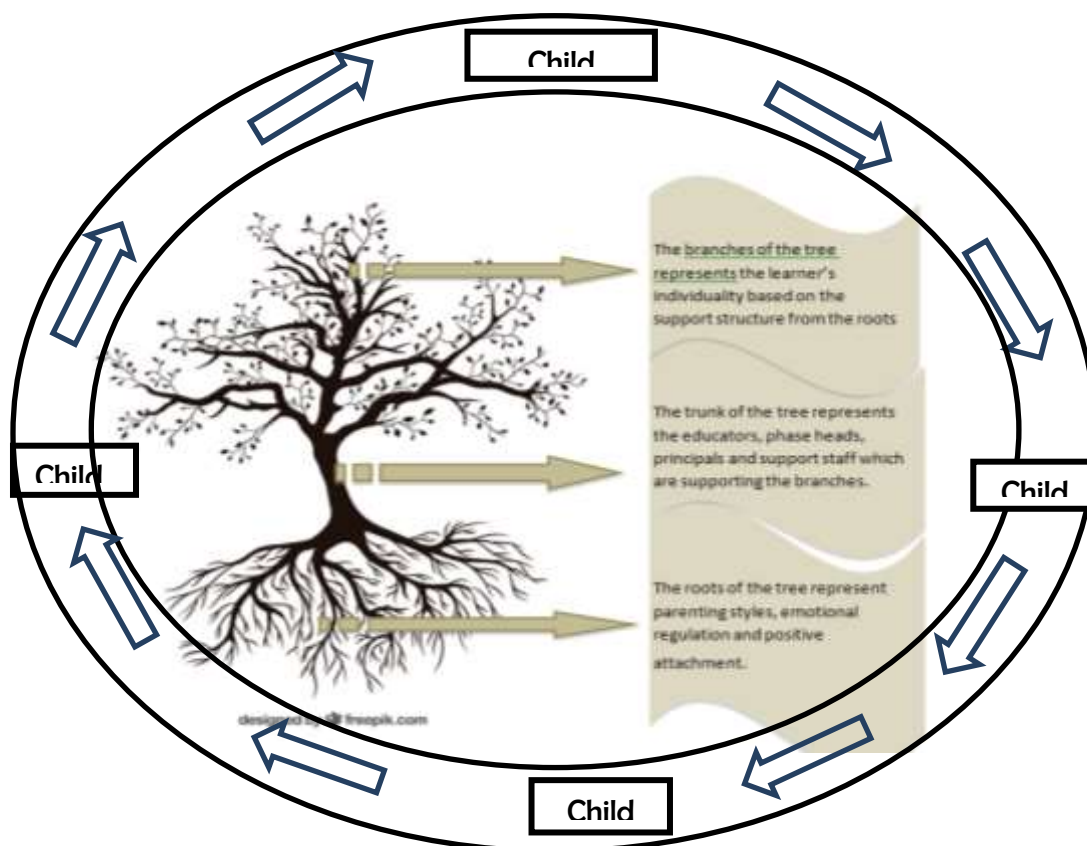
The branches of the tree represents the learner's individuality based on the support structure from the roots

The trunk of the tree represents the educators, phase heads, principals and support staff which are supporting the branches.

The roots of the tree represent parenting styles, emotional regulation and positive attachment.

Figure 7.3: 'The Tree of Nurturance'

7.3.1   A justification for the metaphor of a 'Tree of Nurturance'

The 'Tree of Nurturance' is a metaphor for growth and development in the context of risk such as aggression and aggressive behaviour. The diagram was accessed from the website referenced. However, the creation of the model's title (**'Tree of Nurturance')** is original to the author.

Additionally, nurturance in the early years requires all different role players to work in partnership for a holistic approach. Without question, teams are necessary for different types of responses to risky behaviour. For a school-based intervention model, this team can comprise of participants such as the principals, phase heads, educators and support staff together with the parents and the learner. Hence, the findings of this study confirm the importance of a holistic model which takes into account the micro actors and their roles for support.

Mahmoudi, Jafari, Nasrabadi and Liaghatdar (2012:178), provide enlightenment in that holistic education incorporates an extensive array of philosophical orientations and pedagogical practices. It focuses on *wholeness* and makes an effort to circumvent discounting any major aspects of the human experience. It also purports that educational experience promotes more balanced development. Attention is also paid to the cultivation of the relationship among the distinct qualities of the individual (intellectual, physical, spiritual, emotional, social and aesthetic), as well as the relationships between the individual and other people, the individual and the natural environment, the inner-self of learners and the external world, emotion and reason, and a distinctive discipline of knowledge and diverse forms of knowing. A holistic method as supported by this study includes the learner, parents, siblings and care givers, community and society, educators, phase head, principal and support staff.

7.3.2   The centrality of the child

In the "Tree of Nurturance" the child is both an actor and central focus on which all other adult actors premise their intervention either directly or indirectly. Lemmer (2007:220) puts forward that learners are the answer to successful school and family partnerships.

Indeed, in laying the foundation of the model, the learner is the central point of focus and surrounding the learner is a network of people ranging from parents, educators, phase heads and principals to support staff.

This is further validated by the statement from (Epstein, 1995:702; Lemmer, 2007:220), states that *"The unarguable fact is that students are the main actors in their education, development and success in school."* However, a support network can be successful only if all members are operating on a shared understanding of the key concept/s that drive any intervention.

With this in mind, the model amplifies the centrality of the child and everyone is receptive to the needs of the child who is experiencing aggression and aggressive behaviour. This is in keeping with child-focused intervention. Specifically, in the findings of Chapter 7, Grade Head 2 stated that, *"It is not about the parents but the child's welfare".* Learners are at the focal point as it is their interactions with their parents, siblings, environment, educators and peers that paved the pathway for the development of the model. It is through these relationships and the reactions that one can think about a responsive model.

Subsequently, I concur with Stivaros' statement (2007:83), in that an underpinning assumption of Urie Bronfenbrenner's (2001) bio-ecological theory of human development is that development cannot be understood through exclusive deliberation of the individual child but one must also delve into the complexity of his/her environment. According to (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:27; Stivaros, 2007:83), *'Development never takes place in a vacuum, it is always embedded and expressed through behaviour in a particular environment'.* The bio-ecological theory (as discussed in Chapter 2), places the child at the heart of his/her world, envisioned as a series of nested systems: micro-, meso-, exo- and macro (Stivaros, 2007:84). The child is at the centre of their own relationships and environment in their quotidian life and learning experiences (Stivaros, 2007:97). This study focused on the micro-level which is informed by the other levels that impact on the child directly and indirectly.

7.3.3 The roots – parents/caregivers

In terms of the findings relating to parents' needs and vulnerabilities, there was confirmation that parents are the primary care givers and that their position in the maturity of their child is

major. Any intervention model must be inclusive of parents/caregivers who feel part of the process of support rather than the 'problem'.

If parents/caregivers are isolated from the process, not only will it bode unfavourably in terms of their participation, but it will also negatively affect their personal well-being and this in turn will affect learners and their behaviour. In this study parents were vocal on the advantages of receiving guidance. They viewed it as enhancing their understanding and providing them with the skills on how to manage their children's behaviour. They believed that the implementation of social skills being taught at school would be a constructive way forward. This view was brought alive in Chapter 7 by Parent 1 and Parent 3:

> Parent 1: *"I wouldn't mind anyone offering guidance on how as a parent I can help my child."*

> Parent 3: *"Social skills for kids."*

In collecting the data from the participants, the process drew attention to the magnitude of communicating with parents, as they knew their children the best and the home was the source of valuable information. When parental knowledge and experiences are harnessed and valued, then they want to be involved and part of finding pathways to deal with problematic behaviour. Where they are distant and resistant, interventionists must consider the approach they are using for parental involvement.

This study advocates for an asset-based approach to working with parents as the primary socialisation agent. In order to comprehend the full effect of the asset-based approach, a clear definition is presented by Govere. It will first be defined from an Asset-Based Community Development model (ABCD). I found the ABCD model to be an extremely functional discipline to move towards in terms of parent workshops and Govere (2005:57), explains it most eloquently. The ABCD model promotes self-reliance, self-directing, and change from below. It insists on commencing with a transparent commitment to discovering a community's capacity and assets (Govere, 2005:57). According to (McDonald, 1997:115; Venter, 2013:6), the asset-based approach is a capacity focussed approach and has been referred to as a "half-full" glass approach.

Furthermore, Eloff (Venter, 2013:6) states that this post-modern method concentrates on resources, strengths, assets and capacities, yet also recognises existing needs. Intrinsic creativity, control and power form essential parts of the asset-based approach. With this approach in mind Venter (2013:6), combined the terms "asset-based approach" and "teaching" to form "asset-based teaching" The latter is a course of action where the educator teaches the learners to identify, mobilise and manage their individual, shared, physical and economical assets as well as resources within the relationships with others (Venter, 2013:7). Thus, in a parallel way I will combine the terms "asset-based approach" and "parenting" to construct the term "asset-based parenting" (Venter, 2013:6).

In the same manner as the ABCD model focuses on the capacity, talents, gifts and skills within the community, so will the "asset-based parenting" model. Using the above analogy of "asset-based parenting" would encompass offering parents guidance workshops and, instead of the presenter (ideally an educational psychologist) approaching the workshop from the angle of what parent skills they lack, the presenter will focus on and help parents identify the gifts, talents and skills they already possess and make parents feel valued. I have raised the featured points bound by the ABCD model. Hence, I assumed the asset-based approach which is important for the guidance and support model in the context of this study because it takes on the tone of an optimistic and constructive approach. It is germane in creating a partnership with parents thereby involving the primary stakeholders. Centred on the acknowledgement of parents' talents, gifts and skills, the asset-based parenting approach will stimulate and encourage parents towards more effective parenting methods and thus encourage them to develop a productive approach when engaging with their learners who display aggression.

Furthermore, it can also be an instrument that educators and the school management use in their communicative strategies with parents as they can draw in parents with a participatory approach. It then becomes a shared and cooperative approach whereby parents feel that their skills, talents and gifts are being recognised. In this way the school places priority on making the best use of parent resources and they make an effort to strengthen their relationship with parents by engaging parents as support rather than as clients or customers. The model promotes resourcefulness, independence and change using a bottom-up approach (Govere, 2005:57). Thus, the asset-based parenting will encourage empowerment and, as parents are the primary caregivers, the bottom-up approach is fitting.

By using this strategy, a plethora of opportunities will arise to initiate reciprocal communication between parents and the school as it constructs a platform for verbalisation as, according to Lemmer (2007:218), schools and families rarely share the same perception on what is desired or required.

In the same way, as each tree is given an opportunity to grow, it is supplemented with earth, water, sunshine, ensuring that it has enough space to grow to its full potential; the same analogy can be applied to parents who support their children. The foundations have to be strong - hence the reference to the roots which metaphorically and symbolically refer to parenting styles. Parents are responsible for '*providing earth, water, sunshine'* and ensuring that they have '*enough space to grow'* in their understanding of how to help themselves and their children to thrive optimally.

7.3.4   The trunk – the school-based team

The findings in this study emphasised the working together of teams to support parents and their children. In the Tree of Nurturance this is captured in the metaphor of the trunk. By way of amplification of this idea, the excerpt from Support Staff Member 2 is presented:

> "*All role players in the child's life play an integral part of understanding and managing the behaviour. Working collaboratively i.e. with teachers, parents, child psychologist, psychiatrist (should medical intervention be needed), need to meet regularly to monitor behaviour and learn coping mechanisms to deal with the outbursts.*"

It becomes evident in this chapter that a support network is essential in engaging with parents. The support network would include the participants (multi-professional team approach) constituting of principals, phase heads, educators and support staff for intervention with the parents. There will be additions for specific needs. The network of people involved in behaviour management of learners needs to have a shared conceptual understanding. This is attained through discussion, where all members are present and behaviour that is present in the classroom and home is discussed. This way of working provides better understanding of the problems at hand and how the learner can be supported. This will create a platform that results in the team having a shared conceptual understanding for joint action.

7.3.5 The branches – the learners' individuality and multiple ways to approach intervention with them and their parents

Learners are unique in stature, emotional composition, resilience and their overall being. Accordingly, the learners' individuality and the multiple ways to approach intervention with them and their parents need to be taken into consideration. In the Tree of Nurturance, their uniqueness is captured in the metaphor of the branches and the focus of action of all the other actors. Hence, the Maine Child Welfare Training Institute (2007:7), states that it is imperative to keep in mind the child's history, developmental stage and unique temperament when disciplining and supporting. To illustrate, when sending a child to their room for a time out (if in past they were locked in their room for days) might bring to mind strong feelings of trepidation and nervousness. Therefore, the guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour illuminates approaches that can be used as an instrument for parents and caregivers to use as they expand their own strategies and home structures to suit their exclusive situations and the individual needs of the children in their homes (Maine Child Welfare Training Institute, 2007:41).

The complexity of dealing with learners' aggressive behaviours has been highlighted in the findings. A myriad of types of aggression was identified in Chapter 4 and the factors of aggression were highlighted in Chapter 5. Chapter 4 explicated the emotional, physical, verbal and socio-cultural aspects of aggression. The participants' viewpoints regarding emotions emphasised an irrepressible emotional state, frustration, enmity and emotional regulation. In particular, according to Reebye (2005:16), although numerous paths to aggression have been proposed, no solitary factor is adequate to explain the advancement of aggressive behaviour. Chapter 5 brought to light the biological and environmental factors. The biological factors documented are genetics and neurology. The environmental factors took into account family, divorce attachment, parenting styles, modelling and media. Paired with these factors were frustration and verbal delay, social skills and academics. However, with this being said, it is not an all-inclusive list of factors linked to the birth of aggression in early years.

The guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour does, however, provide parents and caregivers with an opportunity to offer a model for deterrence and intervention that can sustain the individuality of the child (Reebye, 2005:19).

Accordingly, the branches represent the learners as they are individuals and unique. Without the roots (parenting) and the trunk (support structure from educators, phase heads, principals and support staff) the learners will not reach their full potential. Without question, branches are of different lengths and this signifies each learner's individuality.

Subsequently, the approach must have flexibility and specifically to begin a working relationship with parents. Therefore, I review two models, both of which involve parents and they are aptly named: Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Parent Involvement Model and Epstein's Parent Involvement Model which will then be followed by my 'Tree of Nurturance' model. The approach will be graphically represented and elucidated upon. The discernible characteristics between the two models are that they both advocate for parent involvement. However, comparatively, The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Parent Involvement Model is based on a psychological approach.

According to (Fan & Chen, 2001; Tekin, 2011:8), The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Parent Involvement Model is founded on a psychological standpoint outlining five levels. In the first level of the model, (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker & Sandler, 2005 cited in Tekin, 2011:9), suggested that parents become involved in their learners' education for four major reasons: parental task construction for involvement, parental efficacy for assisting the child to learn, parental acuity of invitations to involvement from the school and parental perception of invitations to involvement from the child. Level 2 includes three factors which are: parents' perceptions of their own skills, interests and abilities; parents' perceptions of other demands on time and energy; and parents' perceptions of specific invitations to involvement from the learners, educators, and schools. In Level 3, the model suggests that parents' involvement affects learners' outcomes through the mechanisms (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Tekin, 2011:9). Level 4 of the model concentrates on the tempering/mediating constructs influenced by Level 3 (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey *et al.* 2005; Tekin, 2011:9).

Level 5 of the model attends to the outcomes of parent involvement for the child (e.g., achievement, skills and knowledge, and personal sense of efficacy for succeeding in school) (Hoover- Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Tekin, 2011:9).

On the other hand, Epstein's Theory of Parent Involvement is described by Lemmer (2007:219) as an extensive model of partnership developed by Joyce Epstein. Epstein (1996:214; Lemmer, 2007:219), at the outset developed a theoretical model to elucidate parent involvement based on the following core perceptions about family and school relations: separate responsibilities of families and schools, shared responsibilities of families and schools and sequential responsibilities of families and schools. Epstein (1987:121; Lemmer, 2007:220) explains the *sequential* perspective as the critical stage of parents and educators' contribution to child development. Parents teach needed skills to learners until the time of their prescribed education around the ages of five or six. Then, educators take on the primary responsibility for a learner's education. Hence, because it is presumed that the child is the reason for the links between home and school, the Epstein's model focuses on the key role of the *child as learner* in interactions between families and schools, parents and educators, or the community (Lemmer, 2007:220). Epstein's Parent Involvement Model consists of six types of parent involvement (Astwood, 2009:4) which are parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community.

When placed under a lens my model is inclined towards Epstein's Parent Involvement Model as it is built on relationships formed between the school and parents by creating an engaging platform where parents are offered guidance on how to manage their children who have aggressive tendencies. Thus, this will maintain the central focus on the child. This platform will draw on the talents, gifts and skills of parents where it becomes a collaborative approach and is a shared responsibility between the school and parents. This is allied with Epstein's *'shared responsibilities of families and schools'* perspective as it highlights the coordination, cooperation and complementary nature of schools and families and motivates teamwork between the two. Schools and families share responsibilities for the socialisation of the child. These common aspirations for learners are accomplished most successfully when educators and parents work in sync with each other (Lemmer, 2007:219).

The Tree of Nurturance model will offer parents guidance on the subject of parenting skills, affording parents support and assisting them in being perceptive of their children's behaviour, providing parents with information on what strategies to employ at home that encourage positive behaviour. This relates to the initial form of parent involvement in Epstein's model regarding *'Parenting'*. My model also focuses on communication as communication will be fostered between the school and parents so that parents and the school take on a collaborative approach.

My *'Guidance and Support Model to assist Parents and Learners with Aggressive Behaviour'* is founded on three tiers. Embedded in each tier are steps to be assumed in a systematic manner. The model is graphically represented below and the steps for each tier will be described. Tier 1 comprises of pre-natal parent guidance, tier 2 is based on a support structure consisting of communication, intervention strategies focussing on parent guidance and counselling, therapeutic interventions and school-based interventions and, lastly, tier 3 takes into account physical and verbal aggression strategies and introduces the 5 Step Process and Value Key Approach.
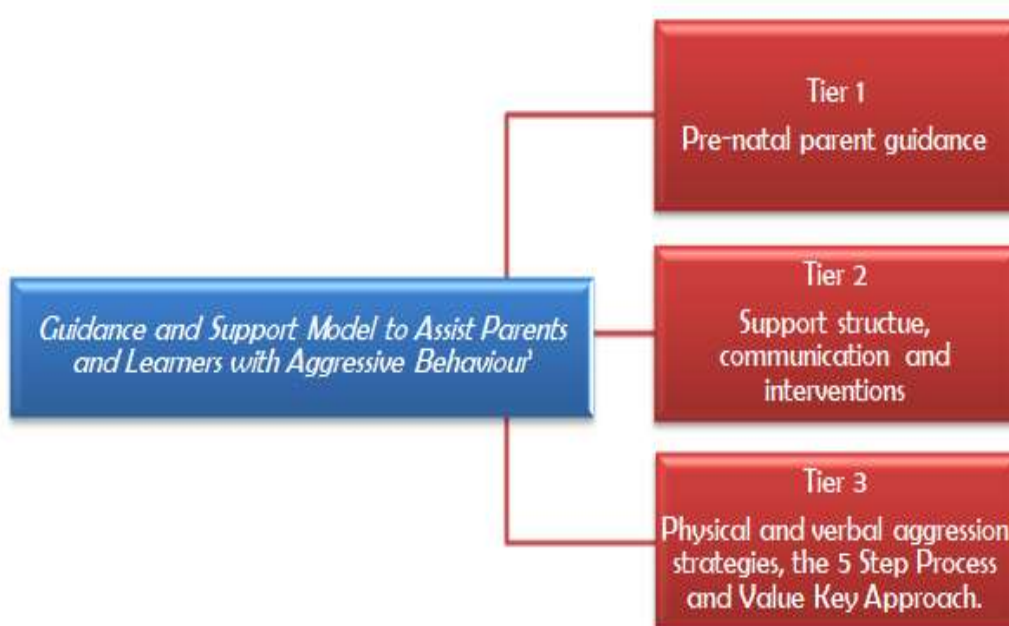
Figure 7.3.5.1 Parent and Guidance Model founded on three tiers

Tier 1 is firmly planted at the base of the Tree of Nurturance, which is linked to the roots of the tree and incorporates parenting styles, emotional regulation and positive attachment. The point of departure is ensuring that the roots are strengthened before we look beyond it. In other words, we could offer a variety of interventions, support and therapy when in fact we should look below the surface at the roots (Arias-Bolzmann, 2007:271). Hence tier 1's first building block begins at the pre-natal stage. At this stage guidance can be offered by specialists to inform parents through workshops (as part of prenatal care) as to which parental style yields the most success. Pearson (2013:6), states that the parenting style that amply balances nurturance and limit setting is authoritative. Authoritative parenting is the blend of parental demands and high responses of warmth. Authoritative parenting commands unambiguous directives for learners to follow, while pairing the directive with apt consequences, supervision, empathy, reason, and flexibility. This course of action permits learners to have more independence as they grow in maturity. I believe that by making parents aware of the correct parenting strategies to use, they become empowered.

This will be most effective with first time parents where guidance will be accepted without parents feeling inferior, that they are being reproached or being held responsible for their child's behaviour. It is at this time where the importance of boundaries, consistency, discipline and modelling of behaviour can be elaborated upon. This level of parent guidance must continue to be offered after birth as well and continue through each stage of development for the child.

Tier 2 is based on a support structure consisting of communication and intervention strategies focussing on parent guidance and counselling, therapeutic interventions and school-based interventions. Hence, this tier comes into effect once the learners begin their school journey. In Chapter 6, principals and support staff members believed that parent/group counselling and parent guidance would yield positive results, but this had to be presented by a behaviour modification expert. Some educators believed that educational psychologists have a role to play here as well. This now brings the focus on parent guidance to assist those parents whose learners behave aggressively. The tree trunk denotes the support structures that will be put in place by the principals, phase heads, educators and support staff. They will provide support to the trunk allowing the branches to grow and develop independently.

As Walumoli (2016:15) stated in Chapter 6, with apposite interventions, aggressive learners can also succeed in education. Child care programmes, social skills development, parent and community training, guidance and counselling programmes can invalidate the negative outcomes of aggressive behaviours of the learner. At these sessions the expert/specialist must engage with parents to determine the guidelines as to what the roles of the parents are by using the asset-based parenting approach. The educational psychologists will provide parents with tools to establish areas of concern. Family therapy can be an additional offer so that the entire family is equipped with guidance and support strategies. During the sessions one crucial element is making parents aware of the necessity of boundaries and discipline in the home.

The fundamental principle surrounding parent guidance and counselling is to obtain parental support and create a network of role-players (with educators, phase heads, principals, SBST, parents, child psychologist, psychiatrist) who can work together to achieve a common goal. That common goal is the behaviour modification of their child. The objective is to work with parents as some are in denial and approach it from a multi-disciplinary perspective and to work collaboratively with parents. As Educator 2 pointed out in Chapter 6, parents should be open to accept advice. This can only be achieved if the guidance and counselling sessions are approached from an asset-based parenting perspective whereby parents are part of the solution and not the problem. The experts will move towards parents utilising their own vision and not by admonishing or criticising, as the essence of the sessions will be to gain their support and implement proactive solutions. This approach will provide emotional support for the parents through the parent guidance sessions.

Regarding therapeutic interventions and school-based interventions, these are done on site by the therapists and educators in the classroom. Educators would require training and this can be incorporated into their professional development training sessions. It has already been established that communication between the school and parents forms an integral part in building relationships. Thus, the school must make a determined effort to communicate with parents on a regular basis and remain consistent in this regard. Parents need to be kept informed in matters concerning their child. This not only fosters engagement with parents, but it also builds positive relationships and enhances the trust factor.

If parents from birth have implemented the ineffective parenting style, support can still be given to parents by making guidance and counselling sessions available to them and training parents to give them the necessary skills by using the asset-based parent approach. I believe that this will assist them to improve their parenting skills and learn how to set up a more authoritative home environment using their own gifts, skills and talents. The training should include how to include warmth, reasoning, appropriate discipline, structure, boundaries, routines and empathy into their parenting style. Furthermore, it is imperative that guidance is given to parents who are divorced. For the latter, co-operative parenting is essential where learners are exposed to the same structures, routines and parenting styles in both homes. Parents should also be made aware of positive modelling and the effects of negative modelling on impressionable learners. It is not the responsibility of only parents to model the correct behaviour, but also older siblings, caregivers, the community and society in general. It is a collective approach and not singular. I believe that this type of training can be offered by the school (inclusive of school fees) by therapists or counsellors.

Despite the above strategies, what must be borne in mind is that parents do have different parenting styles and we also need to have respect for differences. A critical aspect to the guidance and counselling sessions is for the educational psychologist or behaviour modification expert to draw attention to the importance of modelling of behaviour and the impact that it has on learners. Too often parents are reluctant to attend the sessions due to stigma, being ostracised or financial restraints. If it is approached from a whole school perspective, parents may not associate negativity with it. In this way, parents can then also realise that they are not alone and can also learn from the experiences of other parents and draw on each other for support. Regarding finances, schools should be able to provide this as part of the fee structure to parents.

Therapeutic interventions are necessary as educators are not experts in the field of neurology, psychiatry or psychology and hence are unable to make a diagnosis for learners. Educators can, however, communicate to parents what their observations are and together with the phase head and principal recommend that the learner have an assessment. The report from the educational psychologist will be able to shed light on the assessment and provide recommendations. The recommendations will spell out whether learners need further diagnosis (neurologist, psychiatrist) or whether play therapy will be the route for the learner. Educators in Chapter 4 underlined that learners behave aggressively due to being frustrated.

Schools should offer a school guidance and counselling programme for learners as it assists them in having a better understanding of themselves and deals with their challenges and can then enhance their lives. In this way counselling for learners and guidance helps to deal with aggression even prior to the behaviour occurring. An educational psychologist can also provide assistance in enabling learners with strategies on how to acknowledge how the other person feels and acknowledge how the learner feels. Educators in Chapter 4 also believed that learners use aggression as a tool to communicate their emotions. They must then be given a platform to express their feelings. This can be done in sessions with a play therapist or counsellor. Hence the emotional climate of these sessions will need to be monitored.

Regarding school-based interventions, parents and educators have to work from common ground and one way of doing that is by ensuring that the boundaries, consistency and discipline that are prevalent in the classroom are implemented at home. Parents and educators need to maintain a symbiotic relationship. If boundaries and discipline are addressed at home, it changes the climate of the classroom and will make the school-based intervention programme more effective. Educators have a mammoth role to play in terms of equipping learners with social skills. In order to facilitate co-operative learning and collaboration for those learners who have difficulty socialising, educators utilise the Buddy System. The Buddy System is explained in tier 3. As much as the expectation is for parents, older siblings, caregivers, community and society in general to model the correct behaviour, it is extremely important that educators, phase heads and principals' model appropriate behaviour as well. They have to lead by example.

Social support for parents is imperative. My reasoning for this is that it is difficult to assist a child to develop or alter his or her emotional regulation after infancy, because the hemisphere of the brain that controls emotional responses has been developed. This development is, however, temporary and the learned pathways can be shifted to help the child build new experiences. In order to do this, therapists have to assist the child and caregiver experience attunement and create a safe environment for the development of a secure attachment to materialise (Pearson, 2013:5).

Tier 3 takes into account physical and verbal aggression strategies and introduces the 5 Step Process and Value Key Approach. The 'Value Key Approach' creates a platform to unlock intrinsic acts which could allow learners to develop social and emotional skills and in so doing build empathy. The branches of the tree represent the learner's individuality based on the support structure from the roots. According to Pearson (2013:3), the competence of emotional regulation is essential in order for individuals to influence their emotional processes so they can successfully respond to external situations. These skills are developed during childhood, through exchanges between learners and their attachment figures. The first year of a child's emotional life is devoted to the development of emotional communication through attunement and the establishment of secure attachment.

Tier 3 of the model incorporates how to provide support to learners who display verbal and physical aggression. From my experience, I have witnessed learners reacting impulsively in a situation because of not having adequate emotional regulation or knowing how to calm themselves. They also believed that their feelings were not being acknowledged.

The 5 step process (developed by the author) when taught correctly made a difference but still needed more reinforcement to ensure that the positive outcome was reflected every time.

5 Step Process:

Step 1: Stop and think using hand gestures (palm out and then finger on temple).
Step 2: Use your voice as the 'POWER' lies with you. Verbalise, "Stop it! I don't like it" to the person that is affecting you (palm out when saying, "Stop it!" and then palm on chest for, "I don't like it.").
Step 3: If the person does not stop, walk away and count down to 10 whilst you breathe deeply (calming mechanism) and report the behaviour directed towards to you to your educator.
Step 4: The educator will address the incident between both parties and apologies to be extended.
Step 5: Parents are notified as then the educator, parent and learner work in unison. This enables continuous communication and a symbiotic relationship.

In terms of verbal aggression, the method that bears fruit is the modelling of correct behaviour using puppets, role-play, through dramatical representation and the educator's behaviour. Learners need to be actively involved in the making of the puppets. The puppets are then used as examples for appropriate behaviour. Different scenarios can be portrayed hence giving learners ideas on how to deal with various situations should they be confronted with them.

Another method that can be employed when learners feel the need to react physically is to give them an area in the classroom that is their 'cooling off' place. An example would be the Reading Area, Science or Interest Table or playing with puppets. They can also use a 'stress ball' at their desk to calm themselves. Learners with aggressive behaviour can be seated next to a peer who can model good behaviour, encouraging them to work together, and the peer can also learn from the other learner's strengths.

Reading is crucial as the educator can use story time as an expressive route and select reading books on appropriate behaviour. The selection of the reading material is very important as through reading educators can help learners empathise with the predicament of others and hence focus on what makes us human. Stories about emotions (feelings) should be read. The type of questions asked during the reading sessions is imperative as they need to be open-ended questions where learners have to use their meta-cognition skills (thinking about their own thinking) and critical thinking (thinking and reasoning regarding their behaviour and their own strategies to problem solve). Communication at this time allows learners to express themselves and ask reciprocal questions. Instead of only allowing one learner at a time to answer a question, place learners in pairs and allow for discussion time between them and then they can provide feedback. This collaborative work will enhance partnerships within the classroom and also on the playground.

Friendships built in the classroom normally transfer to free and structured play allowing for more interaction between learners and hence increased communication. Educators can implement the Buddy System for those learners having difficulty making friends. The Buddy System is a method whereby the educator teams' up learners who complement each other and can learn from each other (reciprocal relationship). Further to this, suggestions can be made by educators to encourage play dates as this could solidify friendships made at school and then transfer this bond back into the classroom and playground.

The Buddy System works when the learner 'feeds off' the correct behaviour and hence peer modelling of behaviour becomes a positive. This method supports learners who experience stumbling blocks when building friendships. For learners who display aggressive behaviour, having a friend could make all the difference as they 'copy' positive behaviour and in so doing their self-esteem improves.

In terms of communication a common/shared vocabulary needs to be used throughout the school and this language will stimulate learners' problem-solving skills, as they will need to think critically. Learners must be given an opportunity to express their feelings and these feelings need to be validated by the adult. A method of doing this is creating 'value keys'. A 'value key' can be viewed in terms of unlocking a child's emotional and social potential thereby propagating empathy.

The 'value key' approach takes a page out of the 21st Century learning skills based on character and citizenship, which need to be value driven. The ten values that I have identified are: accountability, compassion, forgiveness, kindness, love, perseverance, respect, responsibility, honesty and self-control. Although values are intangible, they exist within us and become our moral compass that provides navigation through the course of life. This steering has its birth in early childhood development in the foundation years. These values become the common/shared vocabulary used by all educators, parents and learners. This approach facilitates responsible decision-making. Each value key is associated with a puppet (that the learners will make themselves), as this will allow them to be part of the process. The value has a laminated key with the word on it.

South Africa is a diverse country and a melting pot of cultures. Puppets representing the specific value will be gender and culturally represented. These puppets will be used for the role-playing of each value. Each key is kept together in a "Value Chest" with the word laminated and attached to a ribbon. These values will be displayed in the classroom as part of the print rich environment. As different situations transpire during the day, the educator becomes the lighthouse who needs to direct the learners towards the value that they need to use by asking open-ended questions such as, "Explain what happened?" "Why did you behave in that manner?" "What were you feeling at the time?" "What can you do instead?" "What key do you need to unlock this"? The educator then goes to the "Value Chest" and allows the learner to find the puppet and appropriate key.

When this occurs and the learner makes the connection, the learner will be able to verbalise that they used their value key to resolve their predicament. This can be done from a whole class approach and the educator has one set. For every child to have a set this can be done during an Art activity at the beginning of the year and in this way the learner is involved in the process. Learners make their own 'keys', write the value on it, which is then laminated and attached with a ribbon. For easy access it is kept in a container in their chair bag and the learner can use it any time, as they will be au fait with it. What remains imperative is that the learner has to verbalise his or her feelings to the educator and the educator remains the central figure in terms of guidance. The latter allows learners to become independent and in control of their emotions which will assist with regulation. To summarise, the interventions that the educator puts in place have to be supported by the parents. This ensures that the systems in place at school are also followed through at home. Consistency between home and school is imperative. Despite efforts from educators and parents, not all implementation is effective in the classroom or at home. Professional intervention may be required which will require the expertise of a psychologist, neurologist, play therapist or counsellor. Support at this level can only further assist a learner who is behaving aggressively. What has to be borne in mind is that the environment in which the child exists needs to be a safe one, where they can be nurtured and their growth is not stunted. However, in creating a safe environment for the learner, we also have to make certain that other learners are also provided with a safe and sound environment. This can only be achieved by parents and educators working together towards a common goal. Parents have to support educators in their endeavours as both parties have the best interests of the learner at heart. From birth to adulthood, they are the central figures moulding the learners into capable, responsible adults who can thrive in the 21st Century world. Strategies adopted must be adhered to in order for the learner to have a positive influence on society and be socially well adjusted.

7.4   SOME THOUGHTS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MODEL

With the implementation of the model in mind, focus now needs to shift towards whether schools can implement it. To start with, the articulations of the participants need to be taken into account. In addition to this, careful consideration must be given to the intervention that is required to be in place in order for the model to be implemented. Attention must be given to "Who will be responsible? What changes must be effected for this to become a reality? How will personnel, finance and timetabling be impacted?"

These questions need to be addressed for each tier. In terms of tier 1, guidance will be offered in pre-natal classes and to parents whose learners are not yet of school going age and hence timetabling would not be an issue for the prenatal class. However, for those who have children who are not yet at school, consideration needs to be given to the time of the sessions and preferably they should be on weekends to cater for those parents that work. The personnel involved would be specialists in the field and regarding financing the cost can be included in the pre-natal class cost. If these classes are offered gratis, then the specialists can be approached to offer their services at no cost. Apart from this the stakeholders at school can incorporate these interventions into their planning for the year. This can be done by utilising weekends to hold workshops for parents and arranging for specialists to present the parent guidance and counselling sessions.

With reference to tier 2, principals and phase heads will be responsible for implementing it. In order for it to be successful, they would require the support of the educators and support staff who then comprise the personnel involved. Depending on the socio-economic climate of the school, the financial costs can be shouldered by the school and the school can approach the support staff to either waive their fee or charge the school a discounted rate. If this is not a viable approach, the SGB can be contacted for assistance. If the latter is not feasible then the school can contact the district for assistance. Timetabling will not be affected as, on a Foundation Phase level, learners are excused during the academic day for either speech or occupational therapy and educators liaise with therapists as to when learners can attend. It is usually in a time slot that is convenient for the educator. Thus, if a learner has to attend a session with the play therapist, the same arrangement can be applied. This is a collective effort from everyone in the educational sphere at school and thus parents remain responsible as well.

Finally, regarding tier 3 the role players responsible are the principal, phase heads, educators and parents. In order for this tier to be effective it will require the educators applying the steps on the playground and in the classroom. It must be a collective effort from everyone and this will ensure consistency and in so doing improve the behaviour of those learners affected. Financial costs are kept to a minimum as educators can incorporate the making of items for the 'value key' approach into their art lessons. Timetabling is not affected in this tier.

In addition, for a school-based intervention programme to work to its maximum educators need to go for training as well on how to deal with aggressive learners. Guidance and counselling for them are imperative. These learners need to also be rewarded, strengths recognised and achievements applauded. They need to intrinsically feel a sense of belonging and that not only the negative is given attention to. They also require a loving, caring and nurturing environment.

7.5   CONCLUSION

This chapter is significant in that it builds a guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour. To my knowledge, more research needs to be completed to address the gap in such a model in the South African Grade R context. The participant's perspective of a school-based parent guidance and support model for addressing aggression was discussed and a model addressing self-regulation and social skills was illuminated. This guidance and support model can go some way to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour. The focus is on the development of social-emotional skills of learners which will enable them to regulate their emotions and communicate effectively instead of reacting aggressively. I have appropriately called the model "Tree of Nurturance".

Participants' perspective of a school-based parent guidance and support model for addressing aggression, showed the need for workshops for parents to equipping them with skills to implement boundaries and discipline at home. These workshops should be initiated from the ECD level. They also believed that researchers in the field could assist with advice. The ABCD model was explored and from there the term "asset-based parenting" was drawn. A holistic approach is favoured. Routines, rules, boundaries and consistency featured as many learners lack this discipline. Learners need to be empowered with strategies on how to recognise how another peer feels. Learners need to have a 'place' where they can communicate their frustrations as they often use aggression as a weapon for frustration.

Chapter 8 is the final chapter of the thesis. It will focus on a summary of Chapters 1 to Chapter 3, including the summary of the findings chapters of Chapters 4 to Chapter 6. Additionally, the research question and the findings are deliberated upon too. The Tree of Nurturance as a knowledge contribution is discussed in greater detail. The implications of the study for all role players (parents, educators, managers, school district managers and policy making for inclusive education) is considered to be important.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

8.1   INTRODUCTION

Bearing the main research question in mind "What does the experiences of principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents suggest about the nature of aggression and aggressive behaviour in Grade R, and what are the implications of this for a school-based model for addressing aggression and aggressive behaviour aimed at parents and learners?", I was able to develop school-based model for addressing aggression and aggressive behaviour aimed at parents and learners fittingly named 'Tree of Nurturance'.

This final chapter presents the summary of the first 3 chapters, which will be followed by the findings of the study in 3 chapters. The original contribution of the "Tree of Nurturance" is summarised to show its content and relevance. Presented below is the summary of chapters with diagrammatic representations.

Statement of the problem

Aggression and aggressive behaviour in South Africa has not been sufficiently contextualised according to the realities that school-based staff and parents experience. Bearing this in mind, this study seeks to use a bottom-up approach to examine the articulations of principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents with a view to develop a model that will assist to deal with the phenomena in context. This investigation helps to provide clarity on what aggressive behaviour looks like in early schooling. Such a response is necessary to contribute to appropriate interventions for parents through a school-based model.

Aim of this study

The main aim of this study was to explore aggressive behaviour amongst Grade R learners as experienced by principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents with the view to developing a school-based guidance and support model to assist parents and learners.

Figure 8.1.1: Statement of the problem

Guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour

The main aim of this study was to explore aggressive behaviour amongst Grade R learners as experienced by principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents with the view to developing a school-based guidance and support model to assist parents and learners.

Main Research Question

What does the experiences of principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents suggest about the nature of aggression and aggressive behaviour in Grade R, and what are the implications of this for a school-based model for addressing aggression and aggressive behaviour aimed at parents and learners?

Objectives

The objectives of the study were as follows:
To establish how the concepts of aggression and aggressive behaviour are understood by principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents;
To identify the contributory factors that lead to aggression and aggressive behaviour of Grade R learners at school and at home;
To ascertain how principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents deal with aggression and aggressive behaviour (approaches, methods, lines of intervention employed);
To establish how the school can support educators and parents to deal with learners' aggressive behaviour;
To propose a school-based guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour.

Subsidiary Questions

What do the participants understand by the concept of 'aggression and aggressive behaviour'?
What are the factors that lead to aggression and aggressive behaviour of Grade R learners?
In what ways can principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents deal with aggressive behaviour?
What does the above suggest for a school-based model to support parents and learners with aggressive behaviour?

Figure 8.1.2: Aims and objectives

8.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS 1, 2 AND 3
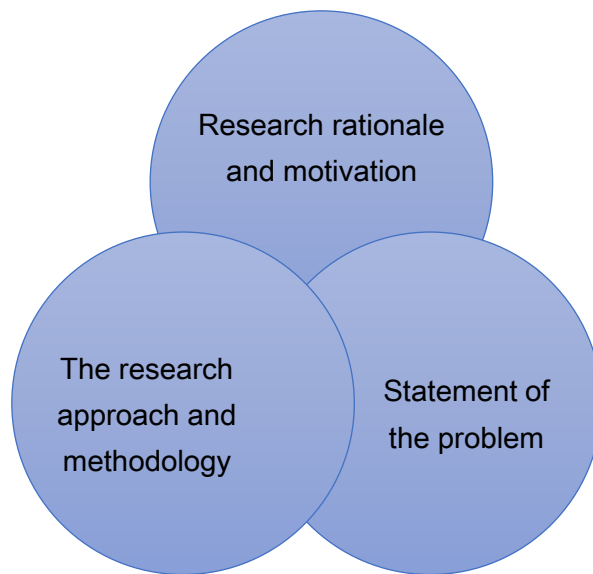
Figure 8.2.1 Chapter 1: Introduction and overview to the study

Chapter 1 provided the overview and introduction to the study, which explored the physical and verbal aggression of Grade R learners. The rationale, motivation and background were provided, wherein the problem statement was presented, and this led to the research approach and methodology that were pursued.
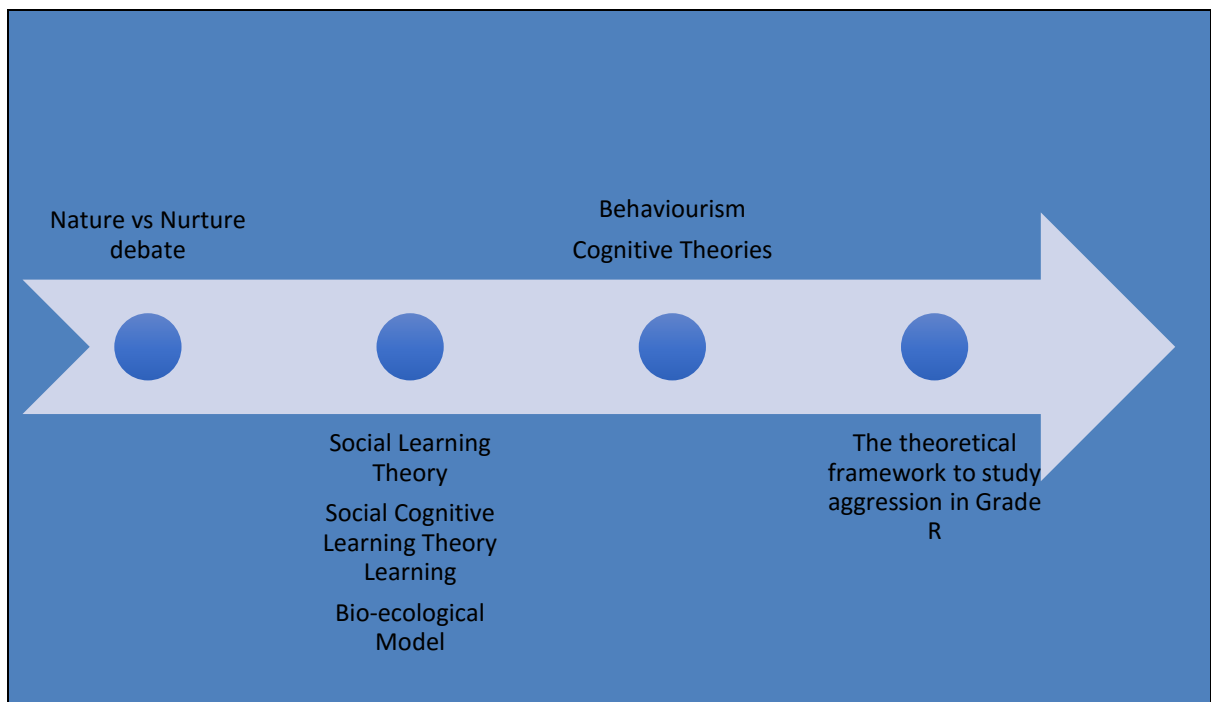
Figure 8.2.2 Chapter 2: The theoretical framework to study aggression in Grade R

Chapter 2 explored aggressions from the nature versus nurture debate. The concept of aggression and aggressive behaviour delineated and a theoretical framework to study aggression in Grade R developed. This was done by utilising Bandura's SLT and SCLT and the Bio-ecological Model by Bronfenbrenner.
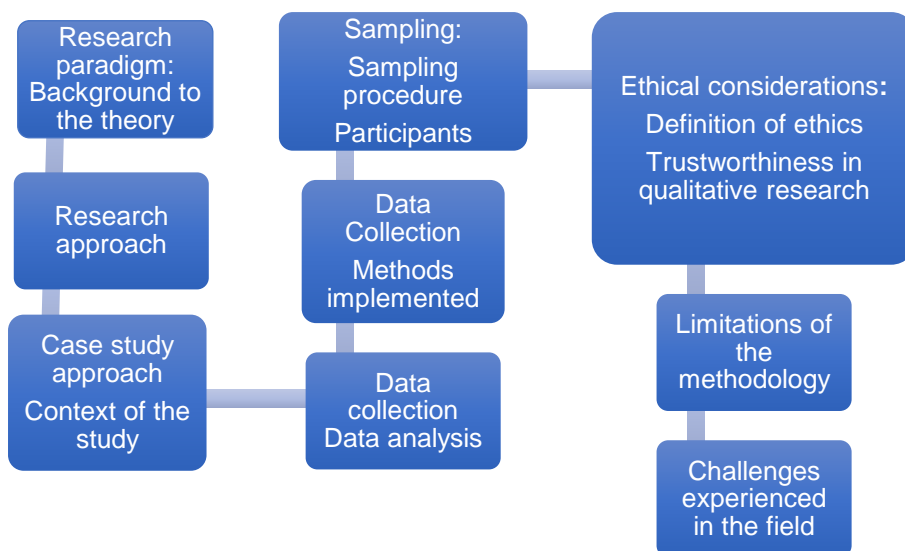
Figure 8.2.3: Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

Chapter 3's major focal point was the research design and methodology detailing the research paradigm, approach, context of the study, sampling, data collection and analysis, ethical considerations and challenges experienced in the field.

8.3   FINDINGS OF CHAPTERS 4, 5 AND 6

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 were based on the findings of the research by taking the participants' perceptions into account.
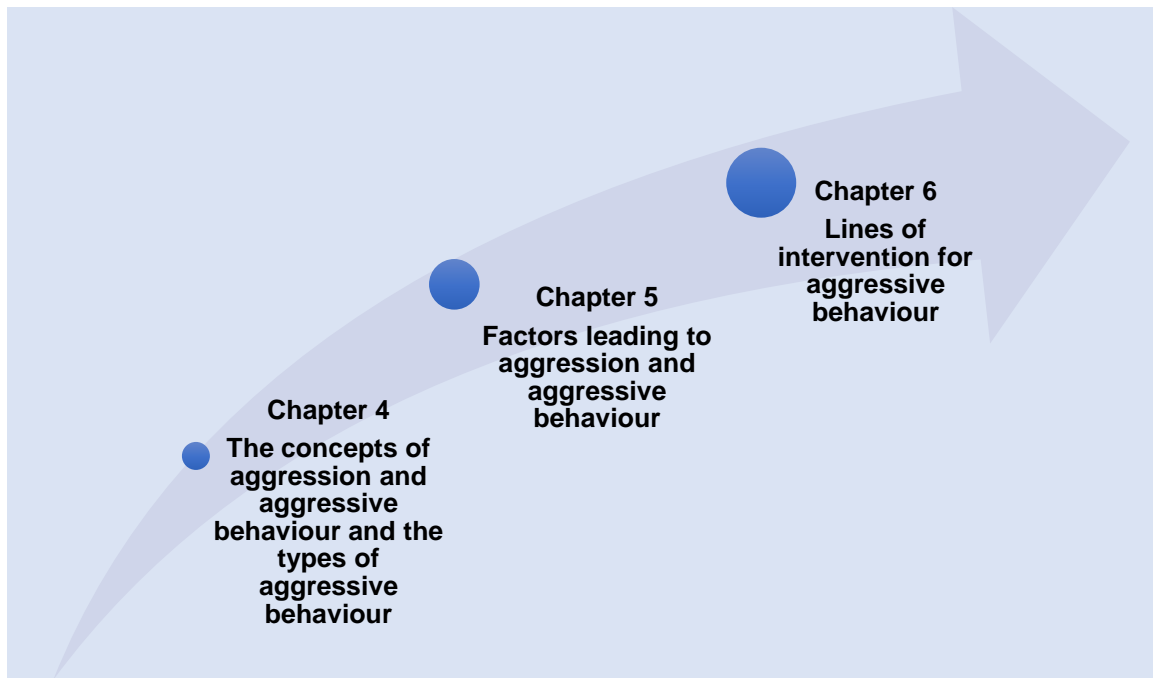
Figure 8.3: Discovery of the findings chapters

8.3.1 Chapter 4 (Findings 1)

The main research question was, "What does the experiences of principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents suggest about the nature of aggression and aggressive behaviour in Grade R, and what are the implications of this for a school-based model for addressing aggression and aggressive behaviour aimed at parents and learners?"

This was linked to the subsidiary question of, "What do you understand by the concept of aggression and aggressive behaviour?" which was answered in Chapter 4 as it presented the first findings chapter which dealt with the concepts of aggression and aggressive behaviour and the types of aggressive behaviour prevalent with Grade R learners.

Participants believed that frustration is a chief building block in aggressive behaviour and that bullying is a factor as well. According to Hamel (2013:1), learner aggression has become a major predicament in many schools. Anger is a normal emotion that often underlies aggression. Aggression in child interactions is often referred to as bullying, particularly since the label of **"bullying"** has become prevalent in the media and school-based interventions in the past few years. Bullying is aggression. It can be direct or indirect. Direct aggression dictates an overt attack, such as a physical assault, threats or teasing. Indirect aggression involves harm to another's social position through exclusion and rumours/gossip.

Indirect bullying is less detectable than direct bullying. Thus, keeping this statement in mind, the findings for the concept of aggression show that it has a range of aspects such as the emotional, physical, verbal and socio-cultural. The participant's stance regarding emotions accentuated irrepressible feelings, frustration, hostility and emotional regulation. According to Klinger (2000:6), proponents of the frustration-aggression hypothesis claim that aggression is a secondary drive induced by frustration in relation to a desired goal.

The physical aggression placed the spotlight on the intrinsic or extrinsic catalyst and furthermore detailed that it could be an emotional reaction that was displayed physically. Hence, Hamel (2013:6), states that the emotional source of aggression is anger. A profound insight into learners' anger may add to researchers', educators' and parents' foundations of knowledge about aggression and bullying prevention.

Anger in itself is not a harmful emotion; in fact, it is an innate and adaptive response to threat. To guarantee survival, people react to anger by acting aggressively. However, it goes in opposition to social norms and laws to attack those who frustrate us. Learners learn social-emotional scripts that prescribe how they respond in certain situations. Learners can learn positive ways to control their emotions through development of an emotional vocabulary, attending to physical symptoms of emotions (Hamel, 2013:16) and practising alternative behaviours. It is not possible to steer clear of or eradicate the things or people that evoke an emotional response of anger, nor is it feasible to control others. It is achievable instead to learn to control one's own behaviour (Hamel, 2013:16).

Chapter 4 highlighted the types of aggression prevalent between girls and boys stating that girls are inclined to engage in relational aggression, whereas boys tend to display overt aggression. Marsee (2003:13) confirms this by noting that relational aggression (e.g., being gossiped about by peers (Marsee, 2013:12), is a gender normative type of aggression for girls that is equivalent to overt aggression in boys.

The findings based on the concept of aggressive behaviour show that the interconnectedness of the physical and emotional states cross with the verbal to create aggressive behaviour. The resulting question is: if self-regulation and attachment are achieved, would early childhood experience in terms of behaviour be constructive?

Finally, the types of aggressive behaviour that were illuminated were hostile and instrumental aggression. Hostile aggression has the prime purpose of harming the victim or of making the victim suffer, whereas instrumental aggression requires the use of force in order to acquire some non-aggressive goal (Gasa, 2005:16).

8.3.2 Chapter 5 (Findings 2)

The research question asks, "What do the experiences of principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents suggest about the nature of aggression and aggressive behaviour in Grade R"

This was connected to the subsidiary question of, "What are the factors that lead to aggression and aggressive behaviour of Grade R learners?" which was answered in Chapter 5 as the latter investigated the factors leading to aggression and aggressive behaviour. The articulations of the participants and the use of empirical data shows factors belonging to two main spectrums, namely the biological and the environment. The biological factors include genetics and neurological aspects. The environmental factors include family, divorce, attachment, parenting styles, modelling and media. Frustration and verbal delay, social skills and academics play a role as well.

Singer, Singer and Rapaczynski (1984; Klinger, 2000:1), state that environmental factors that influence aggression include the home, parenting style, school and neighbourhood. Bandura *et al.* 1963; Huesmann, 1986; Sanson & diMuccio, 1993; Klinger, 2000:2) further state that one area of alarm has been the influence of the environmental factor of television, in particular television violence, on learners' behaviour. Regarding modelling, according to Bandura, learning is an uninterrupted course and observed result of the influence of others' actions on one's behaviour in much the same way as having experienced the consequences personally. Observed behaviours that are rewarded maximise the probability that the specific behaviour will be modelled, and observed behaviours that are punished minimise the possibility that the behaviour will be modelled. However, observed behaviours that are calculated misbehaviour but do not have consequences are more probable to be modelled as if the behaviour had been rewarded (Bandura, 1973; Klinger, 2000:7).

Regarding learners from divorced families, Stapleton (2009:2) states that they have more behaviour problems, more social difficulties, more psychological anguish and poorer academic performance. According to Pagani, Boulerice, Tremblay and Vitaro 1997; (Stapleton, 2009:2), learners who experience parental divorce before age six show signs of more behavioural disturbance than learners whose parents divorced later.

This study demonstrated that numerous factors are contributing to the nature of aggression in Grade R. This underlines the difficulty of dealing with aggression and disruptive behaviour. It also underscores the necessity to have a team of experts and specialists working with parents collaboratively to address the subject of aggressive behaviour. The participants such as principals, phase heads, educators and support staff together with the parents will comprise the team.

8.3.3   Chapter 6 (Findings 3)

The research question asks, "What are the implications of this for a school-based model for addressing aggression and aggressive behaviour aimed at parents and learners?" This question bonded it to the subsidiary question of, "What are some of the ways in which managers, educators, support staff and parents can deal with aggression and aggressive behaviour?" which was answered in Chapter 6 as the former examined the approaches, methods and lines of intervention for aggressive behaviour from the participants' perspective.

This chapter sought to discuss the approaches, methods and lines of intervention for aggressive behaviour by delineating it into two sections: dealing with aggression and aggressive behaviour and how the school can support parents to deal with learner aggression and aggressive behaviour from the participants' perspective. Educators and parents provided enlightenment regarding how the school can provide support and managers and support staff illustrated their methods of intervention. The school suggested that counselling, guidance and workshops would benefit parents (but it must be done by an expert or specialist in the field) and coupled with teaching learners how to manage their behaviour. Parents believed that teaching learners social skills, what the triggers of aggression are and the solutions would encourage positive behaviour.

Hamel (2013:8), states that schools are well positioned to present preventive programmes with the expectation that all learners learning together about aggression at a young age with their peers will make a positive difference.

Hamel (2013:12) further argues that school seems to be the most effortlessly within reach environment to facilitate intervention and prevention programmes for aggression. There are quite a few ways such programmes can be presented. It can be intended exclusively for the learners; can include educators or parents or both. Programmes can be progressive, ongoing throughout the school years, or a one-time offering.

Learners spend many of their waking hours at school. The school environment has a considerable impact on their social skill learning and is a fertile setting for learning non-violent social skills. A child's behavioural accomplishments and difficulties in school are powerful predictors for impending conduct in adult life (Tutty *et al.* 2002; Hamel, 2013:12-13). I concur with them as the school environment is one of the places that can have the most impact on a learner. Taking this into account, my '5 Step Process and Value Key Approach' is a school-based programme.

8.4   THE TREE OF NURTURANCE

Chapter 7 answered the subsidiary question, "What should a school-based parent guidance and support model for addressing aggression look like?" together with the second part of the main question: What does the experiences of principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents suggest about the nature of aggression and aggressive behaviour in Grade R, and *what are the implications of this for a school-based model for addressing aggression and aggressive behaviour aimed at parents and learners?*

The findings in chapters 4, 5 and 6 all contributed to understanding the key aspects for attention in building a guidance and support model. This study shows that the nature of aggression is characterised by many dimensions which intersect in complex ways. There is recognition that some learners are predisposed to aggression due to genetic factors. This study, however, was more concerned with the nurturance and hence the environmental factors through the theories of Bandura and Bronfenbrenner.

Bandura's SLT plays an important role at this level of development for learners, according to Hamel (2013:10). I selected the nurture perspective as the emphasis is on nurture for the SLT. The theoretical component of the study revealed the social aspects that required attention.

The knowledge contribution of this thesis is the "Tree of Nurturance". In Chapter 7, the 'Tree of Nurturance' was described a metaphor for growth and development in the setting of risk such as aggression and aggressive behaviour. Nurturance in ECD necessitates all different role players to work in collaboration for a holistic approach. As it is a school-based intervention model, the team involved should comprise of members such as the principals, phase heads, educators and support staff together with the parents and the learners. Consequently, the findings from Chapters 4, 5 and 6 of this study advocated for a holistic approach and is made up of the principals, phase heads, educators, support staff, the parents, learners, siblings and care givers, community and society and their roles for support whilst maintaining the centrality of the child.

The contribution to knowledge about nature of aggression in a South African Grade R classroom was established through the voices of Grade R educators, phase heads, principles, support staff and parents. Together with this was the formulation of the 'Guidance and Support Model to assist Parents and Learners with Aggressive Behaviour' Through the research process, Bandura's theory proved optimal in relation to the content of data retrieved. Bandura's SLT and SCLT were germane to the study as it brought in the element of the nurture perspective. The Bio-ecological Model as theorised by Bronfenbrenner was used to make total sense of the model that was developed.

A qualitative method with a case study design was employed and an interpretive approach as it was most feasible for the 22 participants who participated in the study. The setting of the study was contracted to three schools in the province of Gauteng and the small sample of data rich participants who comprised of principals, a headmistress, phase head, grade heads, Grade R educators, members of the support staff team and parents by using semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and paired interviews. The latter allowed for the understanding of the nature of aggression in a South African Grade R classroom to be enhanced.

The key role players understood aggression in that they considered mutual effects of biological and environmental factors as leading to aggression and aggressive behaviour of Grade R learners. The participants also suggested the need to have a team of specialists working with parents to address the issues of aggressive behaviour.

The participants such as principals, phase heads, educators and support staff together with the parents should comprise of the team. This meant that dealing with anger and aggression is intricate and requires efforts from teams for an all-inclusive approach. Thus principals, phase heads, educators and support staff together with the parents exemplified their own set of knowledge and skills. The school role as key player can support parents to deal with learner aggression and aggressive behaviour. Parents as another key role player articulated that they would value guidance on behaviour management which they could then apply at home and believed that social skills should be taught at school for their children. Emphasis was placed on parent involvement, boundaries, limit setting and parent styles by the principal, phase head, grade head and teachers.

Hence, to my knowledge, it appears that more research needs to be completed to address the gap in such a model in the South African Grade R context.

8.5   IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has implications for the various stakeholders (for parents, educators, managers, school district managers, for policymaking in inclusive education and for future research), which will be elaborated on.
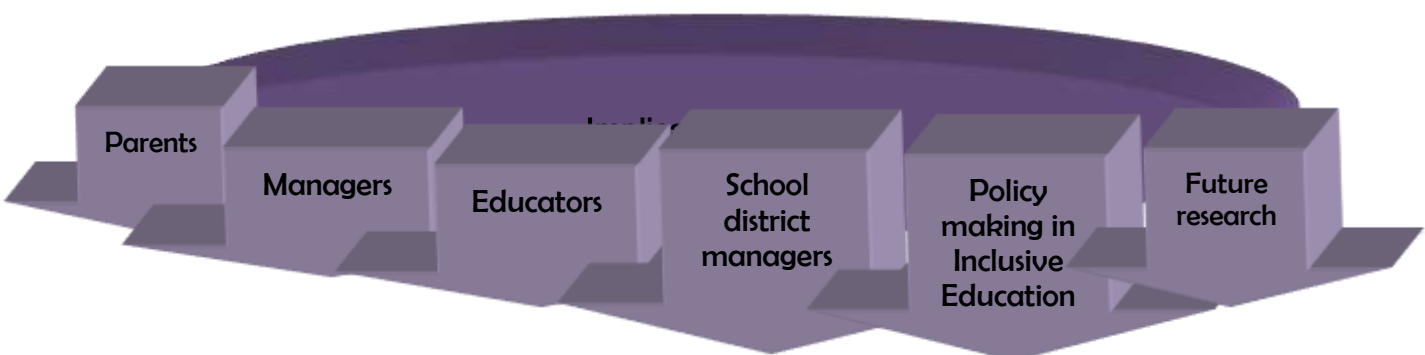
Figure 8.5.1 Implications of the study

8.5.1 Professional development of school-based teams

8.5.1.1 For parents

The implications of the study for parents is that experts, professionals and specialists in the field will be using an "asset-based parenting" approach. The ABCD model was discussed in Chapter 7 and the term "asset-based parenting" was coined. I believe that this approach is helpful as it will empower parents to utilise their innate abilities and hence ensure that the seedlings they plant have strong roots which stabilise the trunk and allow the "tree" to blossom to its full potential and capabilities. The workshops and family therapy sessions could yield positive outcomes and assist with boundaries and limit setting, resulting in parents having more control over certain situations and implementing the correct strategies that provide their children with mechanisms that don't debilitate them.

It is clear that learners have substantial insight into aggression; however, they have a different perception of the association between aggression and anger than adults. Learners comprehend that when an individual is acting aggressively, she or he is feeling angry, but they know that when they themselves are feeling angry they do not have to act aggressively. They have an option in the way they act and react (Hamel, 2013:73). The opportune time to develop this is during primary socialisation.

8.5.1.2 For educators

It is important for educators to identify with the core of how learners understand, experience and express their anger with others from their perspectives because understanding learners' early experiences with aggression can lead to an improved understanding of the long-term effects (Hamel, 2013:73). Thus, this can only be achieved through educator training/professional development. Professional development (PD) according to the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS, 2010:58; Luningo, 2015:11), is defined as activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher. In this study it means how to apply the knowledge and skills to learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. Therefore, effective professional development to enable educators to manage challenging student behaviour is crucial for the enhancement of learning (Birman, 2000 cited in Dhaliwal, 2013:27). School management need to provide high-quality, targeted professional development that addresses key gaps in educators' knowledge (Dhaliwal, 2013:39).

In respect of this study the gap that would have to be addressed with professional development of educators would be their knowledge of how to manage learners with aggressive behaviours in the classroom. In so doing the school becomes pro-active in its approach regarding aggressive behaviour. Educators need to be empowered with the tools to assist learners with aggression.

Adult intervention is not always a prerequisite or sought after. However, it is vital for assisting professionals to be aware that once they become involved, the problem may be beyond the child's ability to solve and that telling them to solve it themselves may be something they are not able to accomplish. Teaching the fundamentals and constructing on what learners already know is the greatest way professionals can effectively support learners (Hamel, 2013:74).

8.5.1.3 For managers

According to Hamel (2013:74), social interaction effects of anger and aggression do give the impression of having significance for learners. Friendship and peer approval can be a true predictor for future mental health. Learners convey that friendship is very important and that social isolation is a frightening idea. They trust that all relationships are repairable, but when it seems that this is not the case, they express feeling sad, angry, confused and heartbroken. These emotions could lead to depression later on if the relationship is never repaired and the child begins to feel discouraged and lonesome as well.

The managers of the school comprise of the phase heads and the principal and their role is deemed an important one. Aside from the administrative and 'managing' role they are accountable for; they are curriculum managers as well. Through the curriculum, social skills, empathy and social and emotional learning can be implemented. It is vital that this is incorporated into the curriculum but not through a haphazard manner but more a hands-on approach. It is critical that managers of the school environment play an active role and implement an approach or policy that will benefit learners who behave aggressively. With this being said, professional development of managers is necessary on barriers to learning.

With reference to barriers to learning the White Paper 6 states that various barriers to learning exist within the systems that make learners vulnerable to exclusion and learning breakdown. These include negative attitudes to and stereotyping of difference; an inflexible curriculum; inappropriate languages of learning and teaching; inappropriate communication; inaccessible and unsafe built environments; inappropriate and inadequate support services; inadequate policies and legislation; non-recognition and non-involvement of parents; and inadequately or inappropriately trained education managers and educators (Luningo, 2015:10). It is imperative that principals themselves need to undergo professional training in effective learner discipline management, responding to individual learner's needs (Paragraph 3.4.6; Belle, 2016:326) as this will empower them. It is only through conferences, workshops, and professional development programmes that principals may learn and practice, through a mentoring process, about responding to individual learner's needs (Belle, 2016:142-143). As the phase head holds the role of manager as well, it would be conducive for professional growth that he/she attends professional development programmes as well.

Thus, it is the responsibility of the District-Based Support Team (DBST) who are a group of professionals to promote inclusive education through training, curriculum delivery, distribution of resources, identifying and addressing barriers to learning, leadership and general management (Department of Education, (DoE) 2008:3; Luningo, 2015:10).

8.5.1.4 For school district managers

School district managers need to recognise how learners experience and understand anger and aggression can teach (holding workshops for educators and school managers) on how best to mediate in an effective manner. It has become apparent that learners have a whole world that adults are not privy to, with their own social norms and interactions (Hamel, 2013:74).

8.5.2   Policy on inclusive education

Policy makers and school-based teams need to take cognisance of the growing number of learners who display aggressive behaviour. They need to continuously educate themselves on the various models that can be implemented within the schools to effectively assist learners with aggressive behaviour.

Policy makers can then use this as a guideline to develop models of intervention, as it has to take on an inclusive approach and not by excluding learners from mainstream education.

Hence, they create a system whereby they empower educators to deal with learners who exhibit signs of aggression from the onset of Grade R and assist learners to manage their aggression by providing them with social and emotional skills.

8.5.3 Future research

Attachment between mothers and their children has been deliberated and the positives and negatives have been weighed. I found Feldman's (2015:30), statement regarding fathers interesting and believe that more research in this field is necessary. Feldman states that fathering during early childhood was associated with learners' socio-emotional adjustment at both home and school, especially for boys. This information can be used to modify, and structure interventions aimed at improving fathers' behaviour in early childhood, such as by discouraging the use of corporal punishment and emphasising the use of positive fathering practices such as inductive discipline. Fathering behaviour, although infrequently studied, has important implications for child development. These findings have shown that fathers' adverse parenting behaviours in early childhood were associated with a diverse range of learners' adjustment problems in the late school-age period. On the other hand, there was some evidence that positive fathering behaviours were associated with fewer adjustment problems, indicating more links with learners' positive socio-emotional development. In many cases, these associations were moderated by the child's gender (Feldman, 2015:30). Emphasis is most often placed on the attachment between mother and child and the effects of it. It will be interesting to establish what the attachment outcome is between fathers and children. Hence, it can be recommended to include the significance of fathers whenever relevant and possible in research, prevention, and treatment in future studies (Feldman 2015:31).

This research contributes by informing future researchers in the field what aggression looks like in early schooling. For future research it is recommended that using the model's researchers can track two groups of parents. One group is from pre-birth until their children turn six. This group will have to attend the prenatal classes that offer parent guidance. The other group will be those parents who do not receive guidance, but they are still tracked from the time they give birth.

Thus, a comparative analysis can be done to enable the researcher to verify whether the model actually has its benefits with advantages and disadvantages. It is recommended that the Tree of Nurturance model be implemented and investigated to determine if it addresses the needs of aggressive learners.

8.5.4   Limitations of the study

The study is limited in that The Tree of Nurturance has not been implemented to determine its efficacy as it was beyond the scope of this study.

Further research needs to be undertaken to determine the value of the three-tier model which provides guidance and support to parents who have children that behave aggressively. Regarding tiers 1 and 2 it would have to be investigated whether the financing would be plausible and what the possible challenges would entail. In reference to timetabling for tier 2, would it be as accommodating as when learners attend speech and occupational therapy sessions? Finally, it is essential that the '5 Step Process' and the 'Value Key Approach' be put into effect to verify whether they are valuable and beneficial to the educators and parents. Future studies should be undertaken to establish whether the '5 Step Process' and the 'Value Key Approach' addresses the development of social-emotional skills of learners that will enable them to regulate their emotions and communicate effectively instead of reacting aggressively. More importantly, however, is it a practical approach for learners in terms of time and resources available?

8.6   CONCLUSION

This study fills the knowledge gap about aggression and aggressive behaviour in Grade R in the South African context in two ways, namely by shedding light on the key issues and then by presenting the Tree of Nurturance for possible action. In so doing, this study creates new possibilities for multiple stakeholders to come together at site level for the task of building resilience in learners, providing them with strategies to be resourceful so they have the problem-solving skills of knowing what to do when they have difficulty. Parents as primary educators are an integral part of the intervention. On a personal note, in the quest to bring about change I was challenged in thinking differently about aggression.

This phenomena has to be informed by evidence as a basis for action. The evidence was produced by myself as a knowledge producer and a change agent. This is a departure from the Department of Education (DOE) telling teachers what to do. I used my research skills to innovate the Tree of Nurturance which will be implemented through action research as part of my postdoctoral work.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE FORM

UNISA | university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2017/07/12

Dear Ms Padayichie,

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2017/07/12 to 2022/07/12

Ref#: **2017/07/12/08492298/7/MC**
Name: Ms K Padayichie
Student#: 08492298

Researcher:

Name: Ms K Padayichie
Email: thivkum@hotmail.com
Telephone#: 0827828440

Supervisor:

Name: Prof HB Ebrahim
Email: ebrahhb@unisa.ac.za
Telephone#: 0124298747

Title of research:

Guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour

---

Qualification: D Ed in Socio-Education

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 2017/07/12 to 2022/07/12.

The low risk application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2017/07/12 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:

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: GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESEARCH APPROVAL
LETTER**

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

	8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	10 July 2017
Validity of Research Approval:	06 February 2017 – 29 September 2017 2017/164
Name of Researcher:	Padayichie K.
Address of Researcher:	P.O Box 782905
	Sandton
	2146
Telephone Number:	082 782 8440
Email address:	thivkum@hotmail.com
Research Topic:	Guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour
Number and type of schools:	Three Primary Schools
District/s/HO	Gauteng North, Johannesburg East and Johannesburg North

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

12/07/2017

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7⁰ Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: PRINCIPAL

1.   What do you understand by the concept 'aggression'?

2.   What do you understand by the concept 'aggressive behaviour'?

3.   What type of aggressive behaviour do Grade R children display at school?

4.   In your experience of dealing with parents whose children display aggressive behaviour, describe the types of aggression children display in the home?

5.   What do you think are the factors that lead to aggression and aggressive behaviour of Grade R children?

6.   How do you deal with aggression and aggressive behaviour? Kindly explain the approaches you use from a management perspective.

7.   Describe the approaches that were successful.

8.   Describe the approaches that were unsuccessful. Provide reasons as to why they were unsuccessful.

9.   How can the school support parents to deal with learner aggression and aggressive behaviour?

10.   What should a school-based parent guidance and support model for addressing aggression look like?

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: FOUNDATION PHASE HEAD

1. What do you understand by the concept 'aggression'?
2. What do you understand by the concept 'aggressive behaviour'?
3. What type of aggressive behaviour do Grade R children display at school?
4. In your experience of dealing with parents whose children display aggressive behaviour describe the types of aggression children display in the home?
5. What do you think are the factors that lead to aggression and aggressive behaviour of Grade R children?
6. How do you deal with aggression and aggressive behaviour? Kindly explain the approaches you use from a Foundation Phase management perspective.
7. Describe the approaches that were successful.
8. Describe the approaches that were unsuccessful. Provide reasons as to why they were unsuccessful.
9. How can the school support parents to deal with learner aggression and aggressive behaviour?
10. What should a school-based parent guidance and support model for addressing aggression look like?

APPENDIX E: PAIRED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: EDUCATORS

1. What do you understand by the concept 'aggression'?
2. What do you understand by the concept 'aggressive behaviour'?
3. What type of aggressive behaviour do Grade R children display at school?
4. In your experience of dealing with parents whose children display aggressive behaviour describe the types of aggression children display in the home?
5. What do you think are the factors that lead to aggression and aggressive behaviour of Grade R children?
6. How do you deal with aggression and aggressive behaviour? Kindly explain the approaches you use.
7. Describe the approaches that were successful.
8. Describe the approaches that were unsuccessful. Provide reasons as to why they were unsuccessful.
9. How can the school support parents to deal with learner aggression and aggressive behaviour?
10. What should a school-based parent guidance and support model for addressing aggression look like?

APPENDIX F: QUESTIONNAIRE: SUPPORT STAFF

Dear Participant

Thank you for agreeing to complete this questionnaire. When it is completed kindly forward to thivkum@hotmail.com **or contact me at 082 782 8440 to make arrangements to collect it.**

1.   What do you understand by the concept 'aggression' in an early childhood support context?

_____
_____
_____

2.   What do you understand by the concept 'aggressive behaviour' in an early childhood support context?

_____
_____
_____

3.   What type of aggressive behaviour do Grade R children display at school?

_____
_____
_____

4.   In your experience of dealing with parents whose children display aggressive behaviour describe the types of aggression children display in the home?

_____
_____
_____

5.   What do you think are the factors that lead to aggression and aggressive behaviour of Grade R children?

_____

_____

_____

6.   How do you deal with aggression and aggressive behaviour? Kindly explain the approaches you use from a Foundation Phase support perspective.

_____

_____

_____

7.   Describe the approaches that were successful.

_____

_____

_____

8.   Describe the approaches that were unsuccessful. Provide reasons as to why they were unsuccessful.

_____

_____

_____

9.   How can the school support parents to deal with learner aggression and aggressive behaviour?

_____

_____

_____

10.   What should a school-based parent guidance and support model for addressing aggression look like?

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX G: QUESTIONNAIRE: PARENTS

Dear Participant

Thank you for agreeing to complete this questionnaire. When it is completed kindly forward to thivkum@hotmail.com **or contact me at 082 782 8440 to make arrangements to collect it.**

1.   What do you understand by the concepts 'aggression' and 'aggressive behaviour'?
_____
_____

2.   What types of aggression does your child display at home?
_____
_____

3.   Have you had any incidents related to aggression and aggressive behaviour reported to you by the educator or principal? If yes, explain.
_____
_____

4.   What are the contributory factors that lead to aggression and aggressive behaviour in the home?
_____
_____

5.   How do you deal with aggression and aggressive behaviour in the home?
_____
_____

6.   Which approaches are successful and why?
_____
_____

7.   How can the school best support you as parents to deal with learner aggression and aggressive behaviour?
_____
_____

APPENDIX H: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Re: Request for permission to conduct research at School A, School B and SCHOOL C. for a study entitled *Guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour.*

Date: _____

Gauteng Department of Education

Research Department

Contact details of the person (telephone and email address)

Dear Sir/Madam

I, Kumaree Padayichie, am doing research under supervision of Professor Ebrahim, a Professor in the Department of Early Childhood Education, towards a Doctorate in Education at the University of South Africa. My study entitled *Guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour* will be conducted at two private schools in Gauteng. The names of the schools appear at the beginning of this letter for your reference.

The aim of the study is to explore the nature of aggression amongst Grade R learners through the voices and experiences of educators, managers, support staff and parents with the view to develop a school-based guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour. The data for this study will be collected through observation of the children, interviewing the principal, Grade R educators and the Foundation Phase Head of Department. The parents and the support staff will be given a questionnaire to complete. All research activities will be undertaken at times negotiated with the participants. The data for this study will be recorded as field notes and audio-taped.

All participation in the study is voluntary. This means that the participants are under no obligation to participate and can withdraw consent at any time without experiencing disadvantage. The benefit of the study for mapping responsive interventions, however, is a motivation to participate in the study. All participants in the study will be referred to in anonymous terms. The selected school will not be mentioned in the study. Both anonymity and confidentiality will be respected. Pseudonyms will be used in the thesis and in resulting publications from the study. If the transcription of the data is outsourced, the transcriber will sign a confidentiality clause.

The data will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years and electronic versions will be protected by a password. The findings of the study will be made available to the departments, the school and other relevant stakeholders that are implicated. This will be in the form of hard copies, electronic versions, summaries and presentations. Should you request other means of obtaining the findings this will be gladly attended to.

Should you have an queries regarding the study or related matters do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor whose contact details appear below. I am prepared to complete any further documentation you might have for this study.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information and I look forward to further communication.

Yours sincerely

PhD Student: Ms Kumaree Padayichie
Cell No:082 782 8440
E-mail: thivkum@hotmail.com
Reference number: 2017/07/12/08492298/7/MC

Supervisor: Prof HB Ebrahim
UNISA
College of Education
Department of Early Childhood Education
AJH Van Der Walt Building
Level 7 Room 55
Tel No.:0847832071/ 012 429 8747
E mail:ebrahhb@unisa.ac.za

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return Slip)

I_____
(participant's name) as senior official of the **Gauteng Department of Education** confirm that I have read and understood the aim, procedure, potential benefits and aspects related to participation. I thereby grant permssion to conduct the study at School A, School B and School C.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX I: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY – SCHOOL A

Re: Request for permission to conduct research at School A for a study entitled *Guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour.*

Date: _____

The Principal

School A

Dear Sir/Madam,

I, Kumaree Padayichie, am doing research under the supervision of Professor Ebrahim, a Professor in the Department of Early Childhood Education, towards a Doctorate in Education at the University of South Africa. My study entitled *Guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour* will be conducted at two private schools in Gauteng. The names of the schools appear at the beginning of this letter for your reference.

The aim of the study is to explore the nature of aggression amongst Grade R learners through the voices and experiences of educators, managers, support staff and parents with the view to develop a school-based guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour. The data for this study will be collected through, observation of the children, interviewing the principal, Grade R educators and the Foundation Phase Head of Department. The parents and the support staff will be given a questionnaire to complete. All research activities will be undertaken at times negotiated with the participants. The data for this study will be recorded as field notes and audio-taped.

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The data will be stored by the researcher for a period of 5 years and electronic versions will be protected by a password. The findings of the study will be made available to the

departments, the school and other relevant stakeholders that are implicated. This will be in the form of hard copies, electronic versions, summaries and presentations. Should you request other means of obtaining the findings this will be gladly attended to.

Should you have an queries regarding the study or related matters do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor whose contact details appear below. I am prepared to complete any further documentation you might have for this study.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information and I look forward to further communication.

Yours sincerely

PhD Student: Ms Kumaree Padayichie
Cell No: 082 782 8440
E-mail: thivkum@hotmail.com
Reference number 2017/07/12/08492298/7/MC

Supervisor: Prof HB Ebrahim
UNISA
College of Education
Department of Early Childhood Education
AJH Van Der Walt Building
Level 7 Room 55
Tel No. 0847832071/ 012 429 8747
E mail: ebrahhb@unisa.ac.za

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return Slip)

I_____
(participant's name) as the principal of
_____ confirm that I have read and understood the aim, procedure, potential benefits and aspects related to participation. I hereby grant permssion for this study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Re: Request for permission to conduct research at School B **for a study entitled** *Guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour.*

Date: _____

The Principal

School B

Dear Sir/Madam,

I, Kumaree Padayichie, am doing research under the supervision of Professor Ebrahim, a Professor in the Department of Early Childhood Education, towards a Doctorate in Education at the University of South Africa. My study entitled *Guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour* will be conducted at two private schools in Gauteng. The names of the schools appear at the beginning of this letter for your reference.

The aim of the study is to explore the nature of aggression amongst Grade R learners through the voices and experiences of educators, managers, support staff and parents with the view to develop a school-based guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour. The data for this study will be collected through, observation of the children, interviewing the principal, Grade R educators and the Foundation Phase Head of Department. The parents and the support staff will be given a questionnaire to complete. All research activities will be undertaken at times negotiated with the participants. The data for this study will be recorded as field notes and audio-taped.

All participation in the study is voluntary. This means that the participants are under no obligation to participate and can withdraw consent at any time without experiencing disadvantage. The benefit of the study for mapping responsive interventions, however, is a motivation to participate in the study. All participants in the study will be referred to in anonymous terms. The selected school will not be mentioned in the study. Both anonymity and confidentiality will be respected. Pseudonyms will be used in the thesis, resulting publications from the study. If the transcription of the data is outsourced the transcriber will sign a confidentiality clause.

The data will be stored by the researcher for a period of 5 years and electronic versions will be protected by a password. The findings of the study will be made available to the departments, the school and other relevant stakeholders that are implicated. This will be in the form of hard copies, electronic versions, summaries and presentations. Should you request other means of obtaining the findings this will be gladly attended to.

Should you have an queries regarding the study or related matters do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor whose contact details appear below. I am prepared to complete any further documentation you might have for this study.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information and I look forward to further communication.

Yours sincerely

PhD Student: Ms Kumaree Padayichie
Cell No: 082 782 8440
E-mail: thivkum@hotmail.com
Reference number 2017/07/12/08492298/7/MC

Supervisor: Prof HB Ebrahim
UNISA
College of Education
Department of Early Childhood Education
AJH Van Der Walt Building
Level 7 Room 55
Tel No. 0847832071/ 012 429 8747
E mail: ebrahhb@unisa.ac.za

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return Slip)

I_____
(participant's name) as the principal of
_____ confirm that I have read and understood the aim, procedure, potential benefits and aspects related to participation. I hereby grant permssion for this study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX K: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY- SCHOOL C

Re: Request for permission to conduct research at School B **for a study entitled** *Guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour.*

Date: _____

The Principal
School C

Dear Sir/Madam,

I, Kumaree Padayichie, am doing research under the supervision of Professor Ebrahim, a Professor in the Department of Early Childhood Education, towards a Doctorate in Education at the University of South Africa. My study entitled *Guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour* will be conducted at two private schools in Gauteng. The names of the schools appear at the beginning of this letter for your reference.

The aim of the study is to explore the nature of aggression amongst Grade R learners through the voices and experiences of educators, managers, support staff and parents with the view to develop a school-based guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour. The data for this study will be collected through, observation of the children, interviewing the principal, Grade R educators and the Foundation Phase Head of Department. The parents and the support staff will be given a questionnaire to complete. All research activities will be undertaken at times negotiated with the participants. The data for this study will be recorded as field notes and audio-taped.

All participation in the study is voluntary. This means that the participants are under no obligation to participate and can withdraw consent at any time without experiencing disadvantage. The benefit of the study for mapping responsive interventions, however, is a motivation to participate in the study. All participants in the study will be referred to in anonymous terms. The selected school will not be mentioned in the study. Both anonymity and confidentiality will be respected. Pseudonyms will be used in the thesis, resulting publications from the study. If the transcription of the data is outsourced the transcriber will sign a confidentiality clause.

The data will be stored by the researcher for a period of 5 years and electronic versions will be protected by a password. The findings of the study will be made available to the departments, the school and other relevant stakeholders that are implicated. This will be in the form of hard copies, electronic versions, summaries and presentations. Should you request other means of obtaining the findings this will be gladly attended to.

Should you have an queries regarding the study or related matters do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor whose contact details appear below. I am prepared to complete any further documentation you might have for this study.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information and I look forward to further communication.

Yours sincerely

PhD Student: Ms Kumaree Padayichie
Cell No: 082 782 8440
E-mail: thivkum@hotmail.com
Reference number 2017/07/12/08492298/7/MC
Supervisor: Prof HB Ebrahim
UNISA
College of Education
Department of Early Childhood Education
AJH Van Der Walt Building
Level 7 Room 55
Tel No. 0847832071/ 012 429 8747
E mail: ebrahhb@unisa.ac.za

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return Slip)

I_____(participant's name) as the principal of _____
confirm that I have read and understood the aim, procedure, potential benefits and aspects related to participation. I hereby grant permssion for this study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX L: CONSENT LETTER FOR PRINCIPAL, FOUNDATION PHASE HEAD, EDUCATORS, SUPPORT STAFF AND PARENTS

Date: _____

Title: **Guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour**

I, Kumaree Padayichie, am doing research under the supervision of Professor Ebrahim, a Professor in the Department of Early Childhood Education, towards a Doctorate in Education at the University of South Africa. My study entitled *Guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour* will be conducted at two private schools in Gauteng. The names of the schools appear at the beginning of this letter for your reference.

The aim of the study is to explore the nature of aggression amongst Grade R learners through the voices and experiences of educators, managers, support staff and parents with the view to develop a school-based guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour. The data for this study will be collected through, observation of the children, interviewing the principal, Grade R educators and the Foundation Phase Head of Department. The parents and the support staff will be given a questionnaire to complete. All research activities will be undertaken at times negotiated with the participants. The data for this study will be recorded as field notes and audio-taped.

All participation in the study is voluntary. This means that the participants are under no obligation to participate and can withdraw consent at any time without experiencing disadvantage. The benefit of the study for mapping responsive interventions, however, is a motivation to participate in the study. All participants in the study will be referred to in anonymous terms. The selected school will not be mentioned in the study. Both anonymity and confidentiality will be respected. Pseudonyms will be used in the thesis, resulting publications from the study. If the transcription of the data is outsourced the transcriber will sign a confidentiality clause.

The data will be stored by the researcher for a period of 5 years and electronic versions will be protected by a password. The findings of the study will be made available to the departments, the school and other relevant stakeholders that are implicated. This will be in the form of hard copies, electronic versions, summaries and presentations. Should you request other means of obtaining the findings this will be gladly attended to.

Should you have an queries regarding the study or related matters do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor whose contact details appear below. I am prepared to complete any further documentation you might have for this study.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information and I look forward to further communication.

Yours sincerely

PhD Student: Ms Kumaree Padayichie
Cell No: 082 782 8440
E-mail: thivkum@hotmail.com
Reference number 2017/07/12/08492298/7/MC

Supervisor: Prof HB Ebrahim
UNISA
College of Education
Department of Early Childhood Education
AJH Van Der Walt Building
Level 7 Room 55
Tel No. 0847832071/ 012 429 8747
E mail: ebrahhb@unisa.ac.za

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, _____ (participant's name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, potential benefits and anticipated procedures 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 and 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 (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant name & surname (please print) _____
_____

Participant Signature: ……………………..…… Date:…………………………………

APPENDIX M: TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLES

Table 3.5.1.1: Individual School Profiles

Schools	A	B	C
Type of School	Private Pre-School	Private Nursery School	Government Primary School
Geographical Area	Gauteng North	Gauteng North	Gauteng North
District	Johannesburg East	Johannesburg North	Johannesburg North
Operating Hours	07:30 – 13:00	07:30-13:05	07:40-13:00
Number of Grades	3 (000, 00 and 0)	4 (0000, 000, 00 and 0)	8 (Grade R-7)
Age group	3-6 years	2-6 years	5 – 13 years
Number of Grade R classes	5	7	7
Total population of Grade R learners	110	154	178
Total population of School	217	276	1320

Table 3.6.1.1: Sample per school

Schools	A	B	C
Type of School	Private Pre-School	Private Nursery School	Government Primary School
Geographical Area	Gauteng North	Gauteng North	Gauteng North
District	Johannesburg East	Johannesburg North	Johannesburg North
Operating Hours	07:30 – 13:00	07:30-13:05	07:40-13:00
Number of Grades	3 (000, 00 and 0)	4 (0000, 000, 00 and 0)	8 (Grade R-7)
Age group	3-6 years	2-6 years	5 – 13 years
Number of Grade R Classes	5	7	7
Total Population of Grade R Learners	110	154	178
Total population of School	217	276	1320

Table 3.6.2.1: Number of participants per school

School	A	B	C	Total
Principal (Interview)	1	0	1	2
Headmistress (Interview)	0	1	0	1
Phase Head per school (Interview)	0	0	1	1
Grade Head per school (Interview)	1	1	0	2
Educators interviewed per school (Paired Interviews)	2	2	2	6
Support staff per school (Questionnaire completed)	1	1	1	3
Parents per school (Questionnaire completed)	2	4	1	7

Table 3.6.2.2: Participants linked to each school

School A	School B	School C
Principal 1	Principal 2	Principal 3
Grade Head 1	Grade Head 2	Phase Head 1
Educator 1	Educator 3	Educator 5
Educator 2	Educator 4	Educator 6
Support Staff Member 1	Support Staff Member 2	Support Staff Member 3
Parent 1	Parent 3	Parent 7
Parent 2	Parent 4	
	Parent 5	
	Parent 6	

Table 3.6.3.1: Principal's gender, race, qualification, year in which teaching began, years of experience in education, years of experience

Name	Gender	Race	Qualification: Degree/Diploma (Highest Level obtained)	Year in which teaching began	Years of Experience in Education	Years of Experience as a Principal
Principal 1	Female	White	Certificate of Education from the University of Rhodesia	1973	44	6
Principal 2	Female	White	B.Ed. in FP, Diploma for Neurodevelopment therapy and Honours in Education	1991	34	18

| Principal 3 | Female | White | Higher Diploma in Education (HDE) | 1974 | 40 | 11 |

Table 3.6.3.2: Principal's age and home language

Name	Age 25-35	Age 35-45	Age 45-55	Age 55-65	Home Language
Principal 1				√	English
Principal 2			√		English
Principal 3				√	Afrikaans

Table 3.6.4.1: Phase Heads' gender, race, qualification, year in which teaching began, years of experience in education, years of experience

Name	Gender	Race	Qualification: Degree/Diploma (Highest Level obtained)	Year in which teaching began	Years of Experience in Education	Years of Experience as Grade/ Phase Head
Grade Head 1	Female	White	Higher Diploma in Education (Pre-Primary and Primary)	1994	23	1
Grade Head 2	Female	White	Diploma in FP and Higher Diploma in Special Educational needs	2000	18	3
Phase Head 1	Female	White	Master's in Education	1990	27	7

Table 3.6.4.2: Phase heads' age and home language

Name	Age 25-35	Age 35-45	Age 45-55	Age 55-65	Home Language
Grade Head 1			√		English
Grade Head 1		√			English
Phase Head 1			√		English

Table: 3.6.5.1 Educators' gender, race, qualification, year in which teaching began, years of experience in education, years of experience

Name	Gender	Race	Qualification: Degree/Diploma (Highest Level obtained)	Year in which teaching began	Years of Experience in Education
Educator 1	Female	White	Montessori Dip, ECE Diploma Neuro-Cognitive Training	2003	10
Educator 2	Female	White	Higher Diploma in Education (Pre Primary and Primary)	1993	25
Educator 3	Female	White	Bachelor in Social Science, PGCE and Honours Degree in Psychology	2014	4
Educator 4	Female	White	Bachelors in Primary Education	2000	18
Educator 5	Female	White	Educare Diploma	2000	18
Educator 6	Female	White	Bachelor in Education: ECD and FP	2011	6

Table 3.6.5.2: Educators age and home language

Name	Age 25-35	Age 35-45	Age 45-55	Age 55-65	Home Language
Educator 1		√			English
Educator 2			√		English and Spanish
Educator 3	√				English
Educator 4		√			English
Educator 5		√			English
Educator 6	√				English

Table: 3.6.6.1 Support Staff's' gender, race, qualification, year in which teaching they qualified, years of experience in psychology

| Name	Gender	Race	Qualification: Degree/Diploma (Highest Level obtained)	Qualification Year	Years of Experience
Support Staff Member 1	Female	White	Masters Counselling Psychologist	2013	4
Support Staff Member 2	Female	White	Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Criminology. Post Graduate Certificate in Education specialising in ECD and FP. Honours and Masters in Educational Psychology.	2012	6
Support Staff Member 3	Male	White	Doctorate in Education	2005	12

Table: 3.6.2.2: Support Staff's age and home language

| Name	Age 25-35	Age 35-45	Age 45-55	Age 55-65	Home Language
Support Staff Member 1	√				English
Support Staff Member 2	√				English
Support Staff Member 3			√		Afrikaans

Table: 3.6.7.1 Parents' gender, race, marital status, age of child, their age and home language

| Name Parent/Guardian (All participants are parents)	Male/ Female	Race	Marital Status	Age of Child	Age 25-35	Age 35-45	Age 45-55	Age 55-65	Home Language
Parent 1	Female	White	Married	6.6 years		√			English
Parent 2	Female	White	Married	5.10 years			√		English
Parent 3	Female	White	Married	6.4 years		√			English
Parent 4	Female	White	Divorced	6.11 years		√			English
Parent 5	Female	White	Divorced	6.4 years		√			English
Parent 6	Female	White	Married	6. 9 years		√			English
Parent 7 (Venda)	Male	African	Married	6.11 years	√				Venda

FIGURES
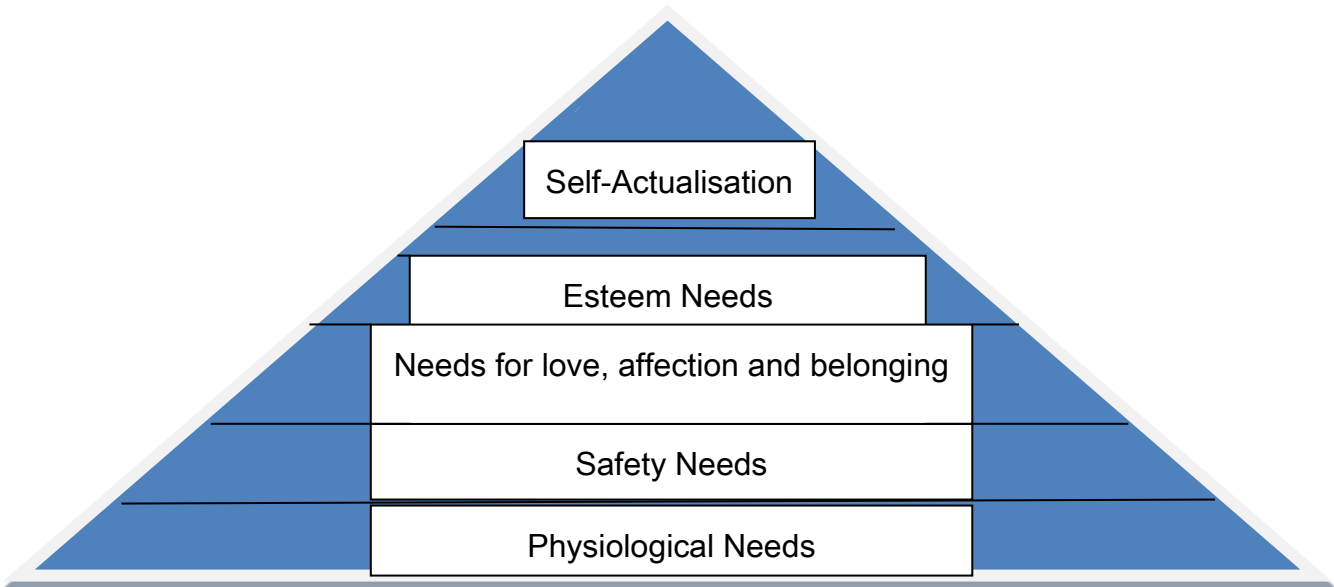
Figure 1.3.1: Learner's hierarchy of needs
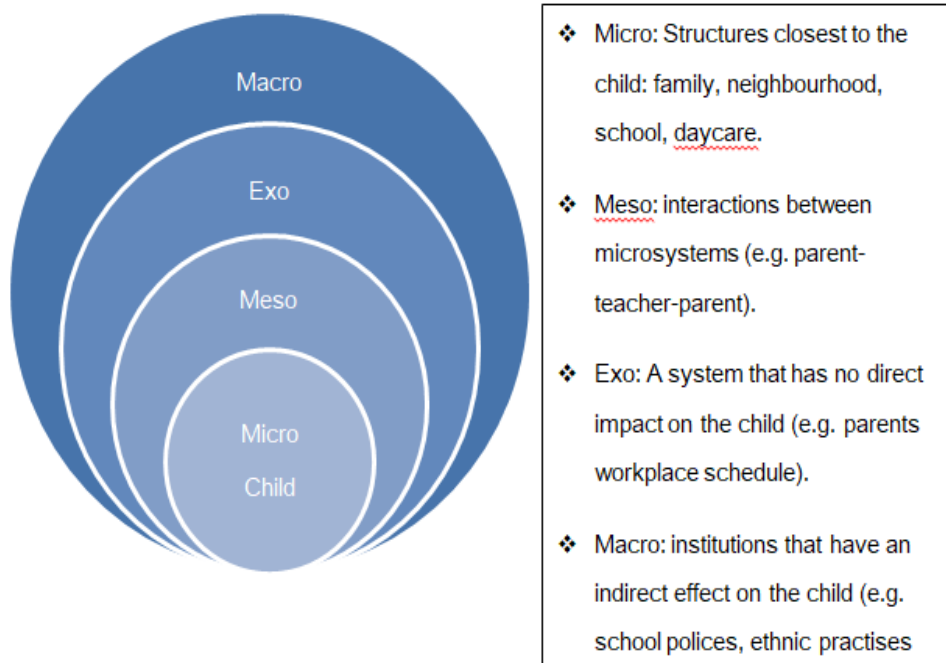
Figure 2.6.1: Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological model of child development
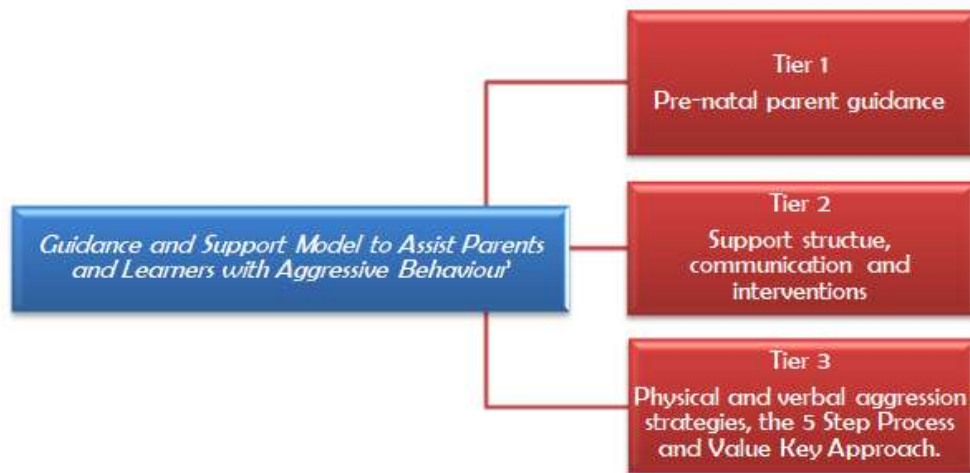
Adapted from: Krishnan (2010:7).

THE TREE OF NURTURANCE MODEL
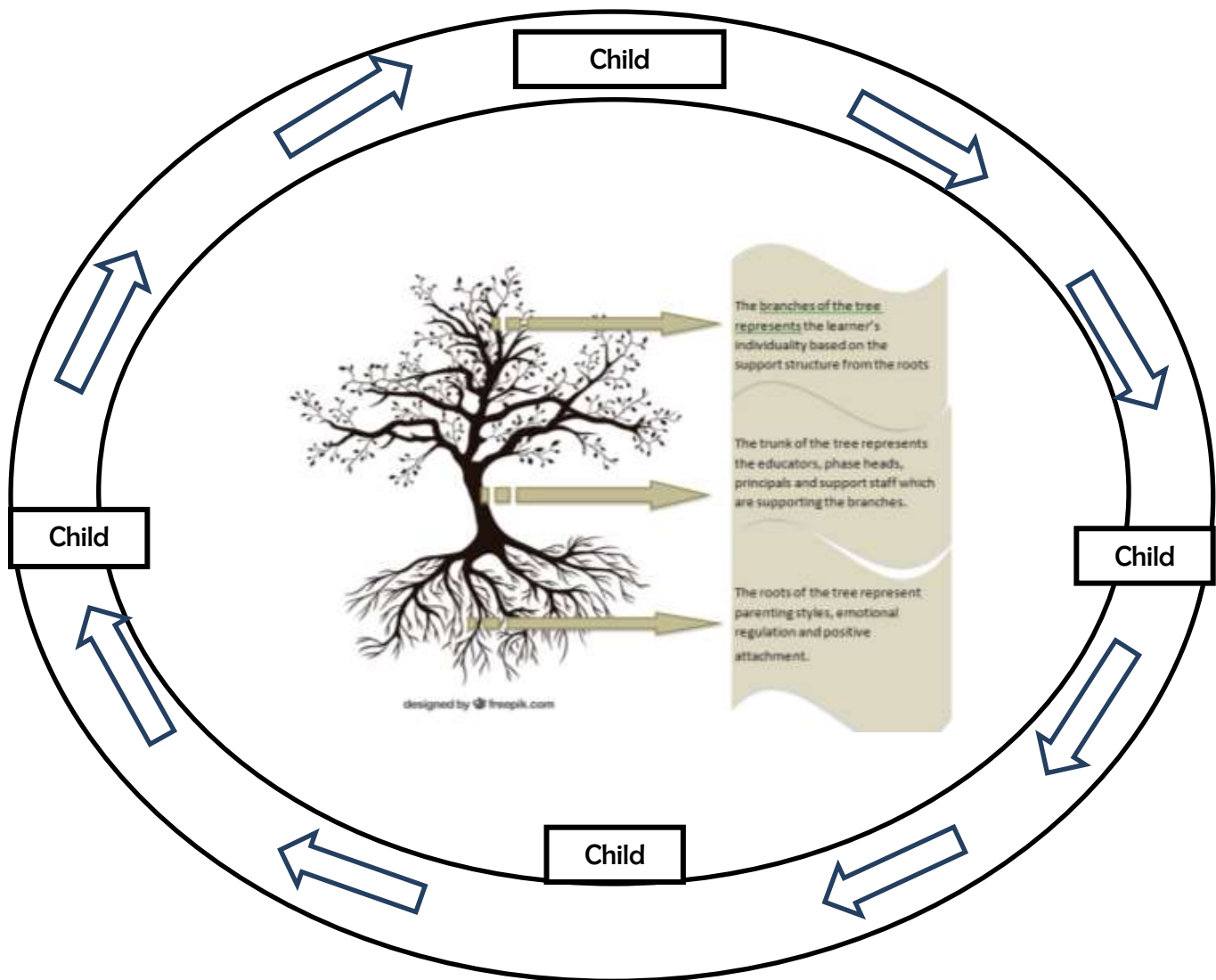
Figure 7.3: 'The Tree of Nurturance'

(Diagram accessed from https://www.freepik.com/free-vector/tree-with-

roots_784011.htm on 15 April 2018)

Figure 7.3.5.1: Parent Guidance Model founded on 3 tiers

Statement of the problem

Aggression and aggressive behaviour in South Africa has not been sufficiently contextualised according to the realities that school-based staff and parents experience. Bearing this in mind, this study seeks to use a bottom-up approach to examine the articulations of principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents with a view to develop a model that will assist to deal with the phenomena in context. This investigation helps to provide clarity on what aggressive behaviour looks like in early schooling. Such a response is necessary to contribute to appropriate interventions for parents through a school-based model.

Aim of this study

The main aim of this study was to explore aggressive behaviour amongst Grade R learners as experienced by principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents with the view to developing a school-based guidance and support model to assist parents and learners.

Figure 8.1.1: Statement of the problem

Guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour

The main aim of this study was to explore aggressive behaviour amongst Grade R learners as experienced by principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents with the view to developing a school-based guidance and support model to assist parents and learners.

Main Research Quest...

What does the experiences ... principals, phase heads, Gra... educators, support staff and ... parents suggest about the na... of aggression and aggressiv... behaviour in Grade R, and w... are the implications of this fo... school-based model for addressing aggression and aggressive behaviour aimed ... parents and learners?
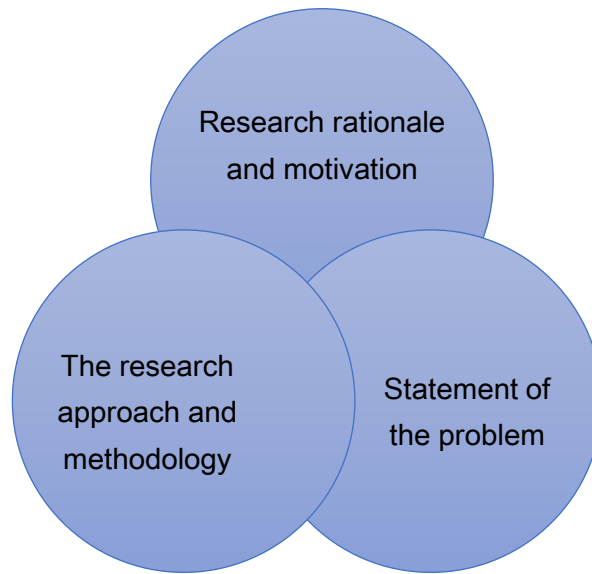
Objectives

The objectives of the study were as follows:
To establish how the concepts of aggression and aggressive behaviour are understood by principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents;
To identify the contributory factors that lead to aggression and aggressive behaviour of Grade R learners at school and at home;
To ascertain how principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents deal with aggression and aggressive behaviour (approaches, methods, lines of intervention employed);
To establish how the school can support educators and parents to deal with learners' aggressive behaviour;
To propose a school-based guidance and support model to assist parents and learners with aggressive behaviour.

Subsidiary Questions

What do the participants understand by the concept of 'aggression and aggressive behaviour'?
What are the factors that lead to aggression and aggressive behaviour of Grade R learners?
In what ways can principals, phase heads, Grade R educators, support staff and parents deal with aggressive behaviour?
What does the above suggest for a school-based model to support parents and learners with aggressive behaviour?
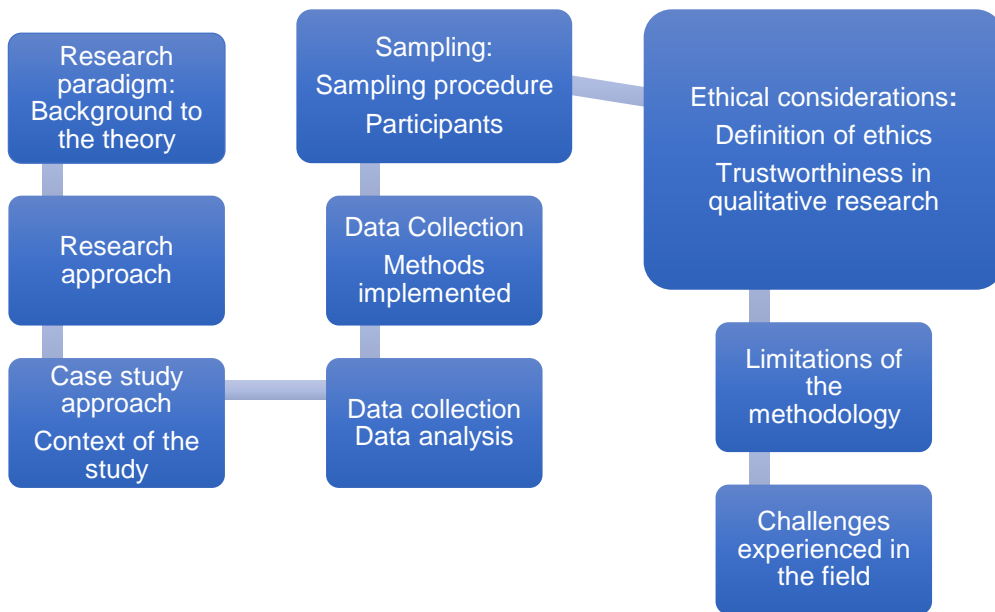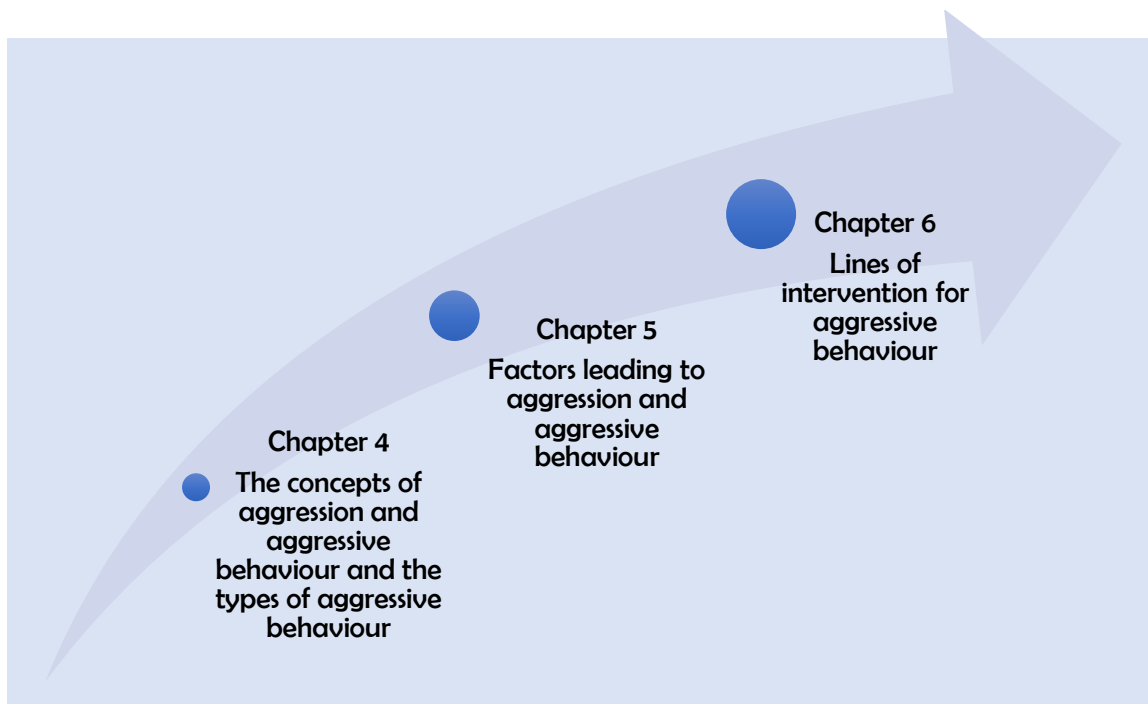
Figure 8.1.2: Aims and objective

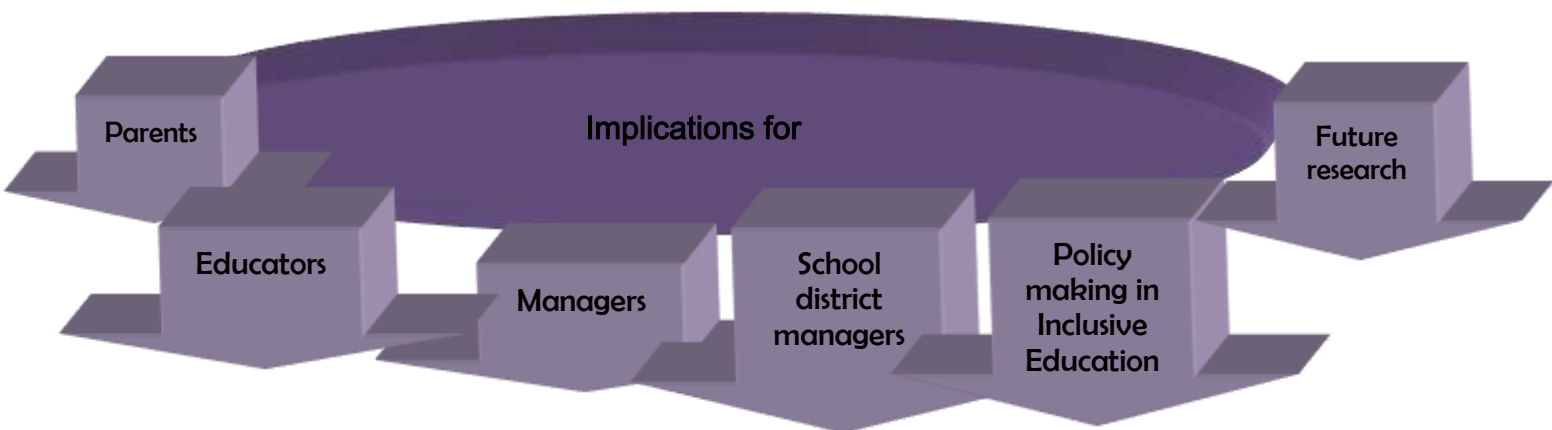**Figure 8.2.1 Chapter 1: Introduction and overview to the study**
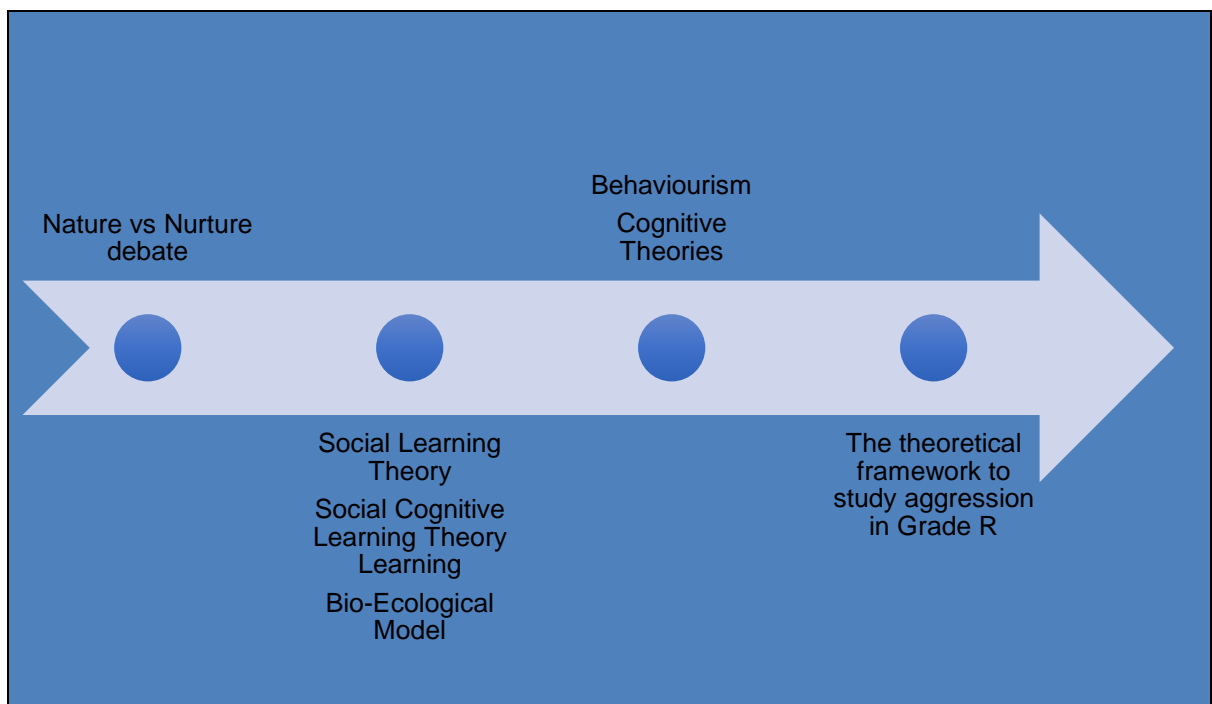
Figure 8.2.2 Chapter 2: The theoretical framework to study aggression in Grade R

Figure 8.2.3 Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

Figure 8.3: Discovery of the findings chapters

Figure 8.5.1: Implications of the study

The diagram contains the following labels: Parents, Educators, Managers, School district managers, Policy making in Inclusive Education, Future research, Implications for.