LEARNERS’ EXPERIENCE OF OTHER

LEARNERS’ AGGRESSION IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL

by

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree

MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS

in

PSYCHOLOGY OF EDUCATION

in the

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

SUPERVISOR: PROF CPH MYBURGH

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NOVEMBER 2009
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study could not have been completed without the valuable contributions made by all the individuals mentioned below who sacrificed their time to make this research possible.

My thanks go to:

- Professor Chris Myburgh and Professor Marie Poggenpoel, my supervisors for their patience, guidance, support and their continuous reminder that success is never delivered on a silver platter.
- My husband Jabu who spurred me on despite all the hardships he had to endure without my support. I thank him for keeping the house warm in my absence and his support was amazing.
- My dearest daughter Khanyisile for her inspirational words like “Mom you can’t give up now, you have to keep on keeping on!”
- My son, Nkanyiso, who had to understand at the age of five, that there were times when he wouldn’t see me, because of my studies.
- My sister Diphaphang and my brother Meshack for their support and encouragement.
- My niece Lydia Sekhonyane who selflessly and tirelessly typed my work with love.
- Timothy Maleswena, a dear friend, whom I thank for support and encouragement when I wanted to give up.
- My dearest friend Phumzile Masango who warmly opened her office for me to use any time so as to submit quality work.
- Delton Sengani, a dear friend for all his support, computer assistance and encouragement.
- The participants, for their sacrifices, their openness trust and sharing their experiences with me.
- My parents for always praying for my success.
- To all my friends and relatives I express my sincere gratitude. Without them this study would not have been possible.
- Above all, I truly learned that nothing is impossible with God.
ABSTRACT

Aggression in schools has become the order of the day as incidents of learners stabbing, bullying and killing each other are reported. Parents, educators, learners, the Department of Education, the Department of Correctional Services and the Department of Social Science are concerned about the escalation of aggression in secondary schools.

Current research on learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school has identified it as a major concern as it interferes with normal schooling. Aggression begets aggression. One of the goals of this research study was to provide guidelines for learners to manage aggression in a constructive manner. The participants in this research study were learners between the age of sixteen years and eighteen years in a secondary school in the Ekurhuleni area.

The researcher’s objectives were as follows:

- to explore and describe learners’ experience of other learner’s aggression in a secondary school; and
- to describe guidelines for the learners which will assist learners in dealing with learner aggression.

The qualitative research approach helps the researcher to understand and interpret the learners’ aggression. Phenomenological interviews were conducted and naïve sketches were written. The data was analysed by means of open coding. The major themes are set out below.

1. Learners experience other learners’ aggression as being out of control.
2. Learners experience that cultural differences contribute to other learners’ aggression.
3. Learners experience inadequate supervision and support of educators.
4. Learners experience other aggressive learners to be challenged in their lives.

5. From the interviews conducted; guidelines were made in line with the findings, to assist learners in dealing with learners’ aggression.
OPSOMMING

Aggressie in skole is alledaagse insidente van leerders se mes aanvalle, boelies en moord word gerapporteer. Ouers, onderrysers, leerders, die Departement van Onderwys, Departement van Korrektiewe Dienste en die Departement van Maatskaplike Dienste is besorgd oor die toename van aggressie in sekondêre skole.

Huidige navorsing oor leerders se ervarings van aggressie van ander leerders in 'n sekondêre skool het dit geïdentifiseer as 'n primêre aspek van besorgheid is aangesien dit inmeng met normale skole. Aggressie veroorsaak meer aggressie. 'n Doel van hierdie navorsing was om riglyne vir leerlinge neer te lê om aggressie op 'n konstruktiewe manier te hanteer. Die deelnemers in hierdie navorsing, was leerders tussen sestien en agtien jaar oud in 'n sekondêre skool in die Ekurhuleni streek.

Die doelstellings van die navorser was soos volg:

- Om leerders se belewenis van ander leerders se aggressie in 'n sekondêre skool te verken en te beskryf.
- Om riglyne vir leerders te beskryf wat hulle sal ondersteun om leerders se aggressie te hanteer.

Die kwalitatiewe navorsings benadering help die navorser om die leerders se belewenis van ander leerders se aggressie te verstaan en te interpreteer. Fenomenologiese onderhoude is gevoer en naïwe sketse geskryf. Die data was geanaliseer deur middel van oop kodering. Vyf hoof temas was geïdentifiseer.

Die hoof temas was:

1. Leerders beleef ander leerder se aggressie as buite beheer.
2. Leerders beleef dat kultuurverskille tot ander leerders se aggressie bydrae.
3. Leerders beleef onvoldoende toesig en steun van onderwysers.
4. Leerders beleef dat ander aggresiewe leerders uitgedaag is in hulle lewe.
5. Van die onderhoude wat gevoer was, is riglyne gemaak in lyn met hierdie bevindings, om leerders te help in die hantering van leerders se aggressie.
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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The South African education system is still one where aggression and violence are dominant. The launching of the “safer schools” programme in secondary schools in South Africa, involves keeping learner aggression off the school premises. It is indicative of the problem of learners’ aggression some schools experience (Bezuidenhout & Joubert, 2003:63).

The fact that South African children are exposed to high levels of violence, both at school and in the general community (Ramphele, 1997:25) suggests that the desensitising effects of such exposure are likely to be of significance in the development of aggressive behaviour among South Africa youth.

A school needs to be a place where learners choose to be and where they choose neither to disrupt nor give tacit approval to their disrupting peers (Porter, 2000:143). Mental and psychological aggression is subtle but destructive in a school environment. Feldman (1996:305) refers to provocation as source of aggression and he cites “Hurt me, I will hurt you”. Physical aggression often begets a physical response. When learners are in pain, they respond with aggression towards the source of pain.

Learners who observe other learners’ aggression feel emotional pain and they end up being fearful, which leads them to act out in aggressive behaviour. They are not concerned about who they are hurting and how. Learner aggression has to do with behaviour that deliberately attempts to achieve a particular goal of injuring another person (Larson & Lochman, 2000:3).

Learners’ experiences of other learners’ aggression emanates from the scars from early years. These are carried over to a secondary school. The scars of physical punishment elicit strong negative emotions, such as fear, anxiety, anger and rebellion (Louw & Edwards 1997:254). Furthermore Louw and Edwards (1997:254) state that research has shown that physical punishment often leads to an increase in aggressive behaviour.

According to Strauss and Kantor (Weiten, 1992:245), children who are subjected to much physical punishment tend to experience more aggression than average, an effect which continues through the adolescent stage and adulthood. If parents use punitive techniques to discipline children, children may well express their anger by behaving aggressively in return (Louw & Edwards, 1997:52).
The challenges that learners experience in their lives emanate from many factors. Their upbringing and social interactions with other learners play a vital role in learner aggression. Any child who repeatedly engages in learner aggression and violent conflict is probably acting in an interpersonal pattern which has been laid down in the family (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 1997:218). Learners experience that a child who observes his or her parents solving conflicts with aggression is more likely to use aggression for problem solving later in life. Aggressive learners expect that their aggressive behaviour will pay off and will terminate others’ hurtful behaviour (Moeller, 2001:36).

The extent to which a learner is exposed to aggression in the home relates to the likelihood that she/he will behave aggressively. When learners arrive at a secondary school, they experience that the only way to deal with conflict is through learner aggression. The school is the place that provides an environment for them to show off that they can make other learners experience learner aggression, and they can dominate other learners.

Learners experience acts of learner aggression at school as socially acceptable models of behaviour. Learners believe that it is through these acts that they will gain recognition and acceptance among their fellow learners. According to Pervin and John (2001:454), learning involves the ability to learn complex behaviour by watching others. Children acquire aggressive responses by modelling their parents, peers and educators.

Learners are ridiculed if they do not follow the biblical injunction of “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” in conflict situations. When at school, they are expected to react with aggression once they are exposed to it. Therefore, when they are irritable, quarrelsome and aggressive, they are unable to control their temper when provoked and end up experiencing frustration.

Frequently learners lash out aggressively at others who have had nothing to do with their frustration. They learn in everyday life that there are various barriers that prevent them from acting in an aggressive manner and that cause frustration. If a learner experiences frustration, aggressive energy is created and that energy activates dominant aggressive responses towards other learners. Learners internalise learner aggression and may become angry and frustrated. Learners should really come to school to learn and not to be exposed to learner aggression.

It seems as if some learners who experience other learners’ aggression cannot handle the pressure any more. They find that they are prone to learner aggression on daily basis and they then try to get even with their perpetrators.
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is a growing concern among the parents about the safety of their children at school. Parents have become unsettled about sending their children to school.

According to the Sowetan (2008:06) the question parents ask themselves is “Will my child come home safely?” Their concern is also supported by the frequent media reports. In view of frequent media releases regarding learner aggression in secondary schools, this researcher has started to wonder about learners’ experiences of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school in the Ekurhuleni area.

It seems as if learners are unsettled and unhappy about other learners’ aggression. This brings about an unsafe environment in their school. According to learners’ experience, their school has now become unsafe due to some learners’ aggression.

There seems to be limited information available regarding learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school in the Ekurhuleni area. The scope of this study will be limited to learners’ experiences of learners’ aggression in a secondary school from the learners’ perspective. Learners tend to experience other learners’ aggression in their school environment.

This topic is under research in South Africa as limited information is found on the topic. It is evident that there is a need to explore this research topic in order to benefit from its findings: it will assist learners in dealing with other learners’ aggression.

Against the background of the preceding discussion, the research questions are set out below.

- What are the learners’ experiences of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school?
- What guidelines can be developed for learners which will assist them in dealing with learners’ aggression in a secondary school?

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives are:

- to explore and describe Grade 11 learners’ experiences of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school; and
- to describe guidelines for the learners which will assist learners in dealing with other learners’ aggression in a secondary school.
1.4 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

Hiles (2000:6) defines a paradigm as a set of beliefs that deals with ultimate or first principles, assumptions adopted towards truth reality, knowledge and how knowledge is to be used.

Creswell (1994:1) states that the selection of a paradigm dictates the theories and methods used in the research. A qualitative paradigm was selected for this research. Three types of assumptions of the researcher’s paradigm are viewed as important namely, metatheoretical, theoretical and methodological. These are discussed below.

1.4.1 Metatheoretical assumptions

Metatheoretical assumptions are concerned with the way in which human beings are seen to act within the world, and whether learners respond in a mechanistic way to their environment and the experiences that happen to them and do they initiate action and make choices (Opie, 2004:22).

In this research the assumptions were that the participants were experts in their own experience and the research aimed to understand rather than explain the phenomenon (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:18, De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2002:268).

1.4.2 Theoretical assumption

A theoretical assumption relates to the nature of reality, the relationship of the researcher to what is being researched, the role of the values in a study, and the process of research (Creswell, 1998:74). Thus, theoretical assumptions reflect what he or she considers true and valid knowledge within an existing theoretical framework. Theoretical assumptions are testable, and form part of the existing acceptable theory of discipline.

In order to understand fully factors of other learners’ aggression, the researcher will enter the research field with an open mind without any preconceived ideas (Creswell, 1994:147; De Vos, 2000:337).

The theoretical assumption used in this study serves to clarify the researchers’ stance on concepts in the investigation.

1.4.2.1 Definitions of concepts

- Educator

Educator refers to any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons, or provides professional therapy at any school, technical college, college of education, assists in rendering professional services, or performs education auxiliary services provided by or in the Department of Education, and whose employment is regarded by the Educational
Employment Act (1994) as any other person registered with the South African Council of Educators (SACE).

Furthermore the South African Council of Educators (SACE) describes the educator as the one who uses appropriate language and behaviour in his or her interaction with learners, and acts in such a way as to elicit respect from the learner. An educator avoids any form of humiliation and refrains from any form of child abuse, physical or psychological. In this research educator will be defined as any person who educates in a school and who monitors learners not to indulge in learner aggression.

- **Learner**

  Mothata, Lemmer, Mda and Pretorius (2000:94) define a learner as any person, ranging from early childhood development to the adult education phases, who is involved in any kind of formal or non-formal education and training activity, and any person who receives or, is obliged to receive education. According to the South African Council of Educators (SACE), a learner is a pupil or a student who is taught or trained by an educator. This researcher briefly describes the learner as any person irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture, age, language and learning style, who is in the process of acquiring skills, knowledge, values and attitudes.

  The learner is someone with his/her own ability to gain insight into the world who formulates concepts and solves problems. Learners learn through being taught by an educator. A learner is someone who receives information from his/her environment and stores it in some form of memory, so as to distinguish between right and wrong.

- **Environment**

  Learners still believe that the environment has to do with natural areas. As individual ideas and experiences are changing, learners begin to realise that the school environment is made up of learners and the place where they learn, work and play.

  A school is expected to be a place where safety and security are guaranteed. It is disturbing to realise that the school environment has turned into a place where learners are exposed to frequent acts of other learners’ aggression. Hill and Hill (1994:16-17) state a single act of violence or aggression within a school has the potential to destroy any possibility of a safe and orderly environment. It is difficult to respect each other in an aggressive environment (Wilde, 1995:5). Learners’ environment is the school. A responsible environment for learners enhances learners’ experiences. The physical environment should convey a message of care, comfort and safety. Learners must be in harmony with their school environment because they influence the environment and they are influenced by it.
• Aggression
The Reader's Digest Word Power Dictionary (2002:17) defines aggression as hostile or violent or combative behaviour or attitudes. Weiten (1992:538) further defines aggression as any behaviour that is intended to hurt someone, either physically or verbally.

For the purpose of this study, learner aggression can be defined as an intentional act to inflict harm or injure others, to frustrate, humiliate and block others in achieving their goals. Learners’ aggression is experienced by learners as a form of power control whereby the older ones are in control over the vulnerable ones.

• Experience
Experience refers to gaining knowledge from birth till death. According to Maphorisa (1999:11), experience is directly related to how adolescents internalise events, which they have experienced. Areas affected are emotions, feelings, thoughts, preferences, values, occurrences and experiences. This study will focus on learners’ experiences of other learners' aggression. The Mac Millan English Dictionary (2005:484) defines experience as the knowledge one gains from life and from being in many different situations.

1.4.3 Methodological assumptions
The central methodological assumption is based on functional reasoning. Botes (1995:13) implies that the research must be applicable to practice and must be useful. Methodological assumptions refers to the theory of obtaining knowledge of the consideration of the best ways, methods or procedures by which data is obtained that will provide the evidence for the construction of knowledge about whatever it is that is being researched (Opie, 2004:16).

The nature of the research problem and its aims determine the most suitable research method for the research process (De Vos, 2000:82). According to Babbie and Mouton (2002:52), the qualitative researcher attempts always to study human action from an insider's experience. Data collected will be validated and justified by appropriate literature control. The researcher will use the strategies of Lincoln and Guba's (1985:39-43 and 209-307) to ensure trustworthiness.

The researcher will also use the criteria for practising science, which are logical reasoning, justification and evidence. In this research, understanding the learners’ experiences of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school will provide the basis for guidelines in assisting them to deal with other learners' aggression. The researcher will listen to participants during interviews and will build a picture based on their ideas (Creswell, 1994:2). The phenomenological approach will help the researcher explore the learners’ experiences of other learners’ aggression.
1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD
The research design and method will be discussed briefly.

1.5.1 Research design
The research design is a plan or structured framework of how the researcher intends conducting the research process in order to solve the research problem (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:55). Furthermore, according to Babbie and Mouton (2001:53), the qualitative researcher always attempts to study human actions from an insider’s experience.

The research design in this study will adhere to the requirements of a qualitative strategy with a contextual, descriptive and exploratory focus. The purpose of this study has been firstly to explore and describe learners’ experiences of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school, and secondly to describe guidelines for learners which will assist learners in dealing with other learners’ aggression. These aspects will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

1.5.2 Research method
The research method will be conducted in two phases.

1.5.2.1 Phase 1: Exploration and description of learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school
In this research, the researcher is interested in understanding the learners’ experiences of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school. The information gathered will be used to describe guidelines, which will assist learners in dealing with other learners’ aggression. The method of obtaining this information will be discussed.

a) Sampling
Learners experiencing other learners’ aggression in their daily lives will be regarded as “knowledgeable” participants (Myburgh & Strauss, 1998:72). Sarantakos (2000:139) states that the major reason for sampling is feasibility. A sample will be purposively selected. Criteria for the selection of the participants will be discussed in-depth in Chapter Two.

b) Data collection
Data collection will be done by means of focus group interviews and naïve sketches (De Vos, 2000:273). A central question will be posed to the participants at the start of the interviews, “How is aggression in your school?” Participants will relate their experiences of other learners’ aggression in detail. Interviews will be audiotaped, and thereafter transcribed. Field notes will be compiled in order to describe the interview situation.
c) Data analysis

It is only through qualitative data analysis that one can begin to gain a feel for the social reality which underlies any research findings (Opie, 2004:152). Learners’ interviews will be transcribed by the researcher so as to raise the credibility of the research (De Vos, et al. 2002:273,305). Thereafter the data analysis technique as generated by Tesch (Creswell, 1994:154-155) will be applied.

d) Literature control

A literature control will be conducted to support the research study in which the researcher will explore and describe learners’ experiences of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school.

1.5.2.2 Phase 2: Description of guidelines for the learners which will assist the learners in dealing with other learners’ aggression

Insights from the study with reference to data collected from the results of phase one will be used to describe guidelines that could be used in assisting learners in dealing with other learners’ aggression in a secondary school. The guidelines will be based on various themes collected through data analysis in conjunction with relevant literature.

1.6 MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

Measures to ensure trustworthiness according to Guba’s model (Krefting, 1991:215) will be followed throughout the research process in ensuring the trustworthiness of the research.

► Truth value refers to the researcher’s confidence about her findings from the participants, and the context in which the study will be conducted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

► Applicability refers to whether the findings can be applied to other circumstances.

► Consistency refers to the same outcomes if the research were to be carried out again in similar context, where learners would discuss their experiences of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school.

► Neutrality refers to freedom from bias in the research procedures and results (Krefting 1991:216).

Measures to ensure trustworthiness will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

1.7 ETHICAL MEASURES

Ethical guidelines are standards adhered to in research (Strydom, 1998a:63), Researchers have ethical responsibilities associated with the conduct and reporting of research. The
The researcher will indicate to the participants that they can participate in the study at their own free will. Informed consent to conduct the research will be obtained from the necessary authorities and from the participants and their parents (Burns & Grove, 1997:209). They can withdraw at any time if they wish to do so. These will include maintaining the confidentiality of the data and respecting their privacy and anonymity.

See Chapter Two for an in depth discussion.

1.8 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1
An overview of the study and the rationale

Chapter 2
Research design and methodology

Chapter 3
Data analysis: learners’ experiences of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school

Chapter 4
Guidelines, conclusion, recommendations and summary

1.9 SUMMARY
The aim of the research is to investigate learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school in the Ekurhuleni East district. The research will attempt to formulate the relevant guidelines which will assist learners in dealing with other learners’ aggression in a secondary school. The chapter concentrates on the background of the research problem statement, the objectives of the research, the research methodology, ethical measures, trustworthiness, sampling data collection, and data analysis, the literature control, definition of concepts and the division of chapters.
CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

2.1 INTRODUCTION OF RESEARCH DESIGN
A research design refers to a set of guidelines to be followed in addressing the research problem (Mouton, 1994:107). The research design addresses the planning of the scientific inquiry or the design of the strategy to find out the result (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:72). They state that research design focuses on the logic of research and the kind of evidence required to address the research question adequately.

In Chapter One the researcher gave an overview of the study. In this chapter, a description of the research design and method will be presented. The design used in this study will be qualitative in nature, exploratory, descriptive and contextual. It will be used to gain as much insight as possible into the learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression.

2.1.1 Qualitative research
Qualitative research is a multiperspective approach to social interaction, aimed at describing, making sense of, interpreting or reconstructing this interaction in terms of the meanings that the participants attach to it (De Vos, 2000:240). According to Mouton and Marais (1994:43-44,51), qualitative research is an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon in which the researcher collects, and interprets the data and reports the findings in a descriptive way. This design has been selected because the approach to the phenomenon was that of describing learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school. De Vos and Fouché (1998:248) further state that observations are determined by the information richness of settings.

Bodgan and Biklen (2003:140) explain that one of the characteristics of qualitative research is that it demands that the world be approached with the assumption that nothing is trivial, that everything has the potential of being a clue that might unlock a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied. Hence, Berg (1995:7) states that a qualitative researcher seeks answers to questions by examining social settings; therefore, this method allows the participants to express themselves in their own language.

According to De Vos, Fouché and Delport (2004:243), qualitative research produces descriptive data in the participants’ own written or spoken words. Qualitative researchers are intrigued by the complexity of social interactions as expressed in daily lives, and by the meanings the participants themselves attribute to these interactions (Marshall & Rossman,
The interviews were guidelines for educators and learners which will assist learners in dealing with other learners’ aggression.

This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future, but is attempting to explore and describe the nature of learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression; what their lives are like; what is going on for them; what their experiences of other learners’ aggression are; what the world is like in that particular setting; what the school is like where they are experiencing other learners’ aggression; and in the analysis to be able to describe their experiences of other learners’ aggression faithfully to other learners who are interested.

The analysis strives for depth of understanding (Merriam, 1998:6). Hence De Vos and Fouché (1998:04) claim that one’s purpose of qualitative methods is to discover important questions, processes and relationships, not to test them. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995:17) qualitative research requires intense listening, a respect for, and curiosity about, what people say, and a systematic effort really to hear and understand what people say. Merriam (1998:6-8) identifies the following as the characteristics of qualitative research.

- Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world.
- The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.
- Qualitative research involves fieldwork.
- Qualitative research primarily employs an inductive research strategy.
- This type of research focuses on process, meaning and understanding. The product of qualitative study is richly descriptive.

Emphasis is placed on the subjective meaning and experiences of the participants; therefore it is the researcher’s responsibility to access these.

2.1.2 Explorative research

Exploratory studies are valuable means of finding out what is happening; to seek new insight; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light (Robson, in Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 1997:43). The exploratory design of the research was to gain the “basic facts and to create a general picture of conditions” (Fouché, 2002:109).

Brink (1996:11) states that explorative research is to explore the dimensions of a phenomenon, the manner in which it is manifested and the other factors with which it is related (it provides insight into the nature of a phenomenon). According to Terre’ Blanche and Durrheim (1999:39), exploratory studies are also used to make a preliminary investigation into
unknown areas of research. The researcher “brackets” her knowledge and preconceptions about learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression so that it does not interfere with the investigation process into learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression. The researcher will thus depart from the position of “not knowing” or curiosity and this will enable her to gain a richer understanding in the phenomenon (Mouton & Marais, 1994:43-44; Mouton, 1996:102; De Vos, 1998:124; Polit & Hungler, 1995:11; Strauss & Corbin, 1995:19; Burns & Grove, 1997:28-29; Creswell, 1994:145).

Successful exploratory research depends on the researcher being open to and investigating new ideas, stimuli and suggestions without allowing preconceived ideas to interfere with the investigation process (Burns & Grove, 1997:8). This study was of an exploratory nature as the primary purpose was to gather richer insight into learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school so that guidelines could be developed to assist them in dealing with learners’ aggression. In this study data was gathered using focus group interviews, naïve sketches and field notes.

2.1.3 Descriptive research

Qualitative research is descriptive in that the researcher is interested in process, meaning and understanding gained through words or pictures (Creswell, 1994:145). In this study description is more likely to refer to an intensive examination of the phenomenon under study (Rubin & Babbie, 2001:125) which is learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression. The participants described as much as possible what they experience, as well as how they act when they experience other learners’ aggression.

Therefore, it is imperative that the researcher has a clear picture of the phenomenon on which she wishes to collect data prior to the collection of the data (Saunders et al., 1997:79). In qualitative research the researcher also determines whether emerging patterns in the data will explain the phenomenon under investigation (Burns & Grove, 1997:16). The researcher employs an inductive form of reasoning to recognise salient theme patterns and categories as identified from the collected data (Creswell, 1994:103; Schurink, 1998:243).

In this study the researcher described guidelines to assist participants who experience other learners’ aggression, based on the data collected.

2.1.4 Contextual research

The aim of contextual design is to produce an extensive description of the phenomenon in its specific context (Mouton, 1996:133). Mouton further states that a contextual study is in one in which the phenomenon of interest is studied in terms of their intrinsic and immediate context. Contextual studies are said to focus on specific events. It is imperative to study people in their
habitat or natural setting in order to understand the dynamics of learners experiences of other learners’ aggression as fully as possible (Schurink, 1998:281).

The context design aims at producing a detailed description of the phenomenon under investigation in is specific context (Mouton, 1994:133).

Context implies the conditions and situations of an event, the cultural and historical situation, which are all important for an understanding of a phenomenon, and the meaning which the participants give to it (Holloway & Wheeler, 1996:192). This study is contextbound in that by conducting this research, learners experiences of other learners’ aggression will be explored and described within the unique context of their life-world. The researcher interviewed participants at their school, as this is their natural setting.

This study deals with learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school in their unique environment in the Ekurhuleni area.

2.2 RESEARCH METHOD
In this section the method in which the study will is carried out will be described. This study will be conducted according to the following set objectives.

- to explore and describe Grade 11 learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school; and
- to describe guidelines for the learners which will assist learners in dealing with other learners’ aggression in a secondary school.

2.2.1 Phase one: Exploration and description of Grade 11 learners experience of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school
The objective of the first phase of the research is to explore and describe Grade 11 learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression. The researcher’s aim will be to gather as much information as possible from the participants about their experiences of other learners’ aggression. This phase will describe how data will be collected, analysed and described, as well as how it will be compared to literature.

2.2.1.1 Pilot study
A pilot study is necessary because it assists the researcher to obtain a picture of the real practical situation where the prospective investigation will be carried out. It helps the researcher to address the resources, research population and procedures of data collection, data gathering it and possible errors which may occur (Strydom, 1998:181).
According to Welman and Kruger (2001:146) the purpose of a pilot study is to detect possible flaws in the measurement procedure. Not only should the actual questions be part of the participants, but they should also be asked to indicate how they have interpreted the formulated questions.

This explanation conforms to the views held by Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:155) who explain a pilot study as a small study conducted prior to a larger piece of research to determine whether the methodology, sampling, instruments and analysis are adequate and appropriate. In the pilot study participants were chosen from the target population in this study.

A pilot study was conducted with a small group of Grade 11 learners in a secondary school in Ekurhuleni with regard to learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression. The pilot study in this research assisted the researcher in collecting relevant data, choosing the appropriate interview setting and being able to eliminate problems from the pilot study. The researcher realised that it was more beneficial for this study to do focus group interviews.

2.2.1.2 Population and Sampling
a) Population
According to Talbot (1995:241) a population is a group whose members possess specific attributes that the researcher is interested in studying. Furthermore, in a survey a researcher selects a subset of the population to represent the population as a whole. The subset of the population drawn from the sampling frame is called the sample. The researcher selected a small group of Grade 11 learners to serve as the sample in learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school. Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (1997:135-136) define a population as the set of all the cases of interest.

b) Sampling: purposive sampling
The sampling plan of this research is purposive. This is the strategy in which particular settings, persons or events are selected “deliberately in order to provide insight into important information that cannot be gotten as well as from other choices” (Maxwell, 1996:70). Talbot and Edwards (1994:254) state that purposive sampling is where the researcher based on knowledge and expertise of the participants, select the participants’ for study. Grade eleven learners between the ages 16 to 18 years were purposively selected to describe their experience of other learners’ aggression. Learners are from a secondary school in Ekurhuleni, where learners’ aggression has escalated at an alarming rate. The researcher is of the opinion that this research would yield a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon that would be researched (Rubin & Babbie 2001:399).
c) Sampling criteria

Sampling criteria will be to assist the researcher in determining the target population for the study (Burns & Grove, 1997:403) and are based among other things on the research problem, research purpose and research design.

The following are criteria utilised for sampling.

- Participants must be Grade 11 learners who have experienced other learners’ aggression in a secondary school.
- Participants should be attending the specific school so that it will be possible to keep contact throughout the study and to facilitate interpretation and findings.
- Participants must be between the ages of 16 and 18.
- Participants must be able to communicate in English.
- Participants need to be prepared to participate in the research. Such participation is confirmed by their written consent.
- Participants will agree to the interview sessions being audiotaped and transcribed.

2.2.1.3 Data collection method

Qualitative research is aimed at understanding a phenomena and for this reason interviews with participants who have experienced the phenomena are one of the methods used to collect data (Fouché, 2002:273; Manson, 1996:39).

Qualitative researchers depend on a variety of methods for collecting information. The use of multiple data collection methods contributes to the trustworthiness of the data. According to Merriam (1998:106), data collection is guided by questions, educated hunches and emerging findings. Interviews were audio-taped and behavioural observations from the participants were written down. Bodgan and Biklen (2003:106) define data as “the rough materials researchers collect from the world they are studying”.

The researcher relies heavily on interviews and naïve sketches as the main method of data gathering. Interviews were conducted with a small sample of learners from a secondary school in Ekurhuleni to discuss their experiences of other learners' aggression. The researcher only guided the participants towards certain themes and did not guide participants towards certain opinions about the themes (Kvale, 1996:176).
a) Focus group interviews

Focus groups are group interviews (Morgan, 1998:1). Focus group interviews always relied on interaction within the group based on a topic supplied by the researcher (Shaw, 1999:156). The researcher identified the essence of human experience concerning a phenomenon as described by the participants in the study (Creswell, 2003:15).

Focus group interviews allowed the participants the freedom to organise their own descriptions, emphasising what they find significant (Moodie, 1997:20). This study applied in depth interviews in collecting data. The researcher avoided prejudice at all cost. According to De Vos (2002:298), the in depth interview was used to determine people’s experiences, opinions, facts and forecasts on their reactions to initial findings and potential solutions. During the process, the researcher “bracketed” her experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study (Nieswiadomy in Creswell, 2003:15).

Josseler in Collins (1998:8) mentions that the events recounted and experienced and described, were made more substantial and more real by being recorded and written down. The participants here were made aware of the fact that the interviews were recorded.

In this study the participants were interviewed at the school premises, at a place convenient to them and in a non-threatening atmosphere. This approach assisted the researcher to interact freely with ease with the participants by creating a friendly atmosphere that enabled her to gain as much information as possible. It also helped the researcher to understand how learners experience other learners’ aggression in their school.

De Vos (2002:299) mentions that prior to the interview, the researcher should define the information required and the information supplied to the interviewee must clearly relate to specific questions that the researcher seeks to answer. Streubert and Carpenter (1995:32) postulate that intuition requires the researcher to become totally immersed in the phenomenon under investigation. The interview consisted of the following question:

- How is aggression in your school?

This question enabled the learners to open up when they discussed their experiences of other learners’ aggression. Hence it led to the second question being:

- Is there anything you would like to contribute?
In this research, techniques are used in collecting information or for data gathering, probing, reflecting, paraphrasing, clarifying and summarising (Okun, 1997: 75-76; De Vos, 2000: 294-295) to encourage participants to articulate their experiences freely.

- **Probing**
  Probing is an open-ended attempt to obtain more information about something (Okun, 1997:75). Probing questions can be used to explore responses, which are of significance to the research topic (Saunders et al., 1997:226). Probing should not give the interviewee’s the impression that their responses are rejected because they are incomplete. No value judgements were expressed during probing.

Schurink (1998:310) states that open-ended questions should be asked, the interviewer should make use of tracking, clarification of what is said and make use of reflective summaries. Polit and Hungler (1995:650) refer to probing as the researcher's ability to help participants elicit more useful or detailed information in an interview that was volunteered in the first reply. Examples of probing are: “Go on, tell me more. . .”, “Let’s talk about that . . . anything else? (Okun, 1997:70)

- **Reflecting**
  This involves expressing in fresh words the interviewee’s essential experience stated or strongly implied (Gillis, 1992:54, Covey, 1992:249). It also refers to communicating to the participants that their concerns and perspectives are being understood (Okun, 1997:70). Examples are the following: “Sounds as if you are really unhappy about learner aggression”?

- **Paraphrasing**
  This is a method of restating the interviewee’s basic message in similar, but usually fewer words. This method is used by the interviewer to test her understanding of what the interviewee has said. In simpler form it is introduced by changing the pronoun “I” to “You” (Gillis, 1992:53).

- **Clarifying**
  This means bridging vague material into sharper focus. The interviewer makes a guess regarding the interviewees and offers it to the interviewee, or the interviewer may also ask for clarification when she cannot make sense of the interviewee’s response. Examples are: “I am confused about. . . Could you go over that again please? (Okun, 1997:70-113)

- **Summarising**
  This involves combining into one statement several ideas and feelings at the end of a discussion unit or the end of the interview. By summarising the researcher synthesises what
has been communicated during the interview and uses this as means to highlight the major
effective and cognitive themes (Okun, 1997:76).

b) Naïve sketches
Naïve sketches involve giving participants the central question of “How is aggression in your
school?” as the subject of written essay.

c) Observation and field notes
Brink (1996:150) defines observations as a technique for collecting descriptive data on
behaviour, events and situations. In qualitative research the researcher is the primary
instrument in data collection. This necessitates identification of personal value assumptions
and bias at the beginning of the study (Creswell, 1994:162-163). In order to do this, the

To be unbiased means seeing all the facts regarding the phenomenon and the formation of
new constructs (Poggenpoel, 1998:337). Observation enables the researcher to reflect on
current behaviour. The researcher kept observational notes in order to give an account of
what has happened. This written account of the observation constitutes field notes, which are
analogous to the interview transcript (Merriam, 1998:104).

Schurink (1998:285) holds the view that researchers should not rely solely on their memories
regarding their observations of participants, as it is possible to leave out vital information.
Schurink further states that field notes are not merely summaries of events, but rather detailed
reproductions of what has occurred.

De Vos (1998:93) adds that researchers must design a way of observing events related to the
phenomenon naturalistically, a system for discovering the extent of the problem and detecting
the effects following the intervention. Observation and field notes supplemented the taped
interviews.

The following are forms of field notes as part of observation.

- Observational notes explain what has happened. They describe the events taking place
  through watching and listening (Schurink, 1998:285). According to Lincoln and Guba
  (1985:183), observational notes are what the researcher present, what she sees and
  hears during the interview.

- Theoretical notes are self-conscious, systematic attempts by the researcher to derive
  meaning from some or all observational notes (Schurink, 1998:286). Theoretical notes
  include notes on operational practices such as the time schedule, the sequence and the
  physical set up (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:183-185).
• Methodological notes are reminders, instructions and critical comments that the researcher makes for personal use (Schurink, 1998:285).
• Personal notes are about one’s own reactions and reflections as well as experiences about the focus group interviews. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985:183-185), these are personal notes as the researcher’s experience during interview.

2.2.1.4 Data analysis

Data analysis involves organising what the researcher has seen, heard and read so that the researcher can make sense of what she/he has learned (Glesné & Peshkin, 1991:49). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000:229), the data analysis begins shortly after the data selection commences and continues during data collection and beyond. De Vos (2002:343) suggests that the success of data analysis rests on well-organised data, the cornerstone of which is the transcripts of taped data.

The researcher identified the major themes and related them to the categories (Poggenpoel, 1998:345; Creswell, 1994:155).

In analysing the data the researcher made use of Tesch’s eight steps (Creswell, 1994:155) to reduce the information into themes and categories, namely “learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression”. These eight steps helped the researcher to analyse the contextual data in a systematic process. Tesch’s approach in Creswell (1998:155) to qualitative data is described below.

• Read carefully through all the transcripts to gain the sense of the whole. Pick the most interesting or shortest interview, jot down some ideas as they come to mind, ask yourself what the study is all about. Think about the underlying meaning and write thoughts in the margin.
• Make a list of all topics from all the interviews and cluster similar topics together.
• Form these topics into columns that might be arranged as major topics, unique topics and leftovers. Take the list and go back to the data.
• Abbreviate the topics as codes and write codes next to the appropriate segment of the text.
• Try out this preliminary organising scheme to see whether new categories and codes emerge.
• Triangulation of data will be made by consulting an independent coder who will analysis the interview independently of the researcher.
• The researcher re-codes existing data if necessary.

A set of transcripts of the interviews, naïve sketches and field notes were given to an independent coder who analysed the data. Consensus discussions took place between the researcher and independent coder regarding identified themes and categories (Creswell, 1994:155). The independent coder is a researcher who is familiar with conducting qualitative data analysis. The themes as they have emerged in the interviews and as interpreted by the researcher, is discussed by the researcher with the interviewees in the follow-up interviews. This is to ensure that information obtained is a clear reflection of what the interviewees meant.

According to Neuman (1997:426), after data has been analysed, examples of patterns of interaction between the internal and external environment of the participants were be interpreted in terms of a social theory. De Vos (2002:344) says the “interpretation involves making sense of the data.” Accurate interpretation of learners’ experiences of other learners’ aggression is dependent on a thorough literature control and after data collection and analysis.

2.2.1.5 Literature control
Literature control refers to a scrutiny of all relevant sources of information, according to Babbie and Mouton (2002:132). The main purpose of doing a literature control is to show the reader how the researcher’s study supplements work that has already been done on learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression (Saunders et al., 1997:375).

Yegidis and Weinbach (1996:57) state that the source should provide the information about research problems and the research questions. It must further enable the researcher to draw conclusion and it must be reliable. Referential checks enhance the scientific trustworthiness of the study. Moodie (1997:240) defines the aim of the literature control in phase one as being to provide the researcher with theoretical data and enables her to compare the results of the study with existing literature.

According to Merriam (1998:55), a literature review is a narrative essay that integrates, synthesises and critiques, the important points and research of a particular topic. Thus the analysed data was compared to verify the findings. This subsequently involved the systematic search for literature that fits the collected data. It should ensure that the study was valued as part of a cumulative knowledge building effort regarding the phenomenon under study (Rubin & Babbie, 2001:121).
2.2.2 Phase two: Description of guidelines to assist the learners in dealing with other learners’ aggression

The objective of phase two is to describe guidelines that secondary schools should use to assist learners in dealing with other learners’ aggression. These guidelines will be derived from the results of phase one and a literature control. These guidelines will be discussed with learners to verify their appropriateness.

2.3 ETHICAL MEASURES

According to Strydom (1998:24), ethics is a widely accepted set of moral principles which offers rules and behavioural expectations about conduct towards participants by researchers. Eloff and Ebersöhn (2004:414) concurs that ethics are moral principles used to guide behaviour and help people to separate right from wrong. Ethical issues need to be considered in all research methods. In focus group interview the researcher has a moral obligation to seek new knowledge.

This is not separated from the moral obligation to consider the rights of the participants who are expected to provide this knowledge (Streubert & Carpenter, 1995:44). In such a situation the researcher is aware that it is of vital importance to build trust between her and the learners and to respect them as autonomous and therefore capable of making sound decisions (Burns & Grove, 1997:83; Streubert & Carpenter, 1995:44; De Vos, 2000:34).

Participants should be selected for reasons directly related to the problem being studied, not because they can be easily manipulated (Brink, 1996:40). The researcher’s emphasis should be accurate and complete information so that participants will fully comprehend the investigation and consequently be able to make a voluntary, thoroughly reasoned decision about their possible participation (De Vos, 2000:65). Eloff and Ebersöhn (2004:98-99) refer to trust as “TOSS”, meaning trusting is openly self-disclosing and sharing.

The ethical measures described below were taken into account during the course of the research study.

2.3.1 Competency of the researcher

Researchers must be competent, accurate and above all, honest in whatever they do. Brink (1996:39) further states that the researcher has to apply other principles which deal with sensitive issues such as honesty and integrity when conducting research. According to Strydom (1998:31), an ethical obligation rests with the researcher to ensure that they are competent and skilled to undertake the investigation they have in mind, the researcher’s methodology and interpersonal skills. The study was supervised by two professors who are experts in this field and who are actively involved in qualitative research.
2.3.2 Relationship with participants
The researcher tried to make the research as transparent as possible. The rationale was to maintain a healthy relationship between the researcher and the participants. Following Schurink (1998:302) the aim of the proposed investigation, as well as the envisaged use of the results, was clearly set out. Participants were informed about the study and its purposes, practical aspects of the research, time investment, and usage of tape recorder, as well as possible inconveniences.

Participants were given the option of whether or not to participate in the study, and they were allowed to withdraw at any time when they felt uncomfortable, without any penalty.

More information was given to the participants about where to contact the researcher if necessary to validate interpretations from interviews, or should they wish to make any changes, or have questions or queries about the research process.

2.3.3 Protection of human rights
Demonstrating respect for participants by protecting their rights, the researcher has a responsibility to demonstrate respect for the scientific community by protecting the integrity of scientific knowledge (Brink, 1996:47). Protection of human rights is an act towards others which regards them as equally entitled to basic liberty such as: life; liberty and the pursuit of happiness, freedom of conscience, thought, expression and freedom from coercion (Johnson, 2003:378).

According to Shaughnessey and Zechmeister (1997:56), researchers take responsible measures to honour all commitments they have made to research participants. To ensure this, the researcher followed the Bill of Rights of South Africa (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996:7). Participants were treated respectfully and courteously at all times.

2.3.4 Rights of participants
Participants with unhealthy communication patterns will experience discomfort, feel insecure and fearful and may be harmed psychologically during the research. This may cause them to withdraw from the project.

2.3.5 Informed consent
According to Neuman (1997:450), it is not enough to obtain permission from the participants. They also need to know in what they are being asked to participate, so that they can make an informed decision. Informed consent implies that adequate information on the goals of the research study and the procedures which were followed with all the possible advantages,
were rendered to the participants (Strydom, 1998:24). Informing participants should be done in the manner to encourage free choice of participation.

Participants may withdraw from the research at any time. The time required for participation, and the non-interfering and non-judgmental research role were explained to participants. Shaw (1999:11) stated that to gain informed consent the researcher must make those being studied aware of the following.

- that they are participating in the research;
- the purpose of the research;
- the procedures of the research;
- the risks and benefits of the research;
- the voluntary nature of research participation;
- the participant’s rights to stop the research at any time; and
- the procedures used to protect confidentiality.

Only after participants understood each of these and agree to participate can the research continue. Informed consent becomes a necessary condition rather than a luxury or an impediment (Hakim, 2000:143). See examples of consent letters in Appendices A to E.

2.3.6 Fair treatment
The participants were informed of their rights to withdraw without penalty or remain in the study, should they so wish. The researcher should not collect more data than was necessary to achieve the objectives of the study. Respect for participants gave an excellent example of fairness. Brink (1996:40) states that the selection of the population to study and the specific participants to study should be fair.

Participants should be selected for reasons directly related to the problem being studied, and not because they are easily available or can be easily manipulated, or poor, or because the researcher wants them to receive the specific benefits of a study. Brink further states that participants should be treated fairly and the researcher should respect any agreements made with the participants.

2.3.7 Privacy
Privacy refers to the rights of individuals to decide how information about them is to be communicated to others. Whenever possible, the manner in which data about participants were to be kept confidential should be explained to participants so that they may judge for
themselves whether the safeguards taken to ensure their confidentiality are reasonable (Shaughnessey & Zechmeister, 1997:56).

Brink (1996:38) states that privacy is the freedom an individual has to determine the extent and general circumstances under which private information should be shared with others. Furthermore, private information includes: one’s attitudes, beliefs, behaviour, opinions and records. She further explained that an invasion of privacy occurs when private information is shared without an individual’s knowledge against his or her will. According to Strydom (1998:27), privacy is that which normally is not intended for others to observe or analyse.

De Vos (2000:67) concurs by stating that privacy implies the element of personal privacy. The researcher enforced the necessary precautionary measures whereby all participants reserved the right to decide for themselves to what extent their attitudes, beliefs and behaviour were revealed.

2.3.8 Confidentiality and anonymity

According to Strydom (1998:28), confidentiality indicates the handling of the information in a confidential manner. The names of the school and all participants who participated in this research were withheld. According to Yegidis and Weinbach (1996:34), it is imperative that researchers be reminded of the importance both of safeguarding the privacy and identity of participants and of acting with the necessary sensitivity where the privacy of participants is relevant.

To ensure confidentiality and anonymity participants were informed about the purpose of the research and they were given the assurance that their names would not be used. Brink (1996:39) refers to anonymity as an act of keeping individuals nameless in relation to their participation in the research. The means of ensuring anonymity were used by code names when data was discussed.

2.3.9 Procedures that were followed

Participants were given information about all the research procedures, the depth of the interviews and the use of the audiotape and the field notes. They were also informed that the interviews would last about 45 minutes.

* Types of contribution expected from the participants

Participants were informed that they were expected to give as much information as possible during their discussions relating to their experience of other learners’ aggression. They were asked to portray their real life situations in their inter-relationship challenges and that they should answer the researcher’s questions as honestly as possible during the interviews.
* Sample selection

All participants were made aware that they have been selected purposively to partake in the research as they meet the research criteria and also likely to provide the researcher with the most comprehensive understanding for the phenomenon being studied. A pilot group of adolescents (between the ages of 16-18) from a secondary school at Ekurhuleni who could express their feelings, emotions and thoughts about their experience of other learners’ aggression, took part in the research.

* Gaining Access

Permission to conduct the research was sought from the Gauteng Department of Education, the school principal, parents in the identified school as well as from the participants.

2.4 MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

All research is rightly open to criticism and there must be criteria by which qualitative research can be evaluated (Holloway & Wheeler, 1996:162). Measures to ensure trustworthiness were applied in this research project to ensure the truth-value. Lincoln and Guba (1985:290-327) strategies of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were applied.

2.4.1 Truth value (credibility)

Truth value establishes how confident the researcher is with the truth findings, based on the research design, informants and context (Krefting, 1991:215). The truth value of this study was determined by using the qualitative approach of credibility. Truth value asks whether the researcher has established confidence in the truth of the findings for the participants and the content in which the research is undertaken (Schurink & Poggenpoel, 1998:331).

According to Krefting (1991:215), a qualitative study is credible when it presents such accurate descriptions or interpretations of human experiences that people who share that experience or perception would immediately recognise the descriptions. Krefting further continues by stating that truth value is usually obtained from the discovery of human experiences as they are lived and perceived by participants. Truth value is the most important criterion for the assessment of qualitative research. In order to establish the truth value with regard to this research project, the researcher needed to interview Grade 11 learners who experienced other learners’ aggression in a secondary school in Ekurhuleni.

Credibility refers to the “truth” value, or believability of the finding (Morse, 1994:105). The objectives of this are to demonstrate that the research was conducted to ensure that the participants were accurately identified and described. The participants in this research were specifically selected for the purposive sample because they have experienced other learners’
aggression. The research was aimed at Grade 11 learners between the ages 16 and 18 years. The relationship was built on trust and co-operation.

Focus group interviews were conducted to achieve data saturation. The research stayed in field until data have been saturated. “Saturation means that the researcher has done an exhaustive exploration of whatever phenomenon is being studied (Morse, 1994:106). This was achieved when the researcher noted that various participants were repeating the same themes.”

Prolonged engagement were implemented to build trust. In this study the researcher collected data about learners’ aggression in a secondary school from participants so as to explore a problem or describe a setting, a process, a social group, or a pattern of interaction that was valid (De Vos, 2000:351). The researcher gave an in-depth description showing the complexities of variables and interactions of learners’ experiences of other learners’ aggression. This was done so that other learners who experienced other learners’ aggression recognised the description immediately.

- Peer group evaluation
  According to Krefting (1991:219), peer group evaluation involves the researcher discussing the research process and findings with an impartial independent coder who has experience with the qualitative method of research. Peer group evaluation kept the researcher honest with the findings.

- Triangulation
  Triangulation of the data method were achieved by conducting focus group interviews with learners who have experienced other learners’ aggression in a secondary school. This strategy was used to enhance the quality of the research, especially credibility (Krefting, 1991:219).

- Member checking
  Member checking was done by giving participants an opportunity to read through the transcription of the tape-recorded interviews. This ensured that they have a chance to clarify any misinterpretations made by the researcher.

2.4.2 Applicability (transferability)
Applicability refers to the degree to which the findings can be applied or transferred to other contexts and settings or with other groups thus it is the ability to generalise from the findings to larger populations. Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:277). One needs to know whether the conclusions of the study are transferable to other contexts. Brink (1996:56) states that the researcher helps to provide the detailed data base and thick description so that someone other than the researcher can determine whether the findings of the study are applicable in another setting. Breakwell, Hammond and Fife-Schaw (2000:280) refer to the idea that one can speculate on the likely application the data to other similar but not identical conditions.

This is obtained by using a purposive sample, working contextual, time sampling and dense descriptions (Krefting, 1991:215-217). The aim of this research is to record learners' experience of other learners' aggression in order to assist them in dealing with learner aggression in a secondary school.

Krefting (1991:221) mentions another way of looking at transferability as to the consideration of data rather than the participants. Furthermore the researcher must determine of the content of the interviews, the behaviour and observed events are typical or atypical of the lives of the participants.

The strength of the qualitative method is that it is conducted in naturalistic settings with few controlling variables (Poggenpoel, 1998:349). Holloway and Wheeler (1996:167) describe transferability as the way in which the findings can be generalised or transferred from representatives of a population to the whole group. The following activities were followed to improve transferability.

- description of the demographics of the participants;
- purposive sampling was used to select learners who experienced other learners' aggression; and
- dense description of the results.

To make transferability possible the researcher aims to provide a “dense” database. According to Babbie and Mouton (2002:277), transferability in a qualitative research study depends on similarities between sending and receiving context. Literature control and verbatim quotes from the focus group interviews were obtained as well as from the naïve sketches were written. The reason for this was to compare the focus group findings with
relevant studies regarding learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school.

2.4.3 Dependability (consistency)
It is the extent to which repeated administration of a measure that provides the same data or the extent to which a measure administered once, but by different people, produce equivalent results (Poggenpoel, 1998:350). It must also provide its audience with evidence that if it were to be repeated, with the same participants in the same context, its findings would be similar.

The control measure of consistency is dependability. Holloway and Wheeler (1996:168) state the following: “One of the ways in which a research study may be shown to be dependable as opposed to consistent is for its process to be audited”. To ensure dependability the following activities should be carried out.

- step-wise repetition of the research method;
- code-recode procedure and data analysis; and
- dense description of the research methodology.

2.4.4 Confirmability (neutrality)
Neutrality refers to the “degree to which the findings are a function solely of the participant’s informants and conditions of the research and not of other biases, motivation and perspectives” (Poggenpoel, 1998:350). According to Krefting (1991:217), objectivity is the criterion of neutrality that is achieved through rigour of methodology through which reliability and validity are established. The criterion of neutrality is considered to be achieved when truth value and applicability are established (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Holloway and Wheeler (1996:68) point out that confirmability means that the data are linked to their sources for the reader to establish conclusion and interpretations that arise from them.

- Furthermore, Lincoln and Guba (in Babbie & Mouton, 2002:278) refer to a confirmability audit as an adequate trail that should be left to enable the auditor to determine if the conclusion, interpretations and recommendations can be traced to their sources and if they supported the inquiry.

2.5 SUMMARY
Chapter Two focused on the qualitative research design and methodology and how the guidelines in this study will be followed in the implementation of this study.

This chapter provided theoretical information on the research methodology and its use in this study. The integration of trustworthiness, which encompasses credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were viewed as being an important criteria to the evaluation of the significance of this research study.
CHAPTER 3
DESCRIPTION AND LEARNERS’ EXPERIENCE OF OTHER LEARNERS’ AGGRESSION IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL

3.1 INTRODUCTION
In this chapter the findings of the research are presented and discussed according to the data obtained from the interviews and field notes. Themes and categories are identified, analysed and discussed according to the data, which were collected to explore learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression.

3.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE
According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000:370), Burns and Grove (1997:294; 306) and Morse and Field (1996:65) sampling entails the careful selection of a group of people, events, behaviours or settings best suited to fulfill theoretical requirements of the research study.

The sample in this study was Grade 11 learners between ages of 16-18 years who experience other learners’ aggression in a secondary school, which consisted of small sample of learners. The focus was on their daily school and classroom situation, which affected them in a way that threatens them emotionally and physically. Participants participated voluntarily in the study and they were interviewed in English.

They were purposively selected until the data was saturated. According to Krueger and Casey (2000:130) data saturation was brought about by themes and categories, which repeated themselves.

3.3 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS
These results will be discussed in depth according to the identified themes and categories. Verbatim quotations from the interviews will be used to support the findings. The findings of this research will be substantiated by relevant literature after each category has been described.

The following themes and categories were identified from learners who experienced other learners’ aggression in a secondary school in Table 3.1.
TABLE 3.1 Learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 THEME ONE</td>
<td>3.3.1.1 Learners experience that other learners’ aggression is a way of protecting oneself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression as being out of control in a secondary school.</td>
<td>3.3.1.2 Learners experience that other learners’ aggression is a norm in a secondary school.</td>
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<td>3.3.1.3 Learners experienced different forms of acts of aggression.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>These are:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Bullying</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b) Using of dangerous weapons and stabbing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c) Group fighting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d) Use of drugs and alcohol leading to learner aggression</td>
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<td></td>
<td>e) Pressurising learners to belong in a gang.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f) Jealousy as a form of aggressive behaviour.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3.2 THEME TWO</td>
<td>3.3.2.1 Learners experience that cultural misunderstandings result in conflict between learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners experience that cultural differences contribute to other learners’ aggression.</td>
<td>3.3.2.2 Learners experience that placing a negative value on cultural differences, contributes to learners’ aggression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3 THEME THREE</td>
<td>3.3.3.1 Learners’ experience lack of intervention of educators in other learners aggression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.3.3.2 Learners observe educators victimising other learners in classroom contributing to learners’ aggression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.4 THEME FOUR</td>
<td>3.3.4.1 Learners experience that aggressive learners have low interest in school and are poor academic performers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners experience other aggressive learners to be challenged in their lives.</td>
<td>3.3.4.2 Learners experience aggressive learners as quarrelsome, irritable, and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
unfriendly.

3.3.4.3 Learners experience that stressful situations at home contribute to other learners’ aggression, namely:
   a) Poverty
   b) Lack of parental guidance

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<th>3.3.5 THEME FIVE</th>
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<td>Recommendations about addressing learners’ experiences of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school.</td>
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<td>3.3.5.1 Importance of information in school.</td>
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<td>3.3.5.5 Parental involvement.</td>
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</table>

The identified themes will each be discussed in more detail with regard to their related aspects as indicated in Table 3.1.

3.3.1 THEME ONE: LEARNERS EXPERIENCE OTHER LEARNERS’ AGGRESSION AS BEING OUT OF CONTROL IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL

Learners come to secondary school with different experiences from different backgrounds. Ever since in primary school they have looked forward to be in secondary school. Their arrival at secondary school was experienced with aggression as part of power play whereby money, jealousy, peer pressure, belonging to gangs, fear, frustration, survival of the fittest were involved.

“This hostile behaviour is often displayed by Grade 8’s. They usually fight or behave violently when there are no educators around. They do this in hidden places where they can only be seen by their peers and others. They fight to avoid being victims.”

Learners’ appreciation of secondary school decreases because they never anticipated that secondary school would be a haven of unhappiness. Learners are sceptical about their safety because of daily experiences with other learners’ aggression in secondary school makes them afraid and bothered. They always live in uncertainty whether the day will pass without daily occurrences. Learners are worried that aggression has become the order of the day and it is alarming to them to experience this, as it has a negative impact on teaching and learning (The Star, 30 June, 2008).
Learners experience that other learners’ aggression has gone out of control to the extent that learners end up killing each other within the school premises. Learners’ experiences of other learners’ aggression are at the point where learners experience that they cannot handle the pressure anymore, thus they end up sceptical about their safety.

3.3.1.1 Category 1: Learners experience that other learners’ aggression is a way of protecting oneself

Learners feel that they are viewed as inferior by other learners and this changes their original behaviour they arrive with at secondary school. Some learners arrive at secondary school humble and focused, hungry for education, but instead they are changed by other aggressive learners who always hurt their feelings. These learners who are victimised by their peers end up not being able to cope. They reach a stage whereby they have an urge to get even with their aggressors. This is evidenced by a participant who said:

“I am like a punching bag, why don’t I do it back? So basically I get to be aggressive in order to defend myself.”

Eleanor Roosevelt said “No one can make you feel inferior without your consent” (Jones, 2004:21). However, in a secondary school, learners, especially the younger ones, experience such feelings.

Learners experience that in secondary school, once a victim, always a victim, so it is important to take a stand and defend yourself against your fellow school mates who always try to outsmart you and making you a laughing stock. School is a learning institution, not a place of harassment by other learners. Since aggression begets aggression, learner aggression victims are changed and they end up developing an attitude of defending and protecting themselves.

“I believe all of us sitting here; we won’t enjoy being bullied. Every day they take my money, every day I get to be pushed around, so in order to defend myself I have to be aggressive”.

“You know here at school, if I don’t do aggression, I won’t even cope.”

Learners who are emotionally impoverished due to aggression and bullying from peers may find themselves in a chronic pattern of deep emotional pain that directly influences their aggressive behaviour towards other learners.

3.3.1.2 Category 2: Learners experience that other learners’ aggression is the norm in a secondary school
For some learners, secondary school is like a training camp. According to the National Curriculum Statement, skills, knowledge, values and attitudes are to be acquired (Chapman, Cornfield, Kgoroeadira & Marais 2006:10). Learners bring limited knowledge to secondary school with expectations of being empowered, since knowledge is power. They have also heard stories about life in secondary school, that in order to gain a certain status you have to belong in a gang and be aggressive.

“I arrived with a lot of fear and my money was always taken from me. One day I decided that I better join the Vragga group.”

Rigby (2002:204) states that status lies everywhere. For boys it is more likely to lie in sporting prowess, for girls, being attractive and popular.

It is as if they are entering a school where a learning outcome will be a skill of aggression, and where this skill is to be nurtured and engraved on their minds and a learning outcome is aggression. Learners experience that exposure to community aggression teaches aggressive behaviour and encourages the acceptance of aggression as a norm. In learners’ experience, other learners will not be recognised and will not gain popularity if they are not aggressive.

3.3.1.3 Category 3: Learners experience different forms and acts of aggression

According to the Centre of Justice and Crime Prevention (Sowetan, 14 April 2008) more than four million learners have experienced aggression in schools. It is an unfortunate situation that learning and teaching are surrounded by different forms of acts of aggression, such as these discussed below.

a) Bullying

Bullying can be described as the unfair imposition of the will of the strong on the weak. Sullivan (2000:16), points out that bullying is not about justice, but about victimisation.

“Like, the older guy wants a girl in the lower grade and the girl is dating a Grade 8 or 9 guy. The older will go after the Grade 8, threatens and scare him to stay away because these older guys feel some sort of ownership because people give them this superiority and make them act like they are superior, and they belittle others.”

Research has shown that bullying occurs at all communities. Schools contain the greatest imbalances of power and they are attended at a time where people are at their most vulnerable to abuse from their peers (Rigby, 2002:73). Research has shown that bullying occurs in all schools (Sullivan, 2000:15). Learners experiences bullying as a contributing factor to learner aggression.
Rigby (2002:51) states that bullying involves a desire to hurt, hurtful actions, a power imbalance, and the unjust use of power, evident enjoyment by the aggressor and generally a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim. Learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression results in the weaker learners being hurt and mocked.

According to Childline National Coordinator, Joan Van Niekerk, bullying is a huge problem at schools, and parents and educators have to look at ways of preventing it from an early age (Weekend Argus, March 2008:10).

Bullies maintain some sort of power over their victims because of their age, strength, size and gender. The victim is vulnerable and displays physical and psychological qualities that make him/her more prone to victimisation.

“The older boy will fight with the Grade 8 learner because this Grade 8 was looking at him.”

Rigby (2002:29; Olweus, 1997:131) explains the following about bullying:

“We say a student is being bullied when another student or group of students,

- say mean and unpleasant things or make fun of him or call him or her mean and hurtful names;
- completely ignore or exclude him/her from their group of friends or leave him/her out of things on purpose”.

“When I am bullied you know, I feel frustrated I feel very aggressive”.

“Bullying and intimidation, demanding money from other learners and beating them up is very common here at school and I have experienced that many times.”

Bullies operate in a very sly manner. They will not target their victims in a place whereby educators are able to intervene. They sometimes hate to be involved in more public confrontations although sometimes they do it publicly just to show off. They create an image of dominance and power (Bezuidenhout & Joubert, 2003:34).

“Last year the bullying thing used to happen in the toilets during school lessons, like they will just stick in to you, you know, like let me see you in ‘Court’ like they used to call it a ‘Court’ and when I get there, everybody is there, then like nobody will come between us……like try to stop and educators won’t find out about it!”
An imbalance of power exists as the bully has power over the victim and has a positive view of himself or herself, has the ability to stay cool and is in control during confrontation, shows no concern for the feelings of the victim and lacks compassion. A clear lack of support for the victim exists, leaving the victim feeling isolated, exposed and scared and frustrated.

“Learners are very clever; they won’t do something in the open. You see, the toilets are where everything happens”.

Phye (2004: 12) maintains that bullying is a common and persistent problem in society, particularly in schools because children:

- have parents who are poor role models for constructively solving problems;
- see aggression as the only way to preserve their self-image;
- think physical image is important for maintaining a feeling of power or control;
- have parents who often do not know their whereabouts; and
- create resentment and frustration in a peer group.

“Bullies wait in entrances in the morning to find money contributors, who cannot defend themselves by any means. They pick on younger ones who are often quiet at school and what keeps this constant is that the learners are afraid of reporting these matters to the principal or educators, so the aggressive learners get away with it and often threaten the vulnerable learners”.

Moskowitz (2005:312) asserts that aggressive people want to feel power and they believe they are morally right and have the power of right on their side. They use this to humiliate others and to be in control.

The problem with bullying according to learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression is that it leaves physical and psychological scars that will always remind them of their unpleasant years of schooling. Damage to the learners’ self-esteem is long lasting and causes learners to withdraw from school activities or to become aggressive towards other learners.

Bullie’s behaviour often results in them getting recognition and this leads to a sense of empowerment. Rigby (2001:17), points out that bullying is deliberate. Plans are made to put the targeted person under pressure, typically to hurt, undermine ad humiliate. Vulnerable learners are sometimes driven to the edge and also start planning how they are going to escape from living in fear.
Learners’ experiences of other learners’ aggression emanates from provocation whereby they end up stabbing their fellow learners who provoke them daily. This is evident in most schools where death has been reported because of bullying, such as Forest High School. Thus, bullying can be described as the unfair imposition of the will of the strong on the weak, and bullying turns to bloodshed (The Star 2008:03.13).

“At school, I fear going to the school toilet because they are havens of bullies.”

Sullivan (2000:128) cites that besides getting learners to think differently about danger spots, non tolerance of bullying sends a strong message that bullying will not be tolerated. Learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression due to bullying has created a sense of fear in a secondary school.

b) Use of dangerous weapons and stabbing

Schools have been declared gun free zones and thus should operate as safe havens for learners. The Department of Education Gun Free South Africa 10420 (no date) explicitly declared that all public schools are dangerous gun free zones. In spite of that, the availability of weapons has been identified as a problem that causes aggression amongst most learners.

“Sometimes when learners fight, they don’t fight clean, they use weapons and sharp objects.”

The use of guns at school increases the chances that violent conflict will result in injury or death. It is suggested that in the majority of school shooting perpetrators were being bullied at school (The Star, 13 March 2008:19). In October 2006 a 19 year old boy was murdered in a brutal stabbing by a fellow pupil at Forest High School.

“Recently my friends were involved in a fight. It started in the morning then later one of them went home to get a knife, came back and tried to stab the other.”

The Sowetan (14 April, 2008:8) cite that research has shown that guns, pangas, knives are brought to school on daily basis. Educators are afraid to reprimand these learners because they fear for their safety.

Learners are also afraid to tell because they are afraid (SABC 19 June 2008). Most learners who are involved in these fights are older ones. Surprisingly young ones because of frustration and being tired of being harassed. They bring knives, guns and other objects to put a stop to always being targeted.
Learners’ experience of learners’ aggression has become a major concern because it has led to the carrying of dangerous weapons. The issue of dangerous weapons is a burning sensation because it is happening at an alarming rate and is causing shock waves among educators, learners, parents and society at large.

That can be evidenced by the Diary of Attacks taking place at schools (The Star, 13 March 2008:26). This diary is set out below.

- A fifteen year-old pupil, who was attacked on the school grounds by gangsters, killed a gang member in self defence.
- Akasia secondary schoolboys were allegedly stabbed several times by three coloured counterparts.
- At Clapham secondary school a schoolboy stabbed his friend with a pair of scissors.
- The Sowetan (14 April 2008:8), 28 February 2008, a 17 year old girl from Humula secondary school in Mkhomi Village in Limpopo was taken to hospital with serious injuries after she was hacked by another girl with a panga.
- 26 February 2008, a 16 year old boy shot and wounded thee fellow pupils at the Siyathuthuka secondary school in Inanda, KZN after an argument.

Senseless killing, threat to life and the uncertainty among parents of whether their children will come back home safe because of learner on learner aggression is becoming a matter that needs serious intervention.

“There are times when I feel like not coming to school, because why do I have to come to school where I am not safe, I’m always the target.”

According to Phye (2004:5) an individual displaying proactive aggression is cold blooded and will utilise aggression to reach his/her goal.

“Fights in our school are a bit frequent; most of the time it is the popular learners that are in fights. This is very dangerous as some learners carry dangerous weapons.”

The carrying of weapons to school is seen as another important risk-related behaviour (Cox, Bynum & Davidson 2004:135).
According to Furlong and Morrison (2000:80), “youth who own guns were disproportionately involved in aggressive behaviour at school.” Furlong and Morrison (2000:80), as well as Cox et al., (2004:135) suggest that learners who bring weapons to school are victims of bullying. Learners concur with these findings and say, “one carry guns to protect oneself”.

Learners consider the school to be an unsafe place, particularly when weapons are used (Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe & Van der Walt, 2004:173). Learners experienced possessions of weapons by other learners as having a negative impact on the morale of other learners. In some instances learners are too terrified to attend school. When they are at school, they are scared to go to the bathroom alone or move around on the school grounds (De Wet, 2003:4).

c) Group fighting

Group fights are usually common in secondary schools. Learners experience that rivalry that exists between and among such groups in a secondary school manifests itself with uncontrollable learner aggression.

“Group fights in our schools are frequent; most of the time it is the popular learners that are in fights. Furthermore, it starts in Grade 8, when a group of amateurs come together from different background”.

Learners who are involved in learner aggression are influenced by the need to belong. Learners experience that in order to survive at secondary school, they have to join in group fighting at school. That will bring approval. Covey (1992:303) points out that one of the deepest hungers of the human soul is to be appreciated, to be valued and to be recognised. Learners experience that recognition by other learners emanates from being involved in group fighting and conforming to what the group members are doing.

“If I am surrounded by people who fight and quarrel all the time, at some point one will adapt, and fight as well. I form a scheme too and then I fight back. I bully another person and that other person forms a scheme and then jaah....”

“Another incident I have experienced involves my whole crew. Most of them are blacks. So this time it was a racial thing. It’s not racism but sometimes they do clash.

“Some girl from the other crew, made a remark about black people and their lack of manners. Naturally, they tried to make her see that it was just a poor misconception but she got so defensive and personal.”

“They started the fight and things got out of hand to a point where it was crew versus crew.”
Learners experience that humiliation and ridiculing each other in a secondary school is a source of other learners’ aggression. They experience that being a group that is superior to others creates a negative atmosphere.

*At school we are of the viewpoint that group fighting emanates from undermining each other, thinking others are superior than the others.*

“I want to say, you see why learners aggression is taking place in our school is because I have experienced that there are too many gangs, and when one gang is ‘thee gang’ and the other is like a small gang and stuff like that, the big gang is on top and everybody likes this gang, they will do something to eliminate that gang to get on top. That is how learner aggression comes in and the group fights starts and most learners get hurt and mostly die.”

An audience is also passive instigators of group fight. Whenever a group fight breaks out, learners surround those who are fighting and urge them on. Learners will usually scream and whistle in order to pour petrol on the burning fire. These fights manifest themselves in gangs within and outside the school premises. Respect is the last thing to consider when one is being cheered to fight. Learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression is rife due to group fighting.

*Whenever a school fight breaks out, learners surround the two people who are fighting and lead them on. Learners will usually scream and whistle in order to encourage those who are fighting*.

“There was this group of guys whom I heard lot of stories about, their name was ‘Vragga’ and this name was everywhere, desks, walls, and chairs and even in the toilets which made it obvious they were attention seekers. They took three Grade 8 boys, drew a small circle on the ground and if anyone’s foot stepped out they would get kicked. When they passed and no one was around they would not do anything, but in the presence of others, especially girls you were in for it. In a bid to survive I started chilling with them. They liked to say: ‘If friendly discussions fail, force shall prevail’. When they took my money I must be quiet.

The animosity that exists between and among such groups at school manifests itself in the form of aggression. Group fighting as experienced by learners in a school is a microsm of bigger factor in South African communities.
Most learners experience group fighting as a source of learner aggression. In a secondary school, learners associate themselves with a feared group of learners to experience protection and safety. They need to rub shoulders with the older boys who indulge in group fighting.

“There is a serious problem in terms of learner aggression. I have experienced that sometimes the act of aggression can be influenced by some factors, such as friends and popularity. It can also be influenced by the dangerous ego. I am in a crew (group) of mainly guys and yes, ego is a huge factor of aggression.”

“I have experienced that it becomes about satisfying their hunger, no matter what. One day they got into a serious fight with others, just because that person bumped on the other and didn’t say sorry. Another one was told to apologise and after that there was an exchange of words and they decided that the person needed to be taught a lesson. The fight was so intense that no one wanted to stop it because they feared getting hurt.”

Adolescent learners consistently express concern over the possibility that aggression threaten their own safety (Prinsloo, 2005:7).

“They are afraid of ringleaders because it is not like they can stand up for them, because usually they do this in a crowd and they can not afford to be a laughing stock of the whole school.”

In order for learners to be protected they need to rub shoulders with the older boys who are known and respected at school. They start looking for a stronger learner in a group of learners, so that they can be protected and feared.

d) Use of drugs and alcohol
The cold hard facts are clear. Highly addictive drugs, deadly and powerful drugs are easily available at the school fence and in the school yard. In the schools, in the townships, towns, the community and across the land, the scourge of these drugs is taking its toll in the schools. This results in a negative impact among learners and it leads to learner aggression.

“The problem is that when a learner takes a substance, it causes chaos because he/she is going to take out his anger and frustration on someone else.”

Intoxicated children are prone to aggressive reactions. They take drugs to suppress their inadequacies, or they believe in a myth that drugs take shyness away.
"If I have a grudge against participant 3, I am going to take drugs, and then a fight can start. Alcohol here at school is drunk there by the toilets."

Peer pressure is often mentioned as the most potent and humiliating aspect in relation to learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression, using these killer drugs. The usage of drugs is seen amongst teenagers as being “cool” and being part of a “family”. The usage of drugs and alcohol has dire consequences and often leads to fatalities and this is experienced during school functions or outings. Learner aggression is experienced during such orgies.

“The drugs story does not only happen during shows. It happens like every day during break. I find a guy standing next to the toilets selling cigarettes. “SHUMI LA SHUMI LA” (ONE RAND HERE, ONE RAND HERE) and I buy. Last year I had an experience of some learners who used to bring Benzine to school. They sniffed it during lessons while the educator is in class. Others carry juice bottles around with alcohol inside and drink in class as if they are drinking water.

Gone are the days when alcohol and dagga were only used by males. Girls are curious about what is happening in a “man’s world”. This is confirmed by a sticker that one reads in most taxis which says “Gone are the days when girls used to cook like their mothers, they now drink like their fathers”!

“Drugs are not only for boys now, everybody, it is unisex now. As a girl, I smoke, I share smokes with guys. If I don’t have smoke, I am not scared to go to the boys toilets. Hey guys, give me some smoke, skuif, I call everything and I also know the names of the drugs. I can hang out with boys, and I know every word associated with drugs. Give me ‘dope’, give me that and if I don’t get it, I become irritable. And this causes corruption and unnecessary fights at school.”

Most learners indulge in aggressive behaviour. If recent outbursts are anything to go by, then schools are headed towards disastrous situations. Learners who struggle for recognition may rebel against their peers in order to be praised, hero worshipped and feared. Usage of drugs entitles them to the distinction of being “the man”. The Brown University Digest of Addiction, Theory and Application (2004:5-8) provides the following reasons why drug use is associated with learner aggression.
• A crime could be committed to service the habit or resources needed to purchase drugs.
• In the illegal drug trade, violence is often a means of solving disputes.
• Violence and drug use both may result from similar factors such as the high sensation seeking in drug users.
• Drugs can increase the likelihood of violence because of their direct effects on users.

It is therefore almost impossible for learners who are drugs and alcohol users to avoid being aggressive towards other learners. The drugs and alcohol abusers resort to learner aggression because they cannot think straight. According to Elmer (2001:20-23) in some communities drug use and committing petty crime is a way of life, it is accepted as long as it is not murder. Furthermore, Elmer state that some parents seem to share the same sentiment because they know their children are using drugs and drinking alcohol, but they are doing nothing.

“I am pressurised by my peers to do things that aren’t natural, such as smoking and drinking. I get angry when I don’t get a ‘puff’ or a drink of alcohol which leads to aggression. Alcohol messes with my mind; I become irresponsible and turn to aggression.”

The problem with substance abuse is that it starts small as a cigarette smoke, sniffing benzine and then it graduates to a higher level of serious substance and it culminates in by producing aggressive learners at school. The use of drugs and alcohol needs to be addressed urgently before learners experience more of other learners’ aggression, and before more deaths are reported in schools. The most minor incidents of cigarettes need to be addressed immediately before it becomes a habit.

“There is a boy in our class who is moody, but I have realised the reason. When he has not had ‘dagga’ that day, he becomes irritable, short tempered and aggressive towards us.”

Alcohol abuse leads to a changed pattern of behaviour. It instigates learners’ aggressive conduct and makes learners act badly towards others. Learners experience that the use of alcohol and drugs helps them to overcome feelings of inadequacy or inferiority.

e) Pressurising learners to belong to a gang

Secondary school learners typically turn to their peers for guidance in matters of dress, identity, social attitudes and acceptable behaviour (Bauer & Shea, 1999:10). To be accepted
in a group, a new member should conform. Carter (2002:30) observes that groups are often gregarious in nature. For many learners, relations with friends are critical interpersonal bridges to psychological growth and social maturity. They offer consensual validation of interests, hopes and fears.

According to Siegel, Welsch and Senna (2003:20), young people are less interested in adult role models. Peer groups exert a significant influence on a learner’s social development because it sets cultural norms or ‘ritual’ for acceptable behaviour. Learners who are lonely and rejected are left no choice but to join gangs.

“I behave wrong for other learners to see me, for girls to like me and to belong.”

Learners experience that when learners are in gangs, they are noticed and cared for, and this explains how the need for family leads people to create substitutes for a family. Belonging to gangs, bolsters feelings of selfworth and provides affection and opportunities for intimate disclosure.

“Sometimes it is people I hang out with. Like my friend says I can do better than this, I am capable of doing anything. Ja, my friends, like not actually force me, but pressurise me to do something.”

Learners are inspired by seeing other aggressive learners gain more respect and status. In instances of experiencing rejection, the learner may indulge in aggressive behaviour to be accepted by gangsters (Christle, Jolivetti & Nelson 2000:1). Learners’ aggressiveness increases popularity among peers and it is cool because they do not have to account for their reactions as individuals but as a group. The following are quotations from the participants:

“It all starts in Grade 8, when a group of amateurs come together from different backgrounds with different knowledge. They start by looking for a stronger person in a group of people so that they can be protected at school. Most of us want to blend in with the rest of other learners’ popularity, belonging and fame among girls.”

“They always want to show people who they are, like in bad ways. They want everybody to see that, they can do this. They will bunk classes, they will smoke around. Their parents are at work, they can do anything they want.”
“Being aggressive towards other learners, makes one portray a satisfying image of being cool and tough.”

Peers play a vital role in shaping and pressurising learners to belong in their group. In secondary school most learners has to conform to standards set by the group in order to feel the connection and the bond. Peers have the ability to provide a “second home” to their fellow peers. Gangs like peer groups serve as an extended family. Gilligan (2001:263) points out how the need for family leads people to create substitutes for them. As Hartup and Stevens (1999:197) puts it, it is possible that children and teenagers learn aggression from their peers.

“I believe their aggression is influenced by their friends mostly coloureds, who taught them to shoot first and ask questions later. They also taught them to become vicious like a dog that has been let loose from its chain. ‘ayeye, die hond is los’ (Watch out, the dog is loose).”

Learners who lack care, love and support from their families have a sense of reassurance that their peers in a gang can actually teach them survival skills which their parents could not provide. Steyn (2001:33) who was once a gang member himself asks the question: Where do you turn to when the society rejects you? What do you do when your family cannot and does not have capacity to meet your need? What do you do when you’ve done all you could and still do not get the support you need? Furthermore, Steyn (2001:33) claims that young people join gangs in search for love, structure and discipline.

“He was told by his friends that the other learner said things about him behind his back. His friends started pestering him into doing something about it. They told him that if he did not confront him, everyone would disrespect him. He started gathering his friends and went to confront him and the fight broke out.”

According to Rigby (2002:163), there can be no doubt that the peer group can be a powerful influence on how children behave. Rigby further states that they have a drive to fit in, to be like the others.

“A lot of us do things because of what our friends expect from us, and what other people will think of us.”
Disruptive behaviour towards others in and out of classroom gives aggressive learners status, the sense of being feared and peer approval and recognition. For the sake of peer acceptance, learners are involved in aggressive episodes to prove their loyalty to the group.

“Another thing is, he was bullied before and he as a senior now, he surrounds himself with people who are feared at school. The next thing is to prove that he is not scared of anyone any more, and at the same time trying to make himself feel better by doing to others what was once done to him.”

Social and peer pressures misguide children who are driven away to seek comfort, love and understanding from social groups and cultural gangs. Gang membership offers the member identification and empowerment in that, by hurting other learners, the perpetrator receives a glamorous status, recognition and a degree of self assertion (Clough, Gardner, Pardeck & Yuen 2005:177). Mc Whirter, Mc Whirter, Mc Whirter and Mc Whirter (1998:138) find that peer pressure sometimes leads to forms of risky behaviour and irresponsibility.

f) Jealousy as a form of aggressive behaviour

“Life is not complex. We are complex. Life is simple and the simple thing is the right thing (Wilde, 1995:6).” Learners’ experiences of other learners’ aggression are associated with jealousy which leads to learner aggression. According to (Proverb 14:30 (1977:633) Jealousy is like cancer. Jealousy begets aggression, and both are wrong and bad acts.

“Why not cheer and learn from the person if they are doing better than us”?

The following are quotations from the participants:

“If he always does his work, studies for a test and stuff like that, they say ‘We are going to be aggressive so as to show him that we are also better people, he is not the only one that is good, that is always doing the work or studying for a test.”
“He always answers in class and they say: oh, he is the educator’s pet, and to stop him being the nerd, the teacher’s pet, they do something about it.”

The recent xenophobic attacks stems from fear and envy. The locals SABC (26 May 2008) said the outsiders were taking their jobs and girlfriends. Somalis and Pakistanians’ own shops. When people are jealous they always look for people who have money, good stuff and good life and ruin it for them. Local people are envious of these enterprising activities and end up by looting and burning their shops.

“It is about trying to prove a point. He is heard and I am always turned down.”

Jealousy is an emotion. A learner who is jealous is suffering from being fearful or is wary of being supplanted; and is envious or resentful. A jealous learner is bitter and unsure of what he or she wants, and is always worried that other people will achieve better than him or her. Such a learner experiences that his/her territory is threatened and he or she substitutes that with learner aggression.

“Like this girl, her hair is beautiful. She is nice, she is looking good and other learners will go like. Oh! She thinks she is special. I am going to show everyone she is not! I will start being aggressive and then ja…” (She laughs.)

Feelings of inferiority are in abundance here, and this can be attributed to the bitterness of always watching like a ‘hawk’ to see if someone else is doing better. Such learners carry with them bitterness which makes them aggressive and frustrated. Faupel, Herrick and Sharp (1998:20) points out that learners who are jealous of others, become angry and therefore, they do not learn very effectively. Learners experience other learners’ aggression from frustrated learners who do not perform well and are always picking on the good achievers.

“Some of these jealous learners, they know they are not going to get a matric certificate, they know they are stuck where they are. Stuck in a spider web and they cannot be free they know
that some of us are going to get somewhere. They are jealous because they know they have no bright future compared to other guys. They try to pick up a fight with other learners because of frustration.”

Peers often play a more significant role in academic achievement. Learners may be opposed to their classmates' commitment to academic excellence and display opposition by name – calling or referring to achievers as “nerds” (Boutte, 1999:138).

3.3.2 THEME TWO: LEARNERS EXPERIENCE THAT CULTURAL DIFFERENCES CONTRIBUTE TO OTHER LEARNERS' AGGRESSION

Throughout their lives learners will meet people of different cultures, religions and customs from all walks of life. Learners often find it difficult to adapt and are often afraid of understanding other cultures and they feel threatened. Learners experience that cultural misunderstanding, results in conflicts between learners. Racial and cultural diversity can also contribute to aggression among learners.

3.3.2.1 Category 1: Learners experience that cultural misunderstandings result in conflict between learners

Lack of understanding other cultures can take the form of prejudice which could lead to misunderstandings, disagreements and sometimes aggression. Learners of different cultures now attend the same school. According to Irvine (1990:26), cultural misunderstandings sometimes result in conflict, distrust and hostility. The conflict may be aggravated by interpretations. Cultural inversion is related to minority learners’ perceptions that certain behaviours are characteristics of the majority and hence inappropriate for them.

Harilal (1996:75) points out that conflict of interest will always emerge as learners feel that they are dehumanised and a sense of unworthiness is developed, and the other culture may feel degraded. Among diversified cultural groups, ethnocentrism is practiced. Ethnocentrism is the tendency to assume that one's culture and way of life is superior to those of all others.
(Harilal, 1996:75). This leads to individuals to perceive their values as different from others. They start to build a strong and impermeable boundary between their group and these persons (Baron & Richardson, 1994:234).

3.3.2.2 Category 2: Learners experience that placing a negative value on cultural differences, contributes to learners' aggression

The intolerance for differences can disrupt the school and become a barrier to effective learning and teaching. A safe and healthy learning environment needs to reflect among others, a sense of care, cohesiveness and synergy that bonds people together, and an equitable distribution of influence and power, innovativeness, adaptability and problem solving adequacy. This implies “Alone I can’t, but together we can, I am because you are” (Bezuidenhout & Joubert, 2003:167).

Learners attend school in multicultural schools. These schools are undergoing rapid change. To some learners, embracing and adapting change is not easy. Tolerating their peers’ cultural differences becomes a problem and thus leads to learner aggression. Learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression emanates from being unable to accept transformation. Learners experience that race marginalisation, frustration and aggression have predisposed them to become involved in acts of learner aggression (Bezuidenhout & Joubert, 2003:4).

Some learners experience their daily schooling as being very unpleasant in a sense that they are reminded by the actions of their peers that they are not accepted because of their culture which is viewed as inferior. They easily become aggressive, hostile and emotionally upset. They experience that they are unfairly targeted and they become more aggressive.

“They were taught always to act out aggressively whenever someone calls them with a ‘K’ word.”

Learners from the minority group feel marginalised and develop an attitude of ‘we will show them’ as this school belongs to the Department of Education. Black learners carry a burden of remembering that they differ and deserve to be treated as inferior and they hurt inside, and
they develop inward conflict which prevents them from relating well with other learners, hence they become aggressive.

“Other learners experience that they don’t belong in this school. When they try to respond to a question, she always ignores them and pays attention to coloured learners. This causes them to be noisy in class. They usually don’t pay attention during her lesson. In short, they have developed a negative attitude.”

Learners’ experiences of other learners’ aggression are manifestations of failure to accommodate different cultures, and this causes conflict among learners. The internal conflict learners experience results in their inability to adapt and to blend in with learners of different cultural and racial backgrounds (Harilal, 1996:86). It hinders their ability to function to their full potential and increases their level of frustration which provokes them to be aggressive.

3.3.3 THEME THREE: LEARNERS EXPERIENCE INADEQUATE SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT OF EDUCATORS

The recent increase in other learners’ aggression emanates from inadequate supervision and support on the part educators. Some educators are aggressive themselves, due to their inner conflicts. Educators have developed an ‘I don’t care attitude.’ Bezuidenhout and Joubert, (2003:65) cite that educators’ reluctance to reprimand learner on learner aggression may be part of other learners’ aggression.

Educators are stressed and it is unfortunate that learners are to experience the brunt of the frustrations and stress that are imposed on them by the educators. Educators develop a sense of helplessness when burdened with stress. This naturally depletes their reservoirs of
strength to care for learners’ in the manner in which they are accustomed to care (Weissbourd, 2003:9).

“Here at school, educators act out as if they care. One day I experienced a serious problem with a boy whose money they wanted to take by force. He went to his educator, to report the matter. She said, she will make a follow up, but didn’t.”

The aggressive behaviour that learners exhibit in secondary schools is a concern for everyone. When parents send their children to school, they have expectations that their children will be nurtured in an appropriate manner. They are convinced that their children will get support and will be supervised for the hours they spend at school. It is such a disappointment to most parents, and even to learners themselves, when things do not work out as expected, but instead learners experience other learners’ aggression.

3.3.3.1 Category 1: Lack of intervention of educators in learner aggression

The alarming aggressive behaviour places the lives of educators at risk and makes the culture of learning and teaching difficult. Educators are scared of the learners; hence they turn a blind eye to all the deviant behaviour that is happening around the school. The aggressive behaviour that is experienced around the school creates a school climate which is not conducive to learning and teaching.

It is clear that frequent exposure to aggressive learners may involve educators in aggressive episodes. Educators experience that they are at a stage where they can not control aggressive learners because learners fight with each other sometimes in front of educators, learners fight in the community, and disobey and quarrel with their own parents. Educators in South Africa share a worldwide struggle to control learner aggression during school hours (Bezuidenhout & Joubert, 2003:65).
“When the Grade 11’s and 12’s fight, things get out of control because educators cannot control the situation. Sometimes they don’t bother stopping the fight because they are scared of being pushed or beaten by big boys. They are feared and no educator wants to interfere.”

According to Bezuidenhout and Joubert (2003:65) some educators fear to intervene in learner aggression, and they inform the authorities that they are not policemen, or they are afraid to confront aggressive learners.

Educators fear for their lives hence they do not intervene in threatening situations. They put the lives of other learners at risk. Learners experience problems of dagga, alcohol, possession of guns, and attack with pangas, knives, and girls carrying scissors, as dangerous and leading to learner on learner aggression, which educators can not prevent.

Learners experience that learners who commit a great deal of aggression are those who are not adequately supervised. During breaks when things happen, it becomes evident that learners have unsupervised time on their hands; hence they bully each other and become aggressive towards each other.

Without educators’ control and supervision learners experience that learners who are aggressive are at liberty to harass other learners. Some learners are not happy at school and their lives are characterised by negativity which encourages learners’ aggressive behaviour.

3.3.3.2 Category 2: Learners experience those educators victimising learners in classroom as contributing to learners’ aggression.

The schools expose children to new behaviours which were not acquired at home during the learner’s childhood. Some of these behaviours may be positive or negative, depending on the environment.

The school is the environment that can shape or break a learner. The educators, when in class, are the driver of that class and learners are passengers. It is very important how the
driver manages his/her passengers. The passengers, who are learners, are very sensitive. It is crucial how the interaction of this class carries on. Educators should know that they have the custody of the learners entrusted to them. Educators who bring their baggage to school become a problem because they will displace their anger towards learners. Angry educators give rise to angry learners who will resort to being aggressive towards other learners.

"Educators can cause aggression. Let's say I am like this kind of a learner in class, I like making jokes. An educator goes to a point where she/he has had enough. Every time I try to talk, he/she turns me down, even when I am serious. I start being aggressive, I am angry because I am not heard. I take it out on other learners who tease me".

Johnson (2003:193) points out that the manner in which educators communicate with learners is important. Learners listen to all the discouraging words of their educators and they perceive these words. Educators' behaviour instigates aggression and drives learners to a boiling point. It is important for the educators to instill in their learners effective communication skills in the classroom which will expand to the playgrounds, toilets or even in the community.

Learners are human beings who are not just supposed to be recognised and not be heard. They feel important when their educators listen to them and when their opinions are being valued (Faupel, Herrick & Sharp 1998:46).

"In some instance the educator comments about other learners in a negative connotation and the class clown is going to build on what the educator said."

Some learners will choose to be quiet in class. They will withdraw and this can lead learners to have little confidence in themselves. Educators should value their learners and not victimise them because that can drive the learners away from school and can lead them to learners' aggression due to frustration. If learners experience that they are unfairly punished, rejected and rigidly controlled, this may serve as a basis for aggression in the school (Smith & Paul, 2000:4). These learners are likely to experience the need to put other learners down in order to defend their own sense of worth (Faupel, Herrick & Sharp, 1998:21).
3.3.4 THEME FOUR: LEARNERS EXPERIENCE AGGRESSIVE LEARNERS AS BEING CHALLENGED IN THEIR LIVES

Learners become aggressive because of the challenges they face in their live. Learners come to school carrying different experience from different backgrounds which act as barriers to their safety at school and to the safety of other learners. They bring their problems to school in the same way that adults bring their worries to work. The challenges young people face causes aggressive learners to displace their frustration and anger. According to the The Star (29 September 2008:18), learners do not behave in an acceptable manner towards their fellow learners because of underlying inadequacies.

3.3.4.1 Category 1: Learners experience that aggressive learners have low interest in school and are poor academic performers

Learners experience that learners who are not performing well academically mask their inability to do well through aggressive behaviour. They resort to aggressive behaviour in order to release this anger and frustration. Learners who are low achievers end up having a loss of self-worth, low commitment to school work and a diminished sense of belonging. This often provokes learner on learner aggression (Bezuidenhout & Joubert, 2003:06).

“It is known, those people who are aggressive you should see their schoolwork, they are lacking. They are weak school wise. You find that a person who has been aggressive has been repeating Grade 7 three to four times and when he gets to high school he repeats Grade 8 many times (they laugh). When a learner is aggressive, I don’t think he has time to think of schoolwork. He wants to be known that he or she is there. Has to be cool. So when
somebody is ‘cool’, schoolwork isn’t ‘cool’ (They laugh) and is made fun of by other learners of his/her own age.”

Bierhler and Snowman (2000:383) state that learners who are not successful in teaching and learning, see themselves as less competent than their peers.

These authors points out that those learners do not experience their performance as a good thing. As a result they lose interest in their school work because they perform badly academically and that leads them to frustration. Once these learners perform poorly, and grow too old for their grades they become a hazard to the safety and smooth running of the school. Bezuidenhout and Joubert (2003:26) points out that, the poorer the school achievement, the more incidents of behavioural problems.

Some learners, when their studies do not go according to plan, become frustrated and exhibit anger towards learners who are performing well in their studies. Academic competition creates animosity among learners.

“They think they are better. They have wings and we must cut off their wings.”

Learners who are lacking in their school work tend to have a negative and unwelcoming attitude toward the achievers. They end up experiencing disturbing emotional consequences. Bezuidenhout and Joubert (2003:26) state that these poor performers are at high risk of being aggressive toward other learners.

3.3.4.2 Category 2: Learners experience other aggressive learners as quarrelsome, irritable and unfriendly

Aggressive learners are seen to be having unresolved issues and that causes them to view school as a centre to vent out their unsolved miseries in an aggressive manner. Other learners indicate that they have experienced that sometimes they do not know where to cross
the line since these aggressive learners are quarrelsome. Cracking a joke for quarrelsome, irritable and unfriendly learners, gives them latitude to hit, kick and scold because these learners are always irritable.

“I like cracking jokes in class. I said to this learner, she eats pap and chicken during break. She was so angry with me and nearly hit me. To her, touch is a move.”

Often aggressive learners feel frustrated, neglected, abused and to them provocation result in aggression. They end up acting out their frustrations on their peers at school like getting easily annoyed even at the slightest provocation. Thus they may scream and physically and verbally abuse others without reason (Mc Adams & Lambie 2003:1). Learners who are treated badly by their peers, parents and educators are irritable.

“I sometimes feel like not coming to school, because why do I have to come to school when I am not safe? I am always the target.”

Jones (2000:25) articulates that these learners who are unable to cope with intense emotions may end up losing control, which can result in dangerous situations.

They loose control and express their displeasure physically.

3.3.4.3 Category 3: Learners experience that stressful situations at home contribute to other learners’ aggression, namely: poverty and lack of parental guidance

a) Poverty

The socio-economic status of parents may be linked to learner aggression. Experience of intense economic stress produces negative responses within the family. For learners who are from disadvantaged families, their parents tend to be indecisive, disorganised and rejecting. Economic deprivation can be a source of unhappiness, irritability, frustration and the learner
may reveal this unhappiness through being aggressive toward other learners. Acting out, is a way to deflect emotional pain (Richardson, 2001:99).

Aggressive learners are faced with a dilemma in their schooling years. They do not know how to deal with their poverty stricken families. Their basic needs are not fulfilled and that frustrates them. There is a vacuum in their lives. The inability of unstable families to guide their children to be responsible citizens leads learners to learner aggression. Coupled with inconsistent parental intervention, these children are likely to become deviants, delinquents and a public nuisance.

“I am not coming to school, I am really stressed, I am hungry and everything. This guy comes in and tries to impress me and I get pissed and I beat daylight of him.”

Learners experience unfulfilled expectations (Liese, 2002:3). Furthermore, a learner deprived of having his or her emotional needs met, often experience feelings of shame, fear, anger and hurt that can lead to aggressive behaviour. Learners experience poverty as a manifestation of negativity around the school (Liese, 2002:3).

b) Lack of parental guidance

In an education system, parents are expected not to pass the buck. Some parents have unreasonable expectations, whereby they expect the school to guide their children. Parents are primary guiders and the school takes over from the foundation laid by parents.

The parents of children who are from dysfunctional families, can be categorised as those parents who can not fulfill their noble calling of raising their children properly and adequately for them to become responsible citizens. It is due to learners’ experiences that the learners end up being aggressive towards other learners because of the lack of parental guidance.
In some instances aggressive learners were brought up believing that there is no better way of solving conflicts, than by aggression. Aggressive learners become aggressive because it has been proven by their dad that the only answer to deal with people who prevent one from getting what one wants is through aggression. ‘Monkey see monkey do’ (Jones, 2004:9). Not getting what they want from home makes learners to seek a sense of belonging and a safe haven for themselves as they would rather be with friends than with their aggressive parents.

“At home once it is weekend, he becomes stressed because is mom will be screaming and his dad will be enjoying hitting her. On Mondays, he does not like to be teased. He wants to be left alone and his classmates don’t understand him.”

Because children are not well looked after and guided, they produce aggressive energy which activates aggression around the school. Every child likes to be in a home where mutual love, acceptance and trust reign. If there is none, a child looks for comfort elsewhere. According to Robbins (2000:66), witnessing angry exchanges between parents causes distress in the child. There will be a sense of anger dominating their lives. These learners are likely to feel the need to put other learners down in order to defend their own sense of worth by aggression (Faupel, Herrick & Sharp, 1998:21).

The lack of availability of adult mentors may leave learners with a huge social void which will lead learners to seek comfort somewhere with friends. Modelling is also a contributory factor to learners’ aggression because aggression is experienced as part of life and as part of fixing people.

“I feel like I am not loved like at home, at school or the educator does not love me enough. She/he does not give me that attention. I find myself being aggressive. I am going to do something because no one likes me. That group does not like me so I have to do something to impress them. They will say ‘I am a dog’ and they will like me.”

Learners who have experienced aggression are likely to feel negative about their parents and thus become aggressive. Heavens (2001:53) state that the family is a powerful socialising agent and the quality of attachment and bonding process between parent and infant. Is the
first few months and years of life that are important for the later emotional health of the individual.

Family is regarded as an important support system available to the child and adolescent. Consequently, any disturbance of this support system through negative parenting style, has an impact on how the child will behave in later years. Parental behaviour may teach children some values, morals, problem solving techniques and pro-social behaviour. If parents intervene ineffectively in the lives of their children, they may inspire children to indulge in aggressive behaviour in their general conduct.

Some children start to have low self-esteem, poor anger management, an inability to solve problems and also to display behaviour of the abuser, such as manipulation, poor impulse control, and aggressive outbursts (Szyndrowski, 1999:11). Learners who have experienced abuse and disrespect from their parents learn that aggression and exploitation are a better means of negotiating life and solving conflicts around the school.

3.3.5 THEME FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT ADDRESSING LEARNERS’ AGGRESSION IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL

Learners highlighted that their wish was to see the decline of learner aggression and made suggestions on how learner aggression can be dealt with in secondary school. These are presented below.

3.3.5.1 Category 1: Importance of information in school

The foundation of a sound school environment is safety. Thulas Nxesi the spokesperson of SADTU pointed out that schools are supposed to be safe havens (The Star, 30 Jan 2008:19). It is vitally important to practise what we preach in a Code of Conduct. A Code of Conduct must just emphasise, Zero Tolerance concerning other learners’ aggression; assembly,
parents’ meetings, classrooms, should be platforms of imparting this information and follow up meetings of implementation should be conducted.

“On Mondays there is assembly here at school. The representative of council of learners should address us on the issue of learner aggression and encourage us to avoid it.”

According to section 8 (1) of the South African Schools Act (SASA, 1996:52) the governing body of every school must adopt a code of conduct after consultation with educators, learners and parents. Furthermore the SASA states that nobody is allowed to administer corporal punishment.

Even if corporal punishment is no longer allowed, clauses in the Code of Conduct must spell out loud and clear, the repercussions of learner on learner aggression. It is the duty of the school to point out clearly that inflicting pain on other learners will not be tolerated and that it will be regarded as misconduct. Clear examples should be set, of learners who deliberately make school an unpleasant place for other learners; or worst case scenario, even shooting at somebody. According to Smith and Furlong (1998:201-202), observing aggressive behaviour is the most powerful facilitator of aggression.

3.3.5.2 Category 2: Counselling of learners who are aggressive.

Firstly, educators who usually blame the home for failing the school by dumping ill-disciplined children to the school often faces barriers that prevent them from assisting aggressive learners. Aggressive learners need a hand that can reach out and touch them, so as to receive assistance.

“I suggest that counselling be organised so as to get underlying causes of our aggression. Peer counsellors can play a vital role because maybe one can listen to another learner who lives a life which is aggression free, and is accepted the way he/she is, who does not do
things to impress. This aggressive learner can actually wake up and realise the importance of refraining from aggression and lead an acceptable behaviour.”

Secondly, peer counsellors are at the level of their peers and they manage to break through to their peers easily. Some of these peer counsellors were once terrorising other learners with their aggressive behaviour. It may be easy for them to instill in their peers sense of responsible behaviour, of worthiness, of hope, of belonging and a sense of living one’s life without peer pressure. It is so important to turn one’s life around and stop being aggressive.

Through peer counselling aggressive learners can turn out to be better learners in the school. Peer counselling can give birth to new peer counsellors who have experienced other learners’ aggression, due to bullying, stabbing, substance abuse, gambling and all other unacceptable behaviour.

Thirdly, guidance counsellors should assist in severe cases and where they can not manage a breakthrough they should collaborate with the Education Support System from the District to assist aggressive learners. The idea is to shape the learner. There is therefore a need to model the values that one wants to see in learners, rather than merely transmit them (Weissbourd, 2003:7). According to Peter Val, (The Star 29 September 2008:10), schools should be rooting out bullies and getting counsellors to deal with whatever experiences they have, from different backgrounds, rather than trying to deal with it as a discipline issue.

Learners should have the value of knowing which behaviour is acceptable and which one is unacceptable. Usually an unacceptable behaviour is the one that violates the rights of other people.

Aggressive learners must not feel that they are singled out. Counselling should give them a sense of hope and understanding that it is through love that counselling has been organised for them in order to assist them to abandon aggressive behaviour.
3.3.5.3 Category 3: Constructive activities in school

Learners’ aggression has a negative impact on the culture of learning and teaching. Schools that have learners who are idling and who do not have constructive activities in the school are bound to experience learner on learner aggression. In order for learners to use their energy purposefully, extra-mural activities should be in place, so as to address learner aggression. Disruptive behaviour can be improved better by interaction with their peers, most importantly to assist learner to display better emotional expression.

“We as learners should be encouraged to be active in all school activities. Boredom creates problems.”

Schools need to enhance healthy activities that will assist learners to spend their time in a constructive manner. Encouraging learners to express their thoughts and feelings through various forms of extra-mural and extra-curricular activities provides physical and emotional outlets for learners and assist them to channel their negative energies, full of animosity among themselves, to positive energy which will lead to better interaction across cultural barriers.

“There are no options given to us to channel our negative behaviour.”

Extra-mural activities should be taken seriously; when learners are kept busy, their time will be spent on practising and they will not have time for drugs and gangs. They will be too busy to experience other learners’ aggression. Crwys-Williams (2008:8), anger is a temporary feeling, you soon forget it, particularly if you are involved in positive activities and attitudes.

3.3.5.4 Category 4: Visibility of law officers in secondary school

Most participants indicated that the responsibility of the South African Police Services was to ensure the safety of learners by visiting schools on a regular basis and participating in
searches of learners and that they should patrol the area. They further suggested that law
officers should be stationed on the road in the afternoons.

Partnerships should be formed in schools with all stakeholders. Adopt A Cop should just not
be in writing or the day when committees were first set up, it should be effective.

“If one sees police vans around the school now and then, one can collect oneself and do the
right things.”

It should be a working partnership. Parents are always panicking when at work. They ask
themselves this question “Will my child come back home safe”?

The visibility of law officers in a secondary school will make parents to trust that their children
will indeed come back home safe. Thulas Nxesi of the South African Democratic Teacher’s
Union (The Star, 30 Jan 2008:19) suggested that there must be guards controlling access in
schools.

3.3.5.5 Category 5: Parental involvement

Parents often shirk their responsibilities and expect the school to do wonders and change their
children into perfect beings. The school has educators as secondary parents, who build the
wall once the foundation has been laid. If a parent has not built a strong foundation of values,
it creates a problem for the school, although sometimes this is not the case. Some learners
have double personalities. They are angels at home and little devils at school.

For some people the aberrant behaviour of children is the product of inadequate parenting
(Rigby, 2002:266). Behavioural problems of children at school are the responsibility of
parents, and the difficulties educators experience with delinquent children is in essence
“imported” (Rigby 2002:267).
"I don’t like to be shouted early in the morning. My mom likes to make an issue out of nothing and sometimes end up smacking me".

Some learners were brought up in a sense that one must fight back. Some learners are frustrated and made angry by their parents and they take it out on weaker learners who cannot defend themselves. According to Faupel et al., (1998:26) displacement occur and the aggressive behaviour spoil relationships at school, hamper effective learning, and damage self esteem, leaving the learner feeling guilty of taking advantage of defend less learners.

- Parents can assist the school by being sensitive, caring and by having love and affection for their children.
- Parents should monitor their children’s behaviour.
- Parents should stop blaming the school, and work with it.
- Parents should assist the school by instilling good values in their everyday interactions.

Many parents leave the disciplining side of a child’s upbringing to the school authorities which are a sad state of affairs (SASA, 1996:210).

3.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter the main themes were identified that described learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school.

It was based on the analysis of data gathered during focus group interviews with ten participants, namely seven boys and three girls and three naïve sketches. A literature control was conducted to verify the findings.

Themes and categories were used to describe learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression. Based on findings, guidelines were identified to assist learners to deal with learners’ aggression. In Chapter Four guidelines, conclusions, objectives, limitations and recommendations of this research study will be discussed.
CHAPTER 4

GUIDELINES, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Three the results of this study were discussed and a literature control was conducted to support the findings. Five themes were identified that describe learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression. Chapter Four offers guidelines based upon these themes to help learners deal with their experience of other learners’ aggression. Thus, in this chapter the limitations, conclusions, recommendations and summary of the study will be highlighted.

**TABLE 4.1 GUIDELINES TO ASSIST LEARNERS IN DEALING WITH OTHER LEARNERS’ AGGRESSION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME ONE</th>
<th>GUIDELINE</th>
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<tr>
<td>4.1.1 Learners experience other learners’ aggression as out of control.</td>
<td>Any form of aggression is to be addressed immediately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.2 Learners experience that cultural differences contribute to other learners’ aggression.</td>
<td>Conflict resolution programmes to be adopted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.3 Learners experience inadequate supervision and support of educators.</td>
<td>Educators to implement programmes that assure learners that they are valued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.4 Learners experience other aggressive learners as being challenged in their lives.</td>
<td>Develop strategies of addressing challenges faced by learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.5 Recommendations about addressing learner aggression in a secondary school.</td>
<td>Formation of partnership and ensuring that these partnerships do not fail.</td>
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4.1.1 Any form of aggression is to be addressed immediately

It is evident from the experiences of these learners that there is a serious problem of other learners’ aggression and it is at a stage where they have experienced enough. They were of the viewpoint that special programmes should be introduced to enable learners to resolve
conflicts peaceably rather than through resorting to force. Any forms of aggression should be addressed immediately. According to the MEC of Gauteng Education, Angie Motshekga (The Star 26.02.08) the warning system known as Project Hlayiseka (to be safe) would involve safety inside and outside school. Aggressors should be repudiated immediately.

The creation of environment where bullying and aggression is not tolerated is to be introduced. Since learner aggression has become order of the day, learners suggested that they need to be part of the solution as to have safe school environment.

4.1.2 Conflict resolution programme to be adopted

An attitude of tolerance leads to a peaceful and safe school. Respect for school ground rules such as mutual and cultural respect should be steadfastly encouraged.

Learners should to be educated to express aggression in healthy ways. They need to be taught to develop skills that assist them to speak to one another in a manner that is not threatening or aggressive. They must have a principle of respect and consideration for others, and develop their ability to be in touch with their own experience. According to the chairman of South African Human Rights Commission Jody Kollapen, and the principal of Hoërskool Akasia, they agreed that there was a need for pupils to be educated in tolerance and diversity (The times, 21 February 2008). In this way they begin to make choices as to how they express their anger and insecurities.

Learners can behave responsibly and resolve problems and disputes non-violently. Learners can refrain from teasing, name calling and other seemingly innocent behaviours that actually hurt other learners’ feelings.
4.1.3 Educators should implement programmes that assure learners that they are valued

The school should compile a policy regarding learner on learner aggressive behaviour. Programmes should be offered to educators to help them serve as aggression prevention coordinators instead of being manifestors of aggression. Educators and learners should draw up the 'gives and the gets' ground rules that will enhance positive atmosphere free from aggression and negative vibes in the school.

Educators need to be workshopped on interpersonal relationship skills. They should be offered programmes that educate them about the damaging scars they leave on learners. According to Bezuidenhout and Joubert (2003:65), educators must not abdicate the control of learners at school. They need to be taught to value their learners and not frustrate them. These guidelines are to assist educators to work well with different emotional problems rather than playing with learners' emotions.

4.1.4 Strategies of addressing challenges faced by aggressive learners

The challenges that the learners face create learning barriers for learners and that causes them to be frustrated due to the abuse they face at home, at school and in the community. Guidelines and strategies will assist them to deal with learner aggression in a positive way.

Parents and educators need to create a platform where they give learners a chance to listen to them. Lines of communication must always be open in order for learners to be taught constructive ways of dealing with their experience of other learners' aggression, rather than being aggressive. Collaboration of parents with their children will create a healthy society, since it is believed that "the road to violence begins at home" and an old adage, says "Charity begins at home".
4.1.5  Formation of partnerships and ensuring that they are effective

The Gauteng MEC of Education, Angie Motshega, (The Star 26 February 2008:8) has indicated that the Department of Education is also worried about the escalation of violence in secondary schools. It is not only the Department of Education that is worried. This is evidenced by the fact that learners indicated that they believed that it was no longer safe for them to come to school. Stephens (1998:53) defines a safe school as a place where students, can learn and in a warm and welcoming environment, free of intimidation and free of aggression.

Joint collaboration by educators, learners, parents, law officers, the community, and social workers should assist learners and educators in dealing with learner aggression. There should be zero tolerance of other learners’ aggression should be enhanced to address learners’ aggressive behaviour. Schools should provide programmes which will provide conflict mediation and resolution programmes.

According to the guidelines for the establishment of the School Based Support Team by the Department of Education and Training (1997:15), the SBST coordinator, has to intervene by offering counselling to learners with behavioural challenges. Hence the SBST coordinator can offer counselling to aggressive learners and to learners who have experienced other learners’ aggression. Workshops need to be held for all staff members, learners and parents in order to provide support to learners who are abusing alcohol and drugs.

It was suggested that the most appropriate way of dealing with school aggression would be to design, in collaboration with stakeholders, a safe school plan. Representatives of the Council of Learners should attend workshops on conflict management, solving issues without being aggressive, and peer counsellors should be utilised so as to educate their peers on how to channel negative energies into positive energies.
4.2 Conclusions and objectives

The objectives of the research study were formulated as follows.

- to explore and describe learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression in a secondary school; and
- to describe guidelines for learners which will assist the learners in dealing with learners’ aggression, in a secondary school.

Data were collected through the use of focus group interviews with a small sample of learners and naïve sketches were written. Data saturation was still not achieved. All learners went through the same process again until the terminal stage of interviews.

The learner described their experiences as scary as they perceive their school environment as unsafe and life threatening. Some learners bully others and the carrying of weapons, drugs and alcohol abuse also makes the school unpleasant. Learners experience that other learners’ aggression is also aggravated by educators who victimise them and who do not motivate them.

Learners experienced other learners’ inability to cope with their anger, and the frustrations they face in school and at home, are due to the parents and educators who are not compassionate, towards the way they face challenges. This highlights the need for improvement in order to assist them in dealing with other learners’ aggression. After analysis and independent coding, five major themes were identified and discussed and the findings were supported through literature control.

The fist theme was that learners’ experience other learners’ aggression as being out of control in a secondary school, and this theme was divided into three categories. Firstly the learners experience that other learners’ aggression is a way of protecting themselves. This was evidenced by the fact that those learners who arrived at school when they were small in age and build were bullied. As they get used to the school, they reach a stage where they need to be aggressive in order to defend themselves.
Secondly, learners experience that the other learners’ aggression is a norm in a secondary school. If a learner does not show power she or he is labelled. If one does not become aggressive in secondary school one will not cope.

Lastly, learners experienced different forms and acts of aggression such as bullies who bully others to hide their inadequacies and they bully for power. The stabbing and the use of dangerous weapons in schools were also the manifestation of other learners’ aggression. Learners also experienced that the use of drugs and alcohol instigated aggressive conduct and made learners act badly towards others.

Pretorius and Le Roux (2000:99) indicate that when learners experience disapproval from their peer group, it usually has a negative effect on their self-worth thus they end up with low self-esteem. The second theme was learners’ experience that cultural differences contribute to other learners’ aggression.

The learners experienced that cultural misunderstanding result in conflict between other learners. They experienced that calling each other names, and not respecting each other, provokes to the unnecessary learner aggression that is occurring on a daily basis.

The third theme was that there is inadequate supervision and support of educators. According to learners, they have experienced that their educators have developed an “I don’t care attitude” because they fear to intervene when bigger boys fight. The fact that the educators do not motivate learners makes learners experience that the people who are to give them hope, inspire feelings of inadequacy and this contributes to other learners’ aggression.

The fourth theme was that learners experience other aggressive learners as being challenged in their lives. Learners experience that aggressive learners end up having low interest in school because they show poor performance; hence they replace their inadequacies and poor performance with learner aggression. Some of these learners are so sensitive; they do not like jokes and are always reacting to slight provocation.
Another learners’ experience was stressful situations caused by poverty in the home that impedes learners effective concentration in class and makes them to be edgy which leads to learner aggression. The lack of parental guidance that they expect to lead them to be responsible citizens pushes them to act irresponsibly.

The abuse which they also experience at the hands of their parents and educators, challenges learners. When learners experience safety that they belong, they are supported at home and at school, they will be able to deal better with learner aggression. Their wish is to see the decline of learner on other learner aggression in a secondary school, hence in the last theme they came up with guidelines about how to address learners’ aggression in secondary school.

4.3 Limitations

Although the interviews were done after school in the staffroom, some educators used to come and want some things in the staffroom, and this made learners to feel uneasy. The principal of the school indicated that some educators were not happy with the researcher conducting the interviews as their worry was, why had she selected their school, and not others, but eventually the interviews continued.

A further limitation was that, due to the National Educators strike, another phenomenological interview could not be conducted because the school was busy with a catch up programme which was organised by the Department of Education, hence naïve sketches were written.

4.4 Guidelines to be considered on how learner aggression can be dealt with in a secondary school are set out below.

4.4.1 Schools can help prevent bullying by, among other things, adopting conflict resolution programmes which will teach learners skills they can use everyday in daily life to manage learner aggression and clearly define and enforce rules to prevent bullying behaviour. These skills will help learners to control their thoughts, to think calmly and positively instead of aggressively. They will also show learners correct ways of negotiating rather than arguing which leads to aggression.
4.4.2 Schools need to build self-esteem in their learners because self-esteem is sometimes described as armour against the world. Young people who feel good about themselves find it easier to handle conflicts and resist negative pressure.

4.4.3 Schools must look at ways to create a school environment where learners feel safe and protected.

4.4.4 Schools are to adopt the “Fix Broken Window Theory” (Chapman, et al., (2006:29). This theory deals with fixing petty misdemeanours in order to curb aggression early before it leads to bigger and dangerous ones.

4.4.5 Schools must have an effective School Based Support Team supported by all staff members.

4.4.6 A programme of Adopt A Cop should be fully utilised.

4.4.7 Schools are to see to it that all partnerships they form, with all the stakeholders should not fail, hence full commitment is required from all stakeholders.

4.4.8 The Education Support Services must be visible and involved in schools. They should come to school and educate learners on how they can deal with learners’ aggression.

4.4.9 Life Orientation lessons are to be used as a source of behaviour change. Learners are to suggest topics that affect them and break them down into themes. For instance; Aggression – All learners are to go and research, design posters and outline their fears and consequences on this theme. The School Based Support Team must assist in monitoring this process.

4.4.10 In their strategic planning the school needs to come up with a year plan on how to assist learners in dealing with learner aggression. It is further recommended that the Department of Education should develop effective programmes that will assist with the alleviation of learner aggression.

4.4.11 The Zero-Aggression tolerance approach should be in the school Code of Conduct and Life Orientation lessons should be used to emphasise this Code of Conduct in the first week of January when schools reopens.

4.4.12 Educators are to play a more supporting role.

4.4.13 Learners must be taught that all schools have been declared “dangerous object free zones!” According to Bezuidenhout and Joubert (2003:63), one of the initiatives by the South African government to reduce gun-related aggression in schools are the establishment of firearm free zones. Thus no person may carry or store any dangerous object in a public school.

4.4.14 Motivational speakers, pastors and experts should take part in assisting the learners to develop programmes that will assist them in dealing with learner aggression.
4.4.15 The other information which is important is that learners must be taught to respect one another and to express learner aggression in a healthy way.

4.5 Further research

Further research should be conducted aimed at addressing learner aggression. Proper guidance needs to be offered so that learners are assisted to deal with learner aggression.

Learners need support on how to overcome anger and how to resolve conflicts without being physical. This will help the school to be a safe haven where it will be such a pleasure for a learner to come to school in an environment which is learner aggression free.

Furthermore, research should be done to link the relationship between the reports released by the South African Institute of Race Relations education researcher, Thomas Blaser. He claimed that South Africa’s schools are the “most dangerous in the world”, whereas the Department of Education Director – General Duncan Hindle said the statement was “both inaccurate and highly irresponsible” (The Citizen, 21 February 2008:9).

4.6 SUMMARY

One of the objectives of this study was to describe guidelines aimed at assisting learners in dealing with learner aggression. The findings from this study on learners’ experience of other learners’ aggression provides evidence that everyone needs to take responsibility since learners are exposed to high levels of aggression on a daily basis.

The guidelines are intended to guide all learners who are victims or perpetrators of learner aggression to be able to deal with their emotions before resorting to learner aggression. Also evident from the study is that not only learners can be able to deal with the uncontrollable learner on learner aggression in a secondary school, but other stakeholders need to be included because ‘alone they cannot do it, but together they can!’. This principle of teamwork can assist learners in dealing with learner aggression. The research findings were that learners’ experiences of other learners’ aggression made some learners feel too frightened to come to school as they experience it as an unsafe environment. The fact that learners can not run to educators for assistance because of the educators’ unhelpful attitude causes learners vent their frustrations.
Another finding was that learners end up turning to their peers because they do not get support and guidance from their parents. Learners indicated that the presence of their parents in their lives for guidance would have a positive impact on their lives and make them responsible citizens, who are able to control their anger and emotions. Support for learners through effective guidelines programmes could ensure that learners are assisted in dealing with learner aggression.

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The Times, (2008-02-21). Teachers to be trained to recognise signs of impending classroom violence.

Weekend Argus. (2008-03-10).


INTERVIEW 1:

R: How is aggression in your school?

P1: Well, aggression among us is very alarming, and like really worries me quiet a lot mam.

R: Mmh….

P1: I think that learners, who are aggressive in classrooms, are people who have problems at home, because they end up being the centre of attention and they like being class clowns. At the end of the day they are class clowns and the expense of the other learners, who are very helpless, so now it causes us to have conflict among each other.

R: Yes!

P1: I am the ring leader and usually have many problems at home, I come from a broken home and being aggressive is just a way for me to enjoy school. Picking on others is just a way for me to stray my pain away that I am feeling at home. In order to impress other learners, I just bully and threaten other learners.

R: You seem worried?

P1: I am worried; like in a classroom it causes many disruptions. I am afraid of ringleaders because it’s not like I can stand up for them because they usually do this in a crowd, now I cannot afford to be the laughing stock of the school or class. If I stand up against them I am just a minority and it is going to cause more aggression.

R: In what way does that cause aggression?

P1: It is not like one is going to bring ones friends and team up against their friends, because that can cause bigger problems. In some instances the teachers also causes learner aggression. If the teacher comments about another boy in a negative connotation, then the class clown is going to build on what the teacher said.
R: Mm!

P1: Sometimes the teachers don’t motivate one in what one can do. It is always that one is stupid or has failed a test and that one don’t study. They always have comments and some bullies take the negative comments from the teachers and that makes them angry and it causes aggression.

R: Hm!

P1: Eeh lets say, I am outside during the break and the bully repeats what the teacher said, I am going to retaliate and act back.

R: Anything else you want to add?

P1: I think maybe another factor is that there are a lot of gangsters here and they all smoke and sell drugs whether Mandrax or what, I don’t know. One day the older boy fought with me because I was looking at him, his actions were caused by drugs. It is not him per se but it is the drugs inside him that push him to do this.
21 August 2006

Dear Professor Myburgh and Mrs Mnyakeni

Ethical Clearance Number : 115 14/08/06

Re: Ethical Approval for Doctoral Study

Title : LEARNER’S EXPERIENCE OF LEARNERS’ AGGRESSION IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL

The FAEC has decided to

<table>
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<tr>
<td>approve the proposal</td>
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<td>provisionally approve the proposal with</td>
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<td>recommended changes</td>
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Sincerely

[Signature]

Professor B. Smit

Chair: FACULTY ACADEMIC ETHICS COMMITTEE
4. A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.

5. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.

6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Senior Manager (if at a district/office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researchers may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.

7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year.

8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.

9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.

10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or offices visited for supplying such resources.

11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear on the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.

12. On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Senior Manager: Strategic Policy Development, Management & Research Coordination with one Hard Cover bound and one Ring bound copy of the final, approved research report. The researcher would also provide the said manager with an electronic copy of the research abstract/summary and/or annotation.

13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.

14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Senior Manager concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

[Signature]

ALBERT CHANE

ACTING DIVISIONAL MANAGER: OFSTD

The contents of this letter has been read and understood by the researcher.

Signature of Researcher:

Date: 25-07-2006
CONSENT FORM TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am an M.Ed (Psychology of Education) student at the University of Johannesburg University. Currently I am doing research on learner experiences of learner aggression in a secondary school. My supervisors are professors C.P.H Myburgh and M. Poggenpoel.

The objectives of this research are:
1. To explore and describe grade 11 learner's experiences of learner aggression in a secondary school.
2. To describe guidelines to assist learners in dealing with learner aggression.

I want to invite learners at your school, between the ages of 16 and 18 years of age to participate in this research. They will be interviewed by me. The interviews will take approximately 40 to 60 minutes. This may be followed by subsequent short interviews for clarification.

Interview(s) will be audiotaped for analysis by the researcher and to verify findings through an independent coder. The audiotapes will only be listened to by myself and my supervisors and be stored safely under lock and key. After the audiotapes have been transcribed they will be destroyed. After the transcription has been done a copy will be brought to learners to make sure that no misunderstanding has occurred.

Participation is voluntarily. Learners have the freedom to withdraw from the study at any given time. Their identity will be dealt with in the strictest confidentiality. The findings of this research will be used to develop guidelines to learners in dealing with learner aggression.

The direct and immediate gain from the research project is that the learners will be able to verbalise their experiences on learner aggression. The study involves no foreseeable risks or harm to you.

Should you have any further questions relating to this research you may contact me at 0736469704.

I have read this consent form and voluntarily agree to allow learner at the school to participate in this study.

Principal's signature

MRS E.M MNYAKENI
RESEARCHER

C.P.H MYBURGH (HED. B.Sc Hons, M.Comm, D.Ed)
PROFESSOR: EDUCATION SCIENCE

MARIE POGGENPOEL (RN., Ph.D)
PROFESSOR: NURSING SCIENCE

05/09/2006
Date

31-08-06
Date

31-08-06
Date

31-08-05
Date
APPENDIX D
DEAR PARENTS / GUARDIAN

CONSENT FORM TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am an M.Ed (Psychology of Education) student at the University of Johannesburg University. Currently I am doing research on learner experiences of learner aggression in a secondary school. My supervisors are professors C.P.H Myburgh and M. Poggenpoel.

The objectives of this research are:

1. To explore and describe grade 11 learner’s experiences of learner aggression in a secondary school.
2. To describe guidelines to assist learners in dealing with learner aggression.

I want to invite your child to participate in this research and will be interviewed by me. The interviews will take approximately 40 to 60 minutes. This may be followed by subsequent short interviews for clarification.

Interview(s) will be audiotaped for analysis by the researcher and to verify findings through an independent coder. The audiotapes will only be listened to by myself and my supervisors and be stored safely under lock and key. After the audiotapes have been transcribed they will be destroyed. After the transcription has been done a copy will be brought to your child to make sure that no misunderstanding has occurred.

Participation is voluntarily. Your child has the freedom to withdraw from the study at any given time. Their identity will be dealt with in the strictest confidentiality. The findings of this research will be used to develop guidelines to assist learners in dealing with learner aggression.

The direct and immediate gain from the research project is that your child will be able to verbalize his/her experiences on learner aggression. The study involves no foreseeable risks or harm to you.

Should you have any further questions relating to this research you may contact me at 0736469704.

I have read this consent form and voluntarily agree to allow learner at the school to participate in this study.

__________________________
Parent’s/Guardian’s signature

MRS E.M MINYAKENI: Researcher

__________________________
C.P.H MYBURGH HED. B.Sc Hons.M.Com, D.Ed
PROFESSOR: EDUCATION

__________________________
MARIE POGGENPOEL (RN, PH.D)
PROFESSOR: NURSING SCIENCE

__________________________
Date 21 - 08 06

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Date 21 - 08 06

__________________________
Date 21 - 08 06
DEAR PARTICIPANT

ASSENT FORM TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am an M.Ed (Psychology of Education) student at the University of Johannesburg University. Currently I am doing research on learner experiences of learner aggression in a secondary school. My supervisors are professors C.P.H Myburgh and M. Poggenpoel.

The objectives of this research are:
1. To explore and describe grade 11 learner’s experiences of learner aggression in a secondary school.
2. To describe guidelines to assist learners in dealing with learner aggression.

I want to invite you to participate in this research and will be interviewed by me. The interviews will take approximately 40 to 60 minutes. This may be followed by subsequent short interviews for clarification.

Interview(s) will be audiotaped for analysis by the researcher and to verify findings through an independent coder. The audiotapes will only be listened to by myself and my supervisors and be stored safely under lock and key. After the audiotapes have been transcribed they will be destroyed. After the transcription has been done a copy will be brought to you to make sure that no misunderstanding have occurred.

Participation is voluntarily. You have the freedom to withdraw from the study at any given time. Their identity will be dealt with in the strictest confidentiality. The findings of this research will be used to develop guideline to assist learners in dealing with learner aggression.

The direct and immediate gain from the research project is that you will be able to verbalize your experiences on learner aggression. The study involves no foresee-able risks or harm to you.

Should you have any further questions relating to this research you may contact me at 0736469704.

I have read this consent form and voluntarily agree to allow learner at the school to participate in this study.

________________________
Participants signature

Date: 05/09/2006

MRS E.M MNYAKENI
RESEARCHER

Date: 31-08-06

C.P.H MYBURGH (HED. B.Sc Hons. M.Comm ,D.Ed)
PROFESSOR: EDUCATION SCIENCE

Date: 31-08-06

MARIE POGGENPOEL (RN., Ph.D)
PROFESSOR: NURSING SCIENCE

Date: 31-09-06
EXTRACT FROM FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW 1:

R: How is aggression in your school?
P1: Well, aggression among us is very alarming, and like really worries me quiet a lot mam.
R: Mmh....
P1: I think that learners, who are aggressive in classrooms, are people who have problems at home, because they end up being the centre of attention and they like being class clowns. At the end of the day they are class clowns and the expense of the other learners, who are very helpless, so now it causes us to have conflict among each other.
R: Yes!
P1: I am the ring leader and usually have many problems at home, I come from a broken home and being aggressive is just a way for me to enjoy school. Picking on others is just a way for me to stray my pain away that I am feeling at home. In order to impress other learners, I just bully and threaten other learners.
R: You seem worried?
P1: I am worried; like in a classroom it causes many disruptions. I am afraid of ringleaders because it's not like I can stand up for them because they usually do this in a crowd, now I cannot afford to be the laughing stock of the school or class. If I stand up against them I am just a minority and it is going to cause more aggression.
R: In what way does that cause aggression?
P1: It is not like one is going to bring ones friends and team up against their friends, because that can cause bigger problems. In some instances the teachers also causes learner aggression. If the teacher comments about another boy in a negative connotation, then the class clown is going to build on what the teacher said.
R: Mm!
P1: Sometimes the teachers don't motivate one in what one can do. It is always that one is stupid or has failed a test and that one don't study. They always have comments and some bullies take the negative comments from the teachers and that makes them angry and it causes aggression.
R: Hm!

P1: Eeh lets say, I am outside during the break and the bully repeats what the teacher said, I am going to retaliate and act back.

R: Anything else you want to add?

P1: I think maybe another factor is that there are a lot of gangsters here and they all smoke and sell drugs whether Mandrax or what, I don’t know. One day the older boy fought with me because I was looking at him, his actions were caused by drugs. It is not him per se but it is the drugs inside him that push him to do this.
To whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that in June 2009 I did the proofreading and the language editing for the Dissertation of

MAPHIRI MNYAKENI

Entitled

LEARNERS’ EXPERIENCE OF OTHER LEARNERS’ AGGRESSION IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL

This document is being submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS

In the PSYCHOLOGY OF EDUCATION

In the FACULTY OF EDUCATION

At the

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

I have proofread and edited the main body of the work, the introductory pages and the list of references. I have not been given any appendices to edit. This editing principally involves proofreading, language, style and grammar editing; and also checking the text for clarity of meaning, sequence of thought, punctuation errors, and expression and tenses. I have also noted any inconsistencies in thought, style or logic, and any ambiguities or repetitions of words and phrases, and have corrected those errors which creep into all writing. I have written the corrections on the hard copy and have returned the document to the author, who is responsible for inserting these.

June 2009

[Signature]

Bernice McNeil


Bernice

Regards from Bernice

Bernice McNeil

Cell 072 287 9859

email edit@iafrica.com