AN EXPRESSION OF SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH IDENTITY:
UNDERSTANDING DELINQUENCY, VIOLENCE AND VANDALISM AMONGST
THE YOUTH IN SELECTED INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

BY

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APRIL 2014

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SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTERS IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION & MANAGEMENT AT THE
NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
DECLARATION

I, KENEUOE MARYEN-JOSEPH MOHALE, Student Number: S208022532, hereby declare that this treatise for the Magister Philosophiae: Conflict Transformation and Management is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment or completion of any postgraduate qualification to another university or for another qualification.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor who offered continuous guidance and direction during the entire process. Without the guidance and support of Professor Isaacs-Martin who served as my supervisor, the completion of this dissertation would not have been possible. She paid great attention to my work and offered appropriate advice that shaped this thesis. I appreciate the long hours she spent reading through the many drafts of the thesis and for proving comment to assist in the compilation thereof.

Special appreciation goes to my family for their support and for believing that I could make this happen. My heartfelt gratitude goes to my mother for her encouragement and for providing financial support to me to undertake this study. Mommy, thank you for your unconditional love, inspiration, encouragement as well as for your support when I had some doubts.

I wish to extend my warmest thanks to all who offered support in whatever way throughout this entire programme. Finally, I also thank all the research participants who gave their time for the interviews and for allowing me the opportunity to meet them and learn from them; please know that your participation was much appreciated. My deepest gratitude goes to the Lord Almighty, for blessing me with the grace and the ability to do undertake and complete this dissertation.
ABSTRACT

This study sought to explore the perceptions of violence by the youth and to investigate the causes and consequences of violence amongst the youth. Specifically, the study aimed at exploring why the youth are predisposed to violence and violent crimes in informal settlements. A qualitative research design was used in this study. The researcher made use of the qualitative design because it allows for the richness of the personal experiences and meanings of the respondents to be explored, allowing the researcher to uncover variations between respondents. Based on the qualitative design, the study utilised the in-depth interview to solicit the views of young people living in New Brighton Township in Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape Province.

The objectives of the study were

- To identify consequences of violence.
- To assert if violence is normalised within a particular social environment.
- To explore what predisposes the youth to violence.
- To find out if parenting styles influence youth violence.
- To explore the role of models in youth violence and crime.

The respondents were selected through purposive sampling as the researcher sought typical and divergent data from the respondents. Data was collected through focus group interviews with nine young people aged nineteen to twenty-four years. The study established the following: Firstly, that violence is high in South African communities. It also found the following factors to be contributing to these high levels of violence: socialisation, unemployment, and family structures. The findings also indicated that some kinds of violence are normalised within the societies in which young people grow up in. Findings also indicate that, as a result of these violent behaviours, many South African youth lose their lives while others are imprisoned.

This study also found that the environment in which a child grows up has a greater impact on the child’s later behaviour in life. Overall, the study concluded that violence amongst the young people is a major problem facing South African communities. As one of the recommendations, the researcher indicated that punishing young people through imprisonment is not the solution, especially in a country where so many people are living in wretched poverty. Rather, the researcher recommended that minimising
the levels of violence to which young people are exposed to on a daily basis could be one of the effective intervention strategies for decreasing this pandemic. This can be achieved by involving families, schools and communities in minimising this kind of exposure.
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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

In South Africa, no community is untouched by violence. Images and acts of violence pervade the media; violence takes place in peoples’ homes, streets, schools, workplace and institutions. Violence threatens and instils fear in people’s lives; research has shown that many people worldwide lose their lives as a result of violence.

A culture of violence dominates the South African society especially in black residential areas (UNDP, 2005). South Africa has high levels of violence and crime, and many of its young people are involved in violence. It was found that some of the victims of violence are more likely to be violent or to be involved in some violent acts as a way of coping and as a form of revenge directed towards others who might be innocent. Apart from being perpetrators and victims of violence, many youngsters witness violence. As a result, the already high level of violence among young people is increasing. Youth violence is one of the major problems facing South Africa, and if is not well managed, the economic and social development will be greatly affected. According to Dawes & Van der Merwe (2012:4-6), South African history is steeped in violence, from pre-colonial times through colonisation to democratisation of the country.

1.2 Background

Violence has become part of people’s daily life in South Africa. South Africa’s history played an influential role in the growth of aggression and violence within this country. This could be traced back to the Anglo Boer War and the start of the Apartheid era. The term “Apartheid” refers to “separate development.” To ensure separate development, all citizens of South Africa were classified according to different racial groups such as black/ African, white, coloured and Asian. The system of Apartheid included a series of discriminating acts against people of colour. Such acts involved causing harm to another who is of a different race, forbidding interracial relationships and assigning low status and education to “lower” races such as the black/ Africans (Bruce, 2009:6).
Even though so many years have passed since South Africa adopted the system of democracy, the legacy of Apartheid continues to provide an understanding as to why South Africans are more prone to violent behaviour. This can be understood by exploring the levels of racism and inequality. Racism plays a role in understanding violence, as the consequences of this institutionalised racism in South Africa resulted in internalised feelings of inferiority which could also lead to feelings of low self-worth. This could lead to violent behaviour as a way to act against one’s feeling of inferiority and low self-worth (Bruce, 2009:6-8).

Moreover, rates of child poverty vary significantly by race and ethnicity. The percentage of young black men without jobs has climbed relentlessly and is significantly higher than the white unemployment rate (Siegel & Walsh, 2012:132). Racial disparity also creeps into the juvenile justice system. If they do commit crime, minority youths are more likely than white youths to be officially processed in the juvenile court. The ability of black men to be providers has consequently declined, and in desperation, some may turn to violent acts such as committing armed robbery as a means of economic survival, which in some cases can result in death.

Hamber (1999:117) also proposes that race remains a primary predictor of violence in South Africa. There is a popular perception largely (held by white South Africans), that the wealthy are more affected by crime than the poor. The rich are twice more likely to be victimised than the poor, but in fact the poverty-stricken are nearly 80 times more likely to die or get hurt by crime than the wealthy, (Hamber, 1999:117). Hamber further suggests that the annual incidence of violence experienced by African women is more than ten times that of their white counterparts. These figures are in line with the increasing international evidence that poor people bear most of the brunt of violence in society.

Inequality reinforces the psychological legacy of Apartheid. Inequality contributes to violence as it gives rise to questions about one’s self-worth, especially when it comes to being compared to people who have a higher status than others. Inequality may also reinforce the legacy of Apartheid racism, as people are not seen as having equal status to that of another race. Looking at South African history, one can understands
why South African individuals living in a new era of post-apartheid are still experiencing the violence and aggression (Masango, 2004:933).

Those living in poverty are forced to live in neighbourhoods that experience inadequate housing and health care, have disrupted family lives and underemployment and despair, (Siegel & Walsh, 2012:132). Long-term poverty undermines a community and its residents, and as a result, residents develop a sense of hopelessness and mistrust of conventional society. children growing up in these disadvantaged areas are at risk of delinquency because they hear from adults that there is little hope of success in the conventional world.

1.3 Problem statement

Conflict and violence have given rise to fear and anxiety among community members in South Africa, but more so amongst members confined to informal settlements due to poverty. Within these unstable communities found within congested informal settlements, violence is confronted daily by all residents, and the youth are most affected and influenced by this. This violence extends beyond individuals, affecting their families, relatives and peers. It is reported that violence amongst and perpetrated by the youth in South Africa is higher than that amongst other age groups, and continues to increase (Bruce, 2009:20). Bruce states further that youth violence is a national epidemic and a growing problem that needs attention in many communities and across the nation.

The number of young people being arrested because of violent crime continues to increase, and the South African youth form a large proportion of those in the justice and correctional system (Masuku, 2004:10). In addition to that, Pelser (2008:82) postulates that South Africa’s youth has normalised illegitimate means, such as crime and violence, as a method to acquire status or to establish control over their environment.

1.4 Aim/s and objectives

1.4.1 Aims

The aim of this study is to explore why the youth are predisposed to violence and violent crimes in informal settlements.
A sub-focus of this aim is to describe the perceptions of violence amongst the youth in informal settlements.

1.4.2 Objectives

- To identify consequences of violence.
- To assert if violence is normalised within a particular social environment.
- To explore what predisposes the youth to violence.
- To find out if parenting styles influence youth violence.
- To explore the role of models in youth violence and crime.

1.5 Theoretical framework

It is necessary to highlight the theoretical explanations for violence before providing empirical linkage between the youth and violence. This theory will help in understanding violence, and factors contributing towards it. There are many theories trying to explain violence and aggression. This research study is guided by the social learning theory. The social learning theory by Albert Bandura (1969) is the behaviour theory pertinent to aggressive and violent behaviours, suggesting that frustration increases arousal and anger, but this leads to aggression only if the individual has learned to be aggressive in the particular situation and environment.

The social learning theory further states that aggression is learned through a process called observational learning or imitation or modelling. Through this process, individual learning occurs when an individual observes and imitates the behaviour of others. Thus, in communities, young people will have learned aggression from observing violent environments either at home or at school, by prolonged exposure to violent acts. Research indicates that through the social learning factors, the environment of young people can be maintained to suit the desires of the society.

The social learning theory further states that children learn behaviours by watching the significant others. These significant others can be either be their parents, siblings, peers or friends. In addition to that, social learning theorists believe delinquency is a product of learning the norms, values and behaviours associated with delinquent activity, (Siegel & Welsh, 2012:154-155). Social learning can involve the actual techniques of crime as well as the psychological aspects of criminality on how to deal with the guilt or shame associated with illegal activities. Delinquent behaviour is learned
and is also a by-product of the interaction. The reality in South Africa is that many people grew up being exposed to all types of violent crimes in societies and they now practise it. Another factor that provides a framework in this study is of culture and socialisation. Culture and social learning postulate that people learn aggression and violence through the process of socialisation. It indicates that different cultures have strong beliefs about what one should or ought to do, and it suggests that the beliefs that people have, play a role in aggression.

1.6 Importance of the study

If the causes and consequences of violent conflicts can be explored and understood, attempts at effective intervention strategies can be designed. Moreover, the researcher believes that by understanding the core causes of violent conflicts can help to decrease their rate by preventing these causes. This has been supported by Clark (2012:78), who indicated that it is virtually impossible to effectively address a problem and find its solution without understanding its causes.

The results of this study are useful to youth and to youth leaders concerned in decreasing the level of violence among youth by identifying possible intervention strategies. Furthermore, this research might be useful to community members who are overwhelmed by the youth’s violent behaviours which affect them either directly or indirectly. Lastly, this research might be useful to the nation as whole, as effective interventions can be designed after understanding the core causes of violent conflicts among young people.

The researcher wants to investigate the causes and consequences of violence amongst the youth, and the youth’s perception of violent conflicts in informal areas. Moreover, the researcher chose to study this group because young people are most likely to be both the victims and perpetrators of violence. Therefore, the researcher chose to investigate this group, as it will assist in overcoming the problem of violence among young people.

Masuku (2004:21) states that the lack of understanding and getting young people’s views on how they get involved in criminal activities and the extent of their vulnerability to victimisation, limits the ability to plan appropriate strategies in decreasing violence
in this group. This limited research and understanding could be the reason why effective intervention strategies have not been found to decrease this problem among the youth.

However, although researches has been done by different scholars on youth violence, this study will be different from those studies in that it will focus on the youth’s perception of the causes and consequences of violent conflicts in informal areas.

1.7 Definitions of terms

**Youth:** The United Nations defines youth as between the age of 15 and 24, while the South African National Youth Policy employs a much broader age definition, which is from 14 to 35 years.

For this study, the researcher took a different stance by considering the youth as young people aged 19 to 24 years.

**Conflict:** A disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns (Anstey, 2006:5).

**Delinquency:** An antisocial misdeed in violation of the law by a minor.

**Vandalism:** Deliberate destruction or damage of private or public property.

**Violence:** An expression of physical force against one or more people, compelling action against one's will on pain of being hurt. Violence may be used as a tool of manipulation, (UNDP, 2005).

**Informal settlement:** A place where people decide to live and build temporary shelters, often followed by more permanent houses. Sometimes informal settlements are supplied with water, electricity, etc., and people can become owners of individual pieces of land.

The 2009 National Housing Code’s Informal Settlement Upgrading Programme of the National Development of Human Settlements (NDHS) identifies informal settlements on the basis of the following characteristics:

- Illegality and informality
- inappropriate locations
• restricted public and private sector investment
• Poverty and vulnerability and social stress, (Housing Development Agency, 2012:20). In this study, the researcher follows the definition provided by NDHS.
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Many countries are plagued by high levels of violence and crime, and South Africa is not exempted from this. As in many of these countries, young people are most involved in, witness to or subsumed by violence as perpetrators and/or as victims. As a result, the high level of violence among young people is increasing. Issues such as culture and socialisation processes, parenting styles and familial influences, media influence as well as inequality and poverty need to be addressed.

The United Nations defines youth as between the age of 15 and 24, while the South African National Youth Policy employs a much broader age definition, which is from 14 to 35 years (UNDP, 2005). For this study, the researcher will limit the youth as young people between the ages of 19 to 24 years.

Coupled with youth is the issue of delinquency. It is defined as an antisocial misdeed in violation of the law by a minor. Siegel & Welsh (2012:9) defined juvenile delinquency as participation in illegal behaviours by a minor who falls under a statutory age limit. Many scholars provided many different definitions of violence, therefore there is no single universally accepted definition of violence. Violence is defined as an expression of physical force against one or more people, compelling action against one’s will on pain of being hurt. Violence may be used as a tool of manipulation (UNDP, 2005).

According to Williams-Evans & Myers (2004:32), violence is defined as emotional or physical aggression that is directed toward others, while aggression is defined as any physical or verbal behaviour that is intended to hurt or destroy. Some scholars describe violent behaviour as occurring on a continuum ranging from bullying and verbal abuse, through fighting, rape and homicide.

There are many theories that attempt to explain violence and aggression, but as for this study, the social learning theory is used to explain possible reasons as to why the youth tend to be violent. This theory is chosen because it is considered as being the best for this study. The social learning theory has concepts that explain and provide literature on how the youth tend to be aggressive and violent. The following concepts
will be covered under the social learning theory: culture and socialisation, parenting styles and familial influences, as well as media influence.

2.2 Social learning theory

The social learning theory by Albert Bandura (1969) is a behaviour theory significant to aggressive and violent behaviours. The social learning theory states that aggression is learned through a process called observational learning or imitation or modelling. Through this process, individual learning occurs when an individual observes and imitates the behaviour of others, (Bandura, 1971:7).

The social learning theory further suggests that frustration increases arousal and anger, but this leads to aggression only if the individual has learned to be aggressive in the particular situation and environment. Bandura indicated that most human behaviour is learned from observing others. In this sense, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action.

Furthermore, analysis shows that human behaviour is continuously a reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental influences. Thus, in community and school situations, young people learn aggression from observing violent environments either at home, by prolonged access to violent media, within their neighbourhood or at school.

Bandura (1971:8-9) states that if communities exhibit negative environments, young people will, out of the reciprocity, exhibit negative behaviour. Institutions of learning that exhibit unconstructive divergent reciprocal interactional relationships between the environment and young people are reported unhealthy for the creation of a non-violent environment. The youth learn both positive and negative reinforcement from each other. When their needs are not met, they become frustrated, thus turning aggressive.

The social learning theory spans both cognitive and behavioural frameworks because the theory encompasses attention, memory and motivation. Researchers have applied the social learning theory extensively to the understanding of aggression and psychological disorders such as behaviour modification (Bandura, 1969). The theory has been used as the theoretical foundation for the technique of behaviour modelling that is widely used in training programmes. Research indicates that through the social
learning factors, the environment of young people can be manipulated to suit the desires of the society, (Bandura, 1971:7).

The theory also states that personality represents an interaction of the individual with his or her environment. Rotter & Chance (1972) view personality as always changeable. One’s personality behaviour and the way one thinks change with one’s environment. Rotter (1966) used four components of the social learning theory to predict behaviour. The components are: behaviour potential, expectancy, reinforcement value, and the psychological situation. Behaviour potential is defined as the probability that an individual will exhibit a particular behaviour in a situation depending on the environment. One may exhibit multiple behaviours in a given situation. An individual will exhibit whichever behaviour has the highest potential for gain (Bandura, 1971:38-39).

Expectancy represents the subjective probability that a given behaviour will lead to a particular outcome or reinforcement. The more often behaviour has led to reinforcement in the past, the stronger is the person’s expectancy that the behaviour will lead to a similar outcome now. Reinforcement value refers to the desirability of the outcome of one’s behaviour. The more attractive the outcome desired, the higher the reinforcement value, (Bandura, 1971:39).

The social learning theory further states that children learn behaviours by watching the significant others. These significant others can either be their parents, siblings, peers and friends. In addition to that, social learning theorists believe that delinquency is a product of learning the norms, values and behaviours associated with delinquent activity (Siegel & Welsh, 2012:154-155).

According to Siegel & Welsh (2012:154-155), social learning can involve the actual techniques of crime as well as the psychological aspects of criminality on how to deal with the guilt or shame associated with illegal activities. Delinquent behaviour is learned and is also a by-product of the interaction. As stated by Siegel & Welsh (2012:154-155), the reality in South Africa is that many people grew up being exposed to all types of violent crimes in societies, and they now practise them. Bandura also suggests that young people are born good and learn to be bad in their societies.
According to Bandura’s social learning theory, aggressive behaviour is acquired by means of family and sub-cultural influences, symbolic modelling and direct experiences. Principles for violent behaviour are set in communities and households as well as in the media, and encourage violent solutions to disagreements or interpersonal tension. As a result, young people learn to use violence pre-emptively, (Schoeman, 2010:10). According to Bandura, patterns of behaviour can be shaped by means of reward and punishment. Through direct experiences, successful actions are reinforced and unsuccessful actions eliminated (Schoeman, 2010:11).

Nell (2006: 53) suggests that aggression can also be learned through observation; by watching an influential role model engage in an act of aggression which has positive outcomes, might result in the observer acquiring this behaviour. Through observation of the aggressive actions of models in the community and modelling adult modes of conflict management, patterns of aggressive behaviour are passed from one generation to the next, as the child or adolescent develops an elementary understanding of certain rules of conduct and a repertoire of aggressive behaviour is built.

The more influential the model, the stronger the effect will be as people would rather imitate the behaviour of people whom they consider to be attractive or powerful. The same applies for the maintenance of aggressive behaviour which is subject to the principles of reinforcement by the environment. In his theory, Bandura also emphasises reciprocal determination which argues that internal mental events, external environmental contingencies and overt behaviour are intra-dependent to a certain degree. This means that conditioning is not a mechanical process in which people are passive participants, but that people actively seek out and process information about their environment to maximise favourable outcomes. If a person observes that aggressive behaviour is the norm among his role models, then his/her normative belief will be favourable towards aggression, which increases the probability that he/she will display aggression.

A large number of South African youth are victims of violence, or are exposed to violence on a daily basis. Pelser (2008:8) postulates that, in general, South Africa’s youth has normalised illegitimate means, such as crime and violence, as a method to acquire status or to establish control over their environment. He further indicates that
a study exploring the causes of xenophobia is an example of an instance where violent behaviour is normalised.

Moreover, research indicates that young people who are exposed to violence are themselves more likely to get caught up in the cycle of violence, as victims and/or perpetrators. Hence, sadly, the youth have become more than mere victims, and in many cases, they are the perpetrators of crime and violence (Schoeman, 2010:9-10).

2.3 Culture and socialisation process

According to O’Neil (2009:1), humans are born without a culture; therefore individuals acquire a culture through the process of learning from their parents, family and significant others. The process of learning and acquiring a culture is known as socialisation. He further states that the learning process begins from the early days of life and continues throughout life.

Each society has a culture that embodies its values, norms and beliefs. In violent societies, the social hierarchy often supports the formation of groups, which sustain a culture of violence in society, such as gangs. Schoeman (2010:10) suggests that it was found that pre-violence attitudes of influential figures, such as community leaders, parents and peers, contributed to the culture of violence, thus reinforcing the established values, norms and beliefs. Culture is a distinctly human factor that plays a role in aggression.

Different cultures have strong beliefs about what one should or ought to do; these beliefs also play a role in aggression preparedness. For many people, violence is a perfectly acceptable method of dealing with interpersonal conflict. In the case of wife beating, in a patriarchal and male domination culture, it is acceptable that a man must beat his wife if she is being disobedient (Anderson & Bushman, 2002:36).

Bandura (Schoeman, 2010:10-11) also postulates that the cultural values and norms a society adheres to may generate aggressive people, if a great deal of value is attached to aggressive models and if aggressive actions are rewarded. In some societies, violence is deemed legitimate by higher-status individuals (especially men) against lower-status individuals such as children or women. In addition to that, the
general attitude towards violence in society might consider violence legitimate to resolve disputes or conflicts.

Similarly, Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz (1980:121) in their study concluded that each new generation learns to be violent by being a participant in a violent family; in other words, ‘violence begets violence’. Krause (1990) verifies this result and records that research finds that sons of most violent parents have a rate of wife beating 10 times greater than that of the sons of non-violent parents. Walker (1991), too, states that witnessing fathers beat mothers put a boy at seven-hundred times greater risk of using violence in his own home, (Singh, 2005:32).

Moreover, Stearns (2008:4) indicated that in societies where males are given higher status, females are usually more repressed in the way they express their anger than males are. The level of anger is considered not only based on the different roles males and females have, but also on physical differences between genders. In some cultures, girls and women were taught that anger was inappropriate and that it was an emotion for males.

A study done in Finland (Lagerspetz et al., 1988) with adults of several professional backgrounds showed that different groups of people within the same country had differing attitudes toward aggression. Soldiers held higher justifications of aggression. Conscientious objectors had more negative attitudes toward aggression. The conscientious objectors had lower total approval scores, especially for items related to defence, killing, and torturing. Similarly, Bonino and Fraçzek (1996) found that approval of antisocial behaviour was greater among adolescents from big cities than among those from rural areas within the same country, (Andreu, et al., 1988:13).

In South Africa it is very important to note that the patriarchal system is the predominant system among cultural groups, whereby women are dominated by men and male control exists at almost all levels of society. The role that men and women are expected to fulfil in the society differs tremendously. Men are expected to be strong, controlled, firm and protective, assertive and to assert themselves and fight for what they want. Women are expected to be gentle, kind, supportive and emotional and are taught to care for and nurture others and support their husbands.
Moreover, the man is considered to be the head of the family and controls the woman who has to be unquestionably obedient. Levin and Penn-Kekana (2002) as referenced by Nel (2006: 27) argue that gender socialisation within South African communities plays a major role in making women more vulnerable to violence as it upholds roles of submissive females and dominant males.

De la Rey (1992) in Nel (2006: 27) also points out similarities regarding gender issues across South African cultures which see women being undervalued and evaluated negatively and which hold them responsible for child rearing and household work. The black culture is highly patriarchal and most of the power, control and authority are in the hands of the male with absolute female obedience.

It seems as if patriarchy combined with cultural demands elevates the problem of gender inequality in South Africa. Motsemme (2003) links this closely with Campbell’s observation that there is a crisis in masculinity among black South African males. She also links the current violence in the country with a more general crisis of masculinity that has developed in the identity of working-class township men. In working-class communities, strong emphasis is placed on masculinity. When masculinity is threatened, violence is one of a range of compensatory responses used by men, (Nel, 2006: 27).

Moreover, anger was considered as a part of masculinity and it was viewed as appropriate in the domestic environment, so as a result, males were taught to channel their anger for certain purposes like solving conflict in the family (Stearns, 2008:4). Schoeman’s research and revealed that in some cultures it is acceptable for a man to hit his girlfriend or wife if she does not listen to him (Schoeman, 2010:14).

Research by Morash (1986) indicates that much of the gender differences in delinquency could be accounted for by the fact that boys had more delinquent peers than girls, and that such associations partially explain gender differences in offending (Haynie & Osgood, 2005:254-255). Giordano’s (1978) research also confirmed this idea. She found that girls who spent time in groups with boys were significantly more likely to engage in delinquent acts than girls who only associated with other girls. Giordano suggests that this is evidence that girls learn delinquency from boys.
Deckard & Dodge (1997:167) indicated that the meaning of specific parental behaviours vary between different cultural groups. Cross-cultural studies have shown variations as well, where in some groups, authoritarian discipline is regarded as parental rejection, but in other populations it indicates parental involvement.

In all the racial groups in South Africa, there are certain traditions, norms and attitudes perpetuating violence against women. According to Deane (2001:20-23), domination of and violence towards women are ingrained in the tradition of family relationships in South Africa. In some black communities, and especially poor communities, when adolescents are initiated into manhood, they learn that they should consider themselves as the rulers and leaders and that women are inferior and subordinate to them. As result of this indoctrination, women are dominated, and violence towards them is encouraged. Deane further states that hitting or raping a woman is consequently not considered to be a serious matter.

Similarly, Muntingh & Gould (2010: 14) also argues that the high levels of violence in South Africa at all levels, create a situation within which children see violence as a normal and acceptable way of resolving conflicts, asserting themselves and obtaining compliance and co-operation from others. A report by the Medical Research Council in 1998 found that in Mthata in the Eastern Cape, particularly in the township of Ngangeliswe, violence and sexual coercion was accepted as normal in relationships between teenagers, (Muntingh & Gould, 2010: 14).

Moreover, Siegel & Welsh (2012:156) further suggest that skills and motives conducive to delinquency are learned as a result of contacts with pro-delinquency values, attitudes and other patterns of delinquent behaviour. The more delinquent an adolescent’s social network, the more likely he is to engage in such behaviours. Numerous studies support the social learning theory that youth often learn to become violent by modelling aggression in their families, school or communities. Children who witness violence between parents often demonstrate a high frequency of assimilation of behaviour problems (Williams-Evans & Myers, 2004:32).

Tyson & Stones (2002:4) also concur with the above statement, as they found that peers and friends play a major role in delinquent behaviour, while Galbavy (2003:73)
is of the opinion that peers relationships have more influence on males than females. In her study, the male participants frequently attributed part of their responsibility for their actions to their friends. The findings indicated that males are concerned to get some sort of approval from friends when engaging in delinquent activities. They need to impress others.

Haynie & Osgood (2005:254-255) stated that increased time spent with peers provides young people with more exposure to models and a more extensive history of reinforcement by the group. They further indicate that attachment of peers is important and enhances the value of reinforcement from the group, thereby increasing the odds that the individual will imitate the group's behaviour. Accordingly, Agnew (1991) found that the relationship of peer delinquency to respondents' own delinquency was considerably stronger for respondents who were more attached to their peers and who spent more time with them (Haynie & Osgood, 2005:254-255).

However, it has been proposed that many young people do not consider aggression, fighting and the usage of guns as an act of violence. Many young people believe that if they are shown disrespect by anyone, they are expected to take action to regain their respect. Therefore many acts of aggression are not seen as violent by young people, but as a way of gaining or maintaining social status. In addition to that, in certain cultures, males are encouraged to be tough from an early age (Williams-Evans & Myers, 2004:32). Heimer and De Coster (1999) also share the same view that gender differences in cultural processes lead to delinquent acts, (Haynie & Osgood, 2005:254-255).

2.4 Parenting styles and familial influences

Bandura’s social learning theory indicated that aggression and violence can be modelled and reinforced by family members. Parents who favour coercive methods or styles have children who tend to use similar aggressive tactics in controlling the behaviour of their peers (Bandura, 1976: 206-207). Many studies were done to confirm this, and it was found that there was a much higher incidence of familial aggressive modelling for delinquent than for non-delinquent behaviours.

Siegel & Welsh (2012:157) also indicated that crime appears to be inter-generational. Children whose parents are deviant and criminal are more likely to become criminals
themselves and eventually to produce criminal children. Children learn deviant behaviours from people they value and admire most. Gwarney, Stockard & Bohmer, (1987:277-280) also concur with the above statement, as they assert that the influence of parents definitely determines the child’s behaviour.

Parental behaviour and the family environment are central factors in the development of violent behaviour in young people. Gwarney, et al., emphasised this by stating that poor supervision of children by parents and the use of harsh, physical punishment to discipline children are strong predictors of violence during adolescence. Long-term exposure to parental alcoholism, domestic violence, physical abuse of the child, and child sexual abuse teaches children that criminal and violent activities are acceptable, (Gwarney, et al., 1987:277-280).

Bandura (1976: 206-207) added by saying that aggression can also be modelled and reinforced by family members. Many studies were done to confirm this, and it was found that there is a much higher incidence of familial aggressive modelling for delinquent than for non-delinquent boys. On parenting styles, Bandura states that parents who favour coercive methods or styles have children who tend to use similar aggressive tactics in controlling the behaviour of their peers.

Wood, Foy, Layne, Pynoos & James (2002:130) also agree that harsh parental discipline is associated with higher levels of aggressiveness in youth. Straus presented evidence for this view that exposure to parental corporal punishment increases the risk of aggressive conduct in children and adolescents. Straus's findings have been contested by Larzelere and Baumrind. A meta-analysis of the extensive literature on corporal punishment, however, indicated that corporal punishment is related to poorer outcomes in children and youth, (Wood et al., 2002:130).

However, Oslon (2004:148) strongly disagrees with the above researchers, stating that what is learned from the parents has little influence on the youth’s aggressive behaviour. The same view was advanced by Gavriel, (2010) and Danesh (2006), contending that what is learned can be unlearned. Oslon argues that what a child learns from its parents in childhood should not be of any worry, as it will be unlearned by his interactive environment in societal demands for ideals, church demands for higher virtues and the school learning environment with the right nurturing environment.
The above arguments support Bandura’s theory of the social learning factors, which states that the environment can be modified for new learning experiences. Similarly, Silvern, Karyl, Waelde, Hodges, Starek, Heidt and Min (1995), who studied a sample of 550 undergraduate students, found that exposure to violence as a child was not always linked to aggressive character development, (Singh, 2005:32).

However, in a study conducted by Galbavy (2003:73), she found that there is a difference in how family influences male and female delinquents. The data indicated that family problems had a greater effect on the manifestation and continuation of female delinquency than in male delinquency. Females seemed to react to family problem situations by exhibiting personal delinquent behaviour. She concluded that the females were substantially more likely than males to blame their families or themselves, rather than their peers for negative behaviour patterns. This was apparent in females’ frequent assessment of family problems as their reason for delinquent behaviours (Galbavy, 2003:73).

Research also shows that there are a vast number of single-mother households, often as a result of teenage pregnancies which is prevalent in disadvantaged communities. The fathers are often absent, leading to a lack of family structure and, with the mothers having to work long hours to provide an income for their households, these children and adolescents spend significant time on the streets.

Another factor that drives children and adolescents to the streets is crowded housing conditions. Adolescents prefer to go to the streets, and because they spend so much time on the streets, they tend to rely on peer groups for social support and entertainment and not on their families. As a result, they are exposed to substance abuse and violence, (Nel, 2006: 53).

2.5 Media influence

Individuals are being exposed to violence through some sort of media from a young age; television can be a powerful entertainment and education tool for children. However, many studies have revealed that television, and media in general, can have
a negative influence on children. Some studies indicated that it can work in conjunction with other factors to create fear, and increase aggressive and violent behaviours in individuals if their exposures to these are not monitored and are unlimited (Marcus, 2007:81-82).

Youth are important consumers of mass media, including entertainment and advertising. Studies (World report on violence and health, 2009) have found that television viewing often begins as early as 2 years of age, and that the average young person between 8 and 18 years of age watches some 10,000 violent acts a year on television. Prolonged consumption of violent media may be related to violent behaviour. Marcus also agreed that the media plays an important role in increasing violence among young people. In her study, she found that television, movies, the Internet and video games have some influence on youth violence. Young children are becoming involved in crimes and violent activities to the extent where they are not afraid of killing other people.

There is much evidence indicating that exposure to television violence and, to a lesser extent, violent video games, is related to increased aggressiveness in children. The media is largely blamed for the worldwide increase in violence. In 1991, meta-analysis, involving 28 studies in Ghana, America and Germany, of children and youth exposed to media violence and observed in free social interaction, concluded that exposure to media violence increased aggressive behaviour towards friends, classmates and strangers (Nisbett, 1997:1198).

Similarly, research conducted on crime trends and strategies indicates that today’s increased use of technology and e-commerce will create more technologically savvy criminals who will be more organised, creative and international in their approach to crime and criminal activities. The assumption is that the largest offending demographic group will continue to be young males between 15 and 25 years, (Schoeman, 2010:11).

Marcus (2007:81-82) indicated that television stations have begun screening programmes and movies that contain a lot of violence. The violent scenes shown in movies and programmes create a mental imbalance in small children and this result in violent behaviour. These movies and television programmes also show the use of
weapons. Therefore, it becomes easy for kids to learn to use weapons, as these programmes also give children new and creative ideas of killing people.

A study on violence in Portuguese public television (Vala, Lima, & Jerónimo, 2000) revealed that in Portugal, as in other countries (Potter, 1999), violence is presented as successful, portrayed by positive and attractive characters, who often are rewarded or not punished for their violent behaviour, and the consequences for the victims are rarely shown. New technologies make it possible that violence is also presented in a very graphic and realistic way, (Mota Matos, Armando, Ferreira & Haase, 2011:77).

These, together with the large amount of time children spend watching TV, facilitate identification with TV characters, enjoyment of TV violence and perceived realism in TV violence. This is because by watching TV, children have the opportunity to observe aggressive behaviours being accepted and reinforced. This also facilitates the learning and memory of schemes about a hostile world, scripts for social problem-solving that focus on aggression, and normative beliefs that aggression is acceptable (Mota Matos, et., al, 2011:77).

Anderson, Berkowitz, Donnerstein, Huesmann, Johnson, Linz, Malamuth & Wartella (2003: 85) indicated that two related randomised experiments demonstrated that exposure to media violence can lead to increased physical assaults by teenage boys, at least in the short run. In a home for delinquent boys in Belgium, Leyens, Camino, Parke, and Berkowitz (1975) assigned boys in two cottages to see violent movies every night for five nights, while boys in the other two cottages saw non-violent films. The boys were observed interacting after the movies each evening and were rated for their frequency of hitting, choking, slapping, and kicking their cottage mates. Those boys who were exposed to the violent films engaged in significantly more physical assaults on their cottage mates. In similar field experiments with American youth in a minimum-security penal institution for juvenile offenders, Parke, Berkowitz, Leyens, West, and Sebastian (1977) found similar effects of exposure to violent films on overall interpersonal attacks.

Anderson et al. (2003: 86) indicated that randomised experiments by (Drabman & Thomas, (1974, 1975), and Thomas & Drabman (1975), revealed that exposure to media violence can cause immediate increases in aggressive thoughts and tolerance
for aggression in both children and older youth. Anderson et al. further point out that in studies with young people, youngsters shown a brief violent film clip were slower to call an adult to intervene when they saw two younger children fighting than were peers who had watched a neutral film.

In a meta-analysis to look at longitudinal studies of media violence conducted by Anderson and Bushman (2002c), results indicated that high levels of exposure to violent TV programmes in childhood promote aggression in later childhood, adolescence, and even young adulthood (Anderson et al. 2003: 89).

However, some researchers disagree over the type of relationship the media data supports. Others like Haw (1975) argued that their findings support the conclusion that there is no relationship between the two at all. And others like Bushman & Anderson (2001:480) state that the two are associated. Bushman & Anderson argued that psychologists have studied the effect of violent media on aggression for several decades. Hundreds of studies have been conducted on this topic and scientific evidence from a collection of studies concluded that viewing violence increases aggression.

2.6 Inequality and poverty

The effects of income inequality and poverty have been viewed by many delinquency experts as key causes of youth crime and drug abuse. Children growing up poor and living in households that lack economic resources are much more likely to get involved in serious crime than their wealthier peers. It has been confirmed that violence occurs at higher rates in societies with high levels of economic inequality.

Moreover, children and youngsters who are judged to be excessively aggressive, in the core sense of causing or threatening physical injury, often come from poor and fragmented communities and belong to minority groups that have suffered from discrimination and negative social stereotyping. Sometimes, this may be more reflective of social stereotyping than an objective assessment of the individual child's conduct and propensities (Andreu, et al.,1988:11-12).

Siegel & Welsh (2012:135) in their study found that children growing up in disadvantaged areas are at risk of delinquency because they hear from adults that
there is little hope of success in the conventional world. Therefore some do whatever they can to survive and make their needs met, which may entail theft and other criminal activities. The causes of poverty are multiple and include unemployment. Unemployment levels in South Africa are high, particularly among young people. Clark (2012:80) stated that in June 2009, 48.1% of the population between the ages of 15 and 24 was unemployed (Presidency of the Republic of South Africa, 2009).

Research conducted by Bell (2007:117) concludes that there is a correlation between current crime trends among the youth and social and economic factors. Clark (2012:80) indicated that the causes of poverty are multiple and include unemployment, the country’s open-borders policy, and HIV/AIDS. Clark stated that many black and coloured people are ill equipped for the job market. They are unable to find work, they have little opportunity to escape from the poverty trap and often experience high levels of frustration.

Clark further suggests that despite the lack of jobs, each year large numbers of economic migrants from countries such as Zimbabwe and Somalia flock to South Africa in search of work and a better standard of living. With competition for scarce jobs so fierce, the migrants’ presence often generates resentment among the local population and, in some cases, leads to xenophobic violence (Clark, 2012:80).

Further contributing to socioeconomic problems is the HIV/AIDS epidemic: ‘South Africa, with a population of about 50 million, has more people living with HIV and AIDS than any other country in the world’ (Russell, 2009, p. 203). If a family loses its main breadwinner to the illness, this has an enormous and devastating financial impact. As a result, young people imitate violent behaviours such as robbery to meet their human needs, (Clark, 2012:80).

Research and findings on school violence and social economic status have shown that high-poverty neighbourhoods and high population densities are associated with higher rates of school violence. In Cape Town, research found that living in unstable social environments seriously affected young people. Young people become more vulnerable and less able to protect themselves against the influence of their peers or
bad neighbourhood. Young people are also more likely to replicate violent behaviour if already immersed in a violent culture from the neighbours (Loeber, 1998:3).

International research consistently demonstrates that societies with high levels of inequality tend to have high levels of violence, indicating that inequality itself is a key driver of violence. Inequality is also interrelated with other intractable social problems such as those of poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and marginalisation in South Africa.

Although extensive research has been done by different scholars internationally and nationally, the researcher is still interested in pursuing this study because the level of violence among young people is still questionable. The researcher found out that many studies were done on incarcerated juveniles alone and/or on victims of violence, which can make it difficult to be dealt with effectively, as the perceptions of young people have received little attention.

This study will take a different stance in that it will focus on the youth’s perceptions of the causes and consequences of juvenile delinquency in informal areas. The reason for this is that there is limited research on young people’s views on how they get involved in criminal activities and the extent of their vulnerability to victimisation. This limited research on the youth’s perceptions and understanding could be the reason why effective intervention strategies have not been found to decrease this problem among our youth. For these reasons and the others mentioned earlier, that influenced the researcher was influenced to pursue this study.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010:2), research is a systematic process of collecting, analysing and interpreting information in order to increase the knowledge and understanding of a phenomenon that one is interested in or concerned about. The
outcome of a research project intends to solve the problem that exists and with which the researcher is concerned.

This chapter covers the method employed in the research, namely the qualitative method, and later in the chapter it will be explained why this method was considered as being the best for this study. In addition, the focus would be on the research design and method of enquiry, the population, sample and sampling techniques used data collection tools and data analysis.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methodological issues of the study. The principal aim of the study was to:

- To explore why the youth are predisposed to violence and violent crimes in informal settlements.
A sub-focus of this aim is to describe the perceptions of violence amongst the youth in informal settlements.

Objectives were:
- To explore what predisposes the youth to violence.
- To identify consequences of violence.
- To assert if violence is normalised within a particular social environment.
- To find out if parenting styles influence youth violence.
- To explore the role of models in youth violence and crime.

3.2 Research method

The study makes use of the qualitative research method. According to Creswell (2008:4), qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Fox and Bayat (2007) also describe the qualitative interview as being an avenue to uncover what people think, feel, remember and experience. This is effected by means of the researcher asking a number of unstructured, open-ended questions which attempt to elicit detailed responses from respondents; responses which tell their story. Respondents tell these stories in their own words, which are most often recorded verbatim, transcribed and then interpreted.

The researcher chose the qualitative research because it allows for the richness of the personal experiences and meanings of the respondents to be explored, thus enabling
the researcher to uncover the variations between respondents, and to find potential patterns of similarity and difference among these individuals who share similar life experiences, from the perspective of the outsider, looking in (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Silverman, 2001). The qualitative method was chosen in this study because the researcher found it to be more appropriate in that it generally aims to understand the experiences and attitudes of the participants. This method was also chosen because it would allow the necessary depth needed to explore how the youth are predisposed to violence and delinquency in informal settlements, whereas the quantitative method would not have allow for such exploration.

This research followed a phenomenological paradigm, whereby it is understood that the meaning attributed by respondents to their circumstances is an interpreted meaning and thus an interpreted reality, based on their own understanding(s), memory and feelings. Moreover, it allows one to explore the participants’ views and perceptions concerning a certain phenomenon. In this case it would help in obtaining the youth’s perceptions of why and how the youth are predisposed to violence and delinquency in informal settlements.

3.3 Data collection method

Data collection methods are the procedures or instruments used by the researcher to observe or measure the key variables in the research problem.

The data was collected through focus group interviews. The focus group is a special qualitative research technique in which participants are informally interviewed in a group discussion setting. The focus group is useful when multiple viewpoints or responses are needed on a specific topic, (De Vos, 2002:306). The focus group was chosen because was considered best for this study, as participants can get closer to what they really think and feel, even though their responses may be harder or impossible to score on a scale.

The focus group's composition and the group discussion are carefully planned to create a non-threatening environment in which people are free to talk openly. Members are also encouraged to express their own opinions, and also to respond to
other members and, to the questions posed by the leader, (Neumann, 2011:459-460). The focus group is different from other forms of interviews in that it is structured, directed and expressive, and it can yield a lot of information in a relatively short time.

Moreover, responses in a focus group are typically spoken, open-ended, relatively broad, and qualitative. They have more depth, nuance, and variety. Therefore the researcher would be able to gather more information from the participants. In addition to that, nonverbal communication is considered to be important and can be observed as participants interact with one another.

Comments from the focus group were recorded through note taking and through tape recordings, to be used for analysis. In addition to that, the focus group interview was chosen because it encourages open and easy discussions to bring out true feelings and thoughts as participants discuss their perspectives and experiences with each other.

3.4 The data

Two main data types were used in realising the research objectives, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data refers to information generated directly by the researcher in the course of the research, while secondary data refers to information obtained from published sources (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010:116). Primary data was obtained by the researcher through focus group guidelines to young people, while secondary data was obtained from scholarly literature, namely: published books, journal articles, web pages, and other relevant materials.

3.5 Target population

According to Creswell (2009:12), the target population is the concretely specified large group from which the researcher draws a sample and to which results from a sample are generalised. In this study, the population consisted of young South Africans in informal settlements.

3.6 Sampling

Sampling is the act, process, or technique of selecting a suitable sample, or a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or
characteristics of the whole population (Creswell, 2009:12). This research design makes use of non-probability sampling, whereby the sample is purposively selected.

De Vos (1998:198) stated that purposive sampling is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher in that the sample is composed of elements which contain the most characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population. For this study, purposive sampling was chosen because the researcher sought typical and divergent data from respondents, (Kumar, 2005:164).

All respondents interviewed had certain characteristics in common. All were youth aged between 19 and 24 years and living in New Brighton Township in Port Elizabeth. This group was chosen because most of youth victims and perpetrators are around those ages. Respondents were selected from both genders so as to represent both genders to prevent the study from being gender biased and to obtain both genders’ views on the phenomena.

Moreover, the researcher chose both genders because the youth comprises of both males and females and the researcher believed it was important to obtain their views, because the different genders might experience and express violence differently. The youth selected for sampling would not be considered as the representative of the youth in South Africa, but as representative of the New Brighton youth in Port Elizabeth.

New Brighton Township was chosen because it has been one of townships with the highest crime rates in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality for the past few years. In 2011 there was a horror of neck-lacings in New Brighton, where over a period of less than two weeks, there were about six incidents of neighbours tracking down the thieves, putting tyres around their necks, dousing them with petrol and setting them ablaze Timse, (Sowetan 2011). Gareth (Herald, 2012) also stated that “The highest number of murders in Nelson Mandela Bay was in the New Brighton area, with 115 reported over the past year compared to 90 last year”. He added by saying that New Brighton was the second highest with 92 home robberies and 13% of those arrested for armed robberies were still in school, meaning they were youth.
The sample comprised of nine respondents, although this was not the researcher’s intentions. The researcher had intended to have twelve respondents, but the other remaining three respondents did not come for the focus group meeting. However, this did not affect the study as De Vos (1998:314) indicated that a focus group typically comprised nine to twelve people. He further postulated that the group should be small enough for all respondents to have an opportunity to share insights, and large enough to provide diversity of perceptions.

The sample size was specifically chosen in order to allow for the richness of the in-depth interview which yields large amounts of data. This suited the researcher’s phenomenological orientation that there is a preference for depth of response from fewer respondents, as opposed to an increased number of respondents producing a greater range of data.

3.7 Data collection procedure

The researcher arranged with the social workers for permission to conduct research, and was given a list of people in charge, but unfortunately none of the phone numbers given were working, and the researcher was advised by the social workers to consult the head office which works with the Ward Councillors. The researcher was provided with the Ward Councillors’ telephone numbers, but this was not of much use either, because some of them were not working while in other cases no-one was answering. The researcher decided to go to the police station to ask where the Ward Councillor’s office was situated at New Brighton location and to asked for directions and in this manner help was finally obtained.

The researcher was able to contact the Ward Councillor and permission was granted. The meeting was arranged by community leaders with young people between the ages 19 and 24. The Ward Councillor also granted the researcher the permission to make use of the venue for focus group interviews. The researcher was turned away twice: first, the community leaders did not arrange the meeting with youth as was promised, and second, the youth did not attend the meeting, and the reason given that it was Friday and month-end.
Information sheets and verbal introductions were used to introduce the study, ensuring confidentiality, notification of potential risks, involvement and the nature of the study as well as its significance. During the focus group meeting, the researcher made use of tape recorder and note taking as was indicated in the introduction. Every effort was made to create a comfortable and safe environment for respondents during focus group meeting. De Vos (1998:317) indicated that the focus group interviews are time consuming, and therefore the researcher provided the respondents with snacks after the interviews. Although there were some complications on how the researcher got hold of the gate keepers, the researcher managed to overcome all these complications.

De Vos (1998:319) suggested that the interview guide must be tested before it is used, therefore the researcher conducted a pilot study. A pilot study was conducted with three respondents prior to the actual data collection to allow the researcher to ensure that the focus group guidelines questions to be discussed were suitable, that they produced the expected rich data, and to make any modifications if necessary.

3.8 The focus group guidelines schedule
There were no structured questions constructed for the focus group interview but rather guidelines of the discussion which could allow respondents to express their opinions and allow the researcher to probe.

3.9.1 The main issues discussed were as follows:
- How the youth are predisposed to violence and violent behaviour
- Places where violence is most likely to take place
- Consequences of violence on community members
- The role of parents or family situations with regard to violent behaviour
- The role of role models with regard to violence

3.9 Data analysis
Data analysis is considered as one of the most crucial stages of research, regardless of the methods, whether qualitative or quantitative. Glasne and Peshkin (1992:37) maintain that data analysis involves organising what one has seen, heard and read so that it makes sense of what one has learned. This view is also supported by Gillham
The purpose of analysis is to faithfully reflect in summary and organised form of what has been found. In essence, data analysis enables the researcher to organise and bring meaning to a large amount of data (Struwig & Stead, 2007:169).

According to Durrheim (1999), qualitative data analysis tends to be primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns. Literature was examined by the researcher to learn about the various techniques of analysing qualitative data. Babbie (1995) makes it clear that the most general guide to analysing qualitative data involves looking for similarities and dissimilarities. In this study, the data is analysed through the use of interpretative phenomenological analysis.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is an approach to qualitative research that explores in detail a personal lived experience to examine how people are making sense of their personal and social world, and the main currency for an IPA study is the meanings that particular experiences, events and states hold for participants (Smith & Osborn, 2007:53-54).

The approach is phenomenological in that it involves a detailed examination of the participant’s life world; it attempts to explore personal experience and is concerned with an individual’s personal perception or account of an object or event, as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself. It tries to understand what the world is like from the point of view of the participants. At the same time IPA acknowledges that this understanding is always mediated by the context of cultural and socio historical meanings (Smith & Osborn, 2007:53-54).

This analysis is chosen because IPA studies are conducted on small sample sizes and participants are experts on their own experiences and can offer researchers an understanding of their thoughts, commitments and feelings through telling their own stories, in their own words, and in as much detail as possible. Moreover, the aim of the study was to say something in detail about the perceptions and understandings of this particular group on youth violence in South Africa. The researcher wished to analyse in detail how participants perceive and make sense of things that are happening to them.
3.10 Reliability and validity

According to Lewis and Ritchie (2003:270-271), reliability and validity in qualitative research generally refers to ‘sustainable’ and ‘well-grounded’ respectively, and “will have relevance for qualitative research, since they help to define the strength of the data”. However, as the term ‘reliability in qualitative research’ sometimes represents a number of different concerns, especially in terms of whether or not qualitative research can, or should, be repeated – linked to the concept of ‘replication’, other researchers use the terms ‘conformability’, ‘consistency’, ‘dependability’ or ‘trustworthiness’ of findings. The latter (trustworthiness) will be used when describing the reliability of this research.

The aspect of validity may refer to the ‘correctness or ‘precision’ of the findings, and is often explained in terms of internal and external validity, referring to the extent to which the researcher meets the aim and objectives of the study, and the extent to which the findings might be generalised or applicable to other contexts or settings; this is also referred to as ‘credibility’ and ‘transferability’ by other researchers (Lewis & Ritchie 2003:271). This study will use the latter terms of description in this context. Validity of the focus group was established by a pilot study and a review of the relevant literature.

3.11 Limitations of the study

This research was limited in the following ways:

- Research was conducted only in New Brighton Township.
- Only the perceptions of nine young people between the ages of 19 to 24 years were used to find out how the youth are predisposed to violence and violent behaviours.
- Some participants were not comfortable to answer or discuss the questions without using their own language.
• Participants complained about being tired of participating in research studies as they have been involved for almost the whole year and they indicated that they wondered why people were concerned about their area.

In the light of the identified limitations with regard to demographics, the findings from this study may not be applicable to other situations.

3.12 Ethical considerations

Neumann (2006:47) states that researchers have a moral and legal obligation to protect the participants from any potential harm. He further indicated that researchers must prepare themselves and take into consideration all the ethical issues that may arise when they design a study so that it is ethically sound.

The researcher was aware of the ethics that protect the participants; as a result she took the responsibility to protect participants against harm and any form of physical discomfort that could have emerged. The participants were informed beforehand about the potential impact of the study. This information offered the participants the opportunity to decide on whether they still wanted to participate in the study.

Moreover, the participants were informed about their anonymity and confidentiality in the research. The participants’ participation was voluntary and it was explained to them that they are free to withdraw from the research process at any stage in the interview if they wanted to. Explanations of what was expected from them were provided so that they could decide whether they wanted to participate in the research or not. According to Neumann (2006:47), test takers have the right to be informed about their rights and responsibilities.

The researcher also clarified the reasons for the study and how helpful it might be to the nation. She also informed the participants that the findings of the research would be presented to them as a form of recognition. Lastly, debriefing of participants was done after the interviews to assist them to work through their experience and its aftermath. This was done as a way in which the researcher could assist participants in minimising possible harm that might have been done in spite of all precautions taken against such potential harm.
3.13 Summary

This chapter presented the methodology used in the research, including the population, the sample, method of data collection and data analysis. The chapter also covered the limitations of the study as well as ethical considerations.

CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This study was undertaken to explore why the youth are predisposed to violence and violent crimes in informal settlements. This chapter focuses on the analysis and interpretation of data collected from the young people of New Brighton Township in Port Elizabeth on their perceptions about delinquency, violence and vandalism amongst the youth in informal settlements.

The study was conducted with five objectives in mind:
• To identify the consequences of violence
• To assert if violence is normalised within a particular social environment
• To explore what predisposes the youth to violence
• To find out if parenting styles influence youth violence
• To explore the role of models in youth violence and crime.

This chapter discusses the study’s findings on the identified themes. The first part of this chapter discusses framework analysis followed by participants’ background while the other part will analyse and discuss the findings of the study.

4.2 Framework analysis

In the process of drawing out participants' experiences, and in line with the analytical framework of IPA (Smith, 1996), each transcript was read a number of times and mapped out, initially in a basic way according to the process described by Smith (1996) to familiarise and orientate the researcher with the data. Anything considered to be related to previous literature and theoretical models of youth delinquency and violent behaviours were noted on the left side of the text margin. The right margin was then used to document emerging themes (subordinate themes).

Adopting this process, new themes emerging in subsequent interviews were tested against earlier transcripts. These were then modified and identified as the superordinate theme. Finally, re-reading of the original transcripts a number of times allowed immersion in the data to ensure that interpretations were grounded fully in what the participants were saying.

From analysis of the interviews using IPA, three themes that illustrated the participant’s experience and perceptions were identified. These were:

1. Risk factors for youth violence
2. Effects of violence
3. Level of violence

4.3 Demographic background of respondents

Research has found out that the majority of the perpetrators of violence are young people. According to the South African National Youth Policy, the youth is considered to comprise of young people aged 14 to 35 years. In this study, the focus group was
comprised of nine young people aged between 19 to 24 of years, and the respondents were representative of both sexes, five were males while four were females. All the respondents were from New Brighton Township and they were all Xhosa speaking.

4.4 Theme 1: Risk factors for youth violence

Bandura’s social learning theory indicates that aggressive behaviour is acquired by means of family and sub-cultural influences, symbolic modelling and direct experiences. It further states that principles for violent behaviour are set in communities and households as well as the media, and encourage violent solutions to disagreements or interpersonal tension. As a result, young people learn to use violence pre-emptively, (Schoeman, 2010:10). The following topics were classified under the risk factors: familial situations, inequality and poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, peer pressure, and lack of activities.

4.4.1 Familial situation

According to the findings of this study, respondents indicated that familial situations influenced violent behaviour, but it depends on the family background. Respondents stated that growing up in an abusive family makes young people think and believe that violence is a good thing to do and they practise it outside their families with their peers and use it as a way of solving conflict. In addition, respondents indicated that in other families, violent crimes are used as a way of making a living, where the parents rob other people, do housebreaking and take expensive goods to sell and get money to provide food for their families. Therefore, young people growing up in such families have the potential of doing the same thing for a living and they said that they personally know some families in the community who make a living from crime.

Furthermore, respondents in this study illustrated that some young people are used to a life of luxury in their families, but as time goes on, things changes. The family can no longer provide expensive things they used to provide to young people and as a result, young people commit violent crimes to get what they want in order to maintain their status.
Similarly, Siegel & Welsh (2012:157) in their study also found that crime appears to be intergenerational. Children whose parents are deviant and criminal are more likely to become criminals themselves and eventually to produce criminal children. Gwarney, et al., (1987:277-280) also found that poor supervision of children by parents and the use of harsh, physical punishment to discipline children are strong predictors of violence during adolescence. According to their findings, long-term exposure to parental alcoholism, domestic violence, physical abuse of the child, and child sexual abuse teaches children that criminal and violent activities are acceptable.

In the same way, Straus showed that exposure to parental corporal punishment increases the risk of aggressive conduct in children and adolescents. Straus's findings were similar to the study of Larzelere and Baumrind, the results of a meta-analysis of the extensive literature on corporal punishment, indicated that corporal punishment is related to poorer outcomes in children and youth (Wood et al., 2002:130). Bandura’s social learning theory indicated that aggression and violence can be modelled and reinforced by family members. Parents who favour coercive methods or styles have children who tend to use similar aggressive tactics in controlling the behaviour of their peers (Bandura, 1976: 206-207).

4.4.2 Single parenting

Findings from this study indicate that single parenting plays a role in young people’s involvement with violence. The respondents indicated that most of time, the single parents are the bread-winners and they spend much time at work. Their children are consequently left by themselves, which leads their spending much time with their peers and being exposed to all sorts of violence. Also, findings from studies conducted in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States show that children growing up in single-parent households are at greater risk of violence.

4.4.3 Role models
The respondents stated that role models influenced violent behaviour among young people. Young people are likely to learn things from older people regardless of whether they are good or bad since they consider them as their role models. However, the respondents further stated that in most cases it depended on whom these young people considered to be their models. They indicated that in their communities there were people known as professional criminals, and these professional criminals were people who were known to make their living from performing criminal activities.

They pointed out that for those young people who considered crime/violence as their career, in the case of robbery and housebreaking, were more likely to be inspired by professional criminals (older people doing the same thing). Respondents indicated that those professional criminals did not receive tertiary education and they were not working but they had luxury cars and big houses, they had money and they wore expensive clothes. They said that some young people wanted to do the same things: they wanted to live a life of luxury but they do not want to work for it. Respondents said that young people got involved with violence because they needed quick cash and they did not want to wait for month end to get this cash.

According to the social learning theory of aggression (Bandura, 1973, 1978; Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961), people exposed to violent environments are more likely to imitate aggression than people exposed to nonviolent environments. Bandura explained how young people are influenced by role models in their involvement in violence. He indicated that young people were more likely to learn and imitate the behaviour of older people: their role models.

**4.4.4 Unemployment**

The respondents also indicated that many young people were unemployed, as the unemployment rate among young people in South Africa is extremely high. In addition, respondents pointed out that in some situations one might find that both parents were dead, so the first-born in the family was expected to fulfil the parent's role and become the bread-winner to provide for the young ones, which may result in acts of violent crime especially if that person is unemployed.
South Africa has a high percentage of unemployment especially among young people. Clark (2012:80) also shares the same view that unemployment levels in South Africa are high, particularly among young people. According to Clark, in June 2009, 48.1% of the population between the ages of 15 and 24 was unemployed (Presidency of the Republic of South Africa, 2009).

4.4.5 Peer pressure

The respondents’ perceptions suggested that peer pressure influenced many young people to become involved in delinquent behaviours. Moreover, they indicated that conformity played a role, as young people liked to obtain approval from peers and friends for certain actions. There was a strong emphasis among respondents on how peer pressure influenced young people to be involved in delinquency.

In their study, Siegel & Welsh (2012:156) also found out that skills and motives conducive to delinquency are learned as a result of contacts with pro-delinquency values, attitudes and other patterns of delinquent behaviour. They indicated that the more delinquent an adolescent’s social network, the more likely he was to engage in such behaviours. Tyson & Stones (2002:4) also concur with the above statement, as they found that peers and friends play a major role in delinquent behaviour. Exposure to deviant peers is a risk factor for high levels of aggression (Loeber, 1998).

4.4.6 Culture

The findings of this study suggest that there is a belief in their culture that walking away from a fight means cowardice. Respondents added to that by saying that many young people believed that if they are shown disrespect by any-one, they must take action to regain their respect by fighting and not by running away. This notion of culture accordingly encourages violence, especially among men. Moreover, this notion shows that culture is a distinctly human factor that plays a role in aggression.

In addition, respondents stated that within black communities, certain traditions contribute to domestic violence, particularly wife and children abuses, as men are considered to be superior and they are the heads of family. They indicated that some men used violence as a way of solving conflicts or arguments in their families.
Empirical cross-cultural research has found differences in the level of aggression between cultures. Some cultures exhibit more aggression than others. Cultural factors affect the amount of violence in a society, like supporting violence as a normal method to resolve conflicts and by teaching young people to adopt norms and values that support violent behaviour, (Andreu et al., 1998).

Cultures that fail to provide non-violent alternatives to resolve conflicts appear to have higher rates of youth violence (Sheikh, 2000). In one study, American men resorted to physical aggression more readily than Japanese or Spanish men, whereas Japanese men preferred direct verbal conflict more than their American and Spanish counterparts (Andreu et al., 1998). This was attributed to their cultural nurturing.

Bandura also (Schoeman, 2010:10-11) also postulates that the cultural values and norms a society adheres to may generate aggressive people, if a great deal of value is attached to aggressive models and if aggressive actions are rewarded. In some societies, violence is deemed legitimate by higher-status individuals (especially men) against lower-status individuals such as children or women. In addition to that, the general attitude towards violence in a society might consider violence legitimate to resolve disputes or conflicts.

### 4.4.7 Inequality and poverty

The effects of income inequality and poverty have been viewed by many delinquency experts as key causes of youth crime and drug abuse. Children growing up poor and living in households that lack economic resources are much more likely to get involved in serious crime than their wealthier peers.

International research consistently demonstrates that societies with high levels of inequality tend to have high levels of violence, indicating that inequality itself is a key driver of violence. Inequality is also inter-related with other intractable social problems such as those of poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and marginalisation in South Africa. Siegel & Welsh (2012:135) also added that young people growing up in disadvantaged areas are at risk of delinquency because they hear from adults that
there is little hope of success in the conventional world. Therefore, some do whatever
they can to survive and make needs met, which may entail theft and other criminal
activities.

Research findings on school violence and social economic status have also shown
that high poverty neighbourhoods and high population densities are associated with
higher rates of school violence. In Cape Town, Loebers’ findings indicated that living
in an unstable social environment seriously affects young people. Young people
become more vulnerable and less able to protect themselves against the influence of
their peers or bad neighbourhood. They are more likely to replicate violent behaviour
if already immersed in a violent culture from the neighbours (Loeber, 1998:3).

4.5 Theme 2: Effects of violence

4.5.1 Fear

Violence has given rise to fear and anxiety among community members in South
Africa, but more so amongst members confined to informal settlements due to poverty.
Respondents indicated that violence affects the way people live as it brings fear in
their lives. Community members live in fear of not knowing when and where the
crime/violence is going to strike or take place. Respondents also pointed out that they
experienced fear as goods are being stolen from their homes; people are being
murdered in their communities. Lastly, they indicated that they fear walking in the
streets because it is not safe.

4.5.2 Death, mob justice and trauma

Respondents indicated that, as a result of violence/-violent crimes, victims are stabbed
to death or are traumatised for life while the perpetrators may be caught and go to jail
for life and lose their future. In addition, they further indicated that community members
are tired of violence/-violent behaviours, and as a result they take the law into their
own hands through mob justice and by beating perpetrators to death or through setting
them alight. This affects their communities as it leads to some community members
receiving a jail sentence.
4.6 Theme 3: Level of violence

Respondents suggested that in their community there is no specific time and specific place where violence takes place as it happens at any time of the day anywhere. They indicated that violence takes place during the day and during the night; some respondents said it happened mostly at night. They indicated that in their community, violence takes place in families/ homes, in the streets, at schools and at the taverns.

At home they indicated that it can take the form of domestic violence or through housebreaking. In the streets it normally happens in the form of robbery and serious assault, while at school, young people/students commit crime in the form of assault to teachers and other students and even murder. In the context of chronic and excessive levels of unemployment that characterises the townships of South Africa, the tavern has also become a daily place of resigned gathering for many men who no longer attempt to seek employment. At the taverns, violence takes place in many forms, ranging from serious assaults to attempted murder, murder and robbery.

4.7 Conclusion

South African and international research shows that violence and aggression are factors with a major impact on the youth. It can have a very detrimental effect on human functioning. The respondents’ causes and consequences of violence were discussed as well as the role played by role models. Indeed, Bandura’s theory that social learning factors are a significant cause of violence among young people has been confirmed from respondents’ discussions. Violent behaviour in general is linked to the experience of violence at home, to victimisation, and to witnessing violent acts.
5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a conclusion to the findings of this study. It chapter gives a summary of how youth violence is caused by the violent social learning factors existing in the child's' environment. The chapter then makes recommendations for those who are concerned about the high level of violence and who intend to assist in its decrease. These recommendations would also be helpful and bear fruitful results anywhere else where the occurrence of violence is high and it seems to be the norm.
5.2 Social learning factors as a cause of violence

The social learning theory highlights that the environment in which a child grows up has a great effect on the child’s later behaviour in life (Isom, 1978). Thus, a child who is nurtured in a background of a violent environment will portray violent behaviour in life. The social learning factors considered here included the protracted viewing of violent media, the familial situations, and the violent cultural norms and poverty and unemployment.

This study can confidently conclude that prolonged exposure to violence in the family as well as community causes violence. The evidence is provided by the findings stating that young people whose parents are violent and criminal are more likely to become delinquents themselves. The findings also suggest that children learn deviant behaviours from people they value and admire more.

Moreover, findings from this study show that parents who favour coercive methods or styles of conflict resolution have children who tend to use similar aggressive tactics in controlling the behaviour of their peers. Young people growing up in disadvantaged areas are at risk of delinquency because they hear from adults that there is little hope of success in life. Therefore, some of these young people learn to do whatever they can to survive and make their needs met; those acts include housebreaking and robbery. Results also indicated that some of young people learn delinquent acts from their parents, as their parents support the family through such acts.

The findings also show that the absence of parents in many families creates an opportunity for young people to be involved in violent behaviours as human needs cannot be compromised but must be met. The older children are expected to fulfil the parents’ role of becoming the breadwinners in their families, and in the cases where those older ones are not working, the easiest way of surviving is found through delinquent behaviours.

The research results also indicate that some cultural practices encourage aggressive behaviour among its members. Findings in this study suggest that in some cultures there is belief is that walking away from a fight means cowardice more especially in males than in females. The findings also indicate that many young people believe that
if they are shown disrespect by any-one, they must take action to regain their respect by fighting and not by running away.

In addition, results indicate that in some cultures, violence is acceptable, as in the case of wife and child beating by men; men are seen as superior while women are seen as subordinate. The study also found out that high levels of unemployment among young people contribute to the increase in the violent behaviours in which they engage in. Results indicate that young people are more likely to be involved in violence mainly because they are not working and their families can no longer afford to provide the things they used to provide.

Furthermore, findings show that young people want to live a life of luxury, and if they are unemployed they use other means to make sure that they get what they want regardless of whether what they do is good or bad. Unemployment also allows young people to spend much of their time in the streets where they are exposed to all sorts of violence and where they are able to imitate them.

The results also indicate that young unemployed people are also inspired to engage in violent behaviours by available delinquent role models in their communities. As explained by respondents that these people live a life of luxury, they have money, luxury cars and wear expensive clothes, and yet they are jobless and they are known to make their living from criminal acts.

Respondents did not discuss how the media influences violence in their communities therefore the findings on the media’s influence can-not be confidently presented. Moreover, findings indicated that the level of violence in informal settlements is still on the rise as respondents indicated that violence takes place in their communities any time of the day, anywhere in the communities. In addition, peer pressure is indicated to play a vital role in young people’s involvement in delinquency because more time is spent with peers than parents.

Lastly, the findings indicate that the community members live in fear as they do not know when and where the violence will strike. Results also show that people are left
traumatised by delinquent acts in their communities and that if the perpetrators are caught the community members sometimes set them alight or they are imprisoned.

5.3 Recommendations

The levels of violence to which young people are exposed to on a daily basis should be minimised and the critical steps in tackling this issue should be explored.

In short, simply punishing young people through imprisonment is not the solution especially in a country where so many people are living in wretched poverty. The vast sum of money spent on youth imprisonment could be better spent elsewhere, for instance, creating job opportunities for young people. Findings indicate that unemployment plays a vital role in violence and crime that affects the country.

In addition, the social learning theory indicated that young people learn violence from their violent environment, therefore this shows that imprisonment is not the effective intervention strategy for tackling youth violence because most prisons are overcrowded. NICRO (2009) states that overcrowded prisons can become extremely violent. Therefore their imprisonment must be questioned, as to whether or not it will reduce the violent behaviour, or are the youth are being hardened to become professional criminals with more criminal skills because they are being exposed to a violent environment. According to NICRO (2009), prisoners are almost always exposed to rape, violence and the influence of gangs.

Moreover, findings indicate that culture also plays a key role in violence, as it sets the boundaries around what is acceptable behaviour and what is considered unacceptable, and in determining the response to violence. Within cultures which fail to provide non-violent alternatives to resolve conflicts, efforts to transform social and cultural norms should be made. Non-violent ways of solving conflicts should be taught by skilled people. Social rules disapproving violent behaviour also can also inhibit whatever aggression is supposed to be shown.

Moreover, efforts to change gender issues, racial or ethnic discrimination, and harmful traditional practices should be put into practice. A great emphasis must be put on
human rights practice, particularly on those traditions contributing to domestic violence in the case of wife and children abuse by men.

Communities can play a pivotal role in reducing the level of youth violence. Communities can assist by providing young people with activities to do after school and by redirecting children from retaliatory justice and providing them with a context that can change their antisocial behaviours. This can lay the foundations for a much safer and healthier society.

The findings from this study indicated that violent behaviour is learned from social learning factors in environments where young people are exposed to violence. Therefore, in order to tackle this problem, Bandura in his theory indicated that what is learned can be unlearned. This means that exposing young people to non-violent environments can assist in finding a solution towards decreasing the level of violence in South Africa. Bandura’s theory further states that the environment can be modified for new learning experiences.

5.4 General conclusion

This thesis has five main chapters. Chapter one provided the background of the research, the research problem, purpose, objectives and conceptual frameworks which guided the researcher in presenting and analysing the data. The second chapter examined the existing literature on youth violence and delinquency. Chapter three discussed the methodology used for data collection, while chapter four presented the discussions, interpretation and the analysis of the research findings. In chapter five, the general conclusions and recommendations are presented.

The aim of this research was to explore why the youth are predisposed to violence and violent crimes in informal settlements. It is this researcher’s assertion that the aim has been met, as increased understanding of youth perceptions has been reached on why the youth are predisposed to violence in informal settlements. Through in depth focus group interviews, employed young people shared their experiences and knowledge of violence, its causes, consequences and the role of parenting styles as well as the influence of role of models.
Secondary aims were explored to enable understanding of what predisposes the youth to violence. It was apparent from the stories that the level of violence among young people is very high in communities. According to the social learning theory, violence is learned through observation and imitation. This was clearly evident in the experience and knowledge of young people interviewed, for they indicated that familial situations influenced violent behaviour, but that it depended on the family background. Respondents stated that growing up in an abusive family makes young people think and believe that violence is a good thing to do and they practise it outside their families with their peers and use it as a way of solving conflict.

Respondents further indicated that in other families, violent crimes are used as a way of making a living, where the parents rob other people, do housebreaking and take expensive goods to sell and get money to provide food for their families. Respondents suggested that they personally know some families in their community who make a living from crime.

The above paragraph also gives an evidence to the third objective of the study, which sought to understand whether violence has been normalised within a particular social environments, as it indicates that other people have normalised violence as a way of satisfying their own basic needs. Finally, the predominant themes of risk factors, effects and level of violence were evident in the data obtained from respondents. It was clear that there is a high level of violence among young people. It was also apparent that young people learnt violent behaviour from the significant others, meaning that the environments in which young people grow up in have a greater influence on their violent behaviour later in life.

This study on youth violence and delinquency has indicated a clear significance between the social learning factors and youth violence. The social learning theory is useful in understanding the causes of violence, vandalism and delinquency, as it argues that these are learned behaviours and they are learned by observing significant others and then later be practised. Bandura believes that in the same way that violence, vandalism and delinquency can be learned, they can be unlearned, hence he states that what is learned can be unlearned.
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**Appendix 1: Research methodology**

**GUIDLINES FOR FOCUS GROUPS**

**TOPIC**

An expression of South African youth identity: understanding delinquency, violence and vandalism amongst the youth in selected informal settlements

**GUIDELINE QUESTIONS**

What do you think leads youth to violent behaviours /-violent crime?

When and where does violence occur?

How are youth pre-disposed to violence and violent behaviours?

How does violence affect community members?

What are the benefits/- costs of youth violent crime?
Does parenting style or family situations influence violent behaviours?

Do role models inspire violent behaviours?

Has the level of youth violence become worse, better or stayed the same over the past three years?

Appendix 2: Consent form

Keneuoe Mohale
25 Bradley Street
Summer Strand
Port Elizabeth

**An expression of South African youth identity: Understanding delinquency, violence and vandalism amongst the youth in selected informal settlements**

If you decide to volunteer, you will be asked to participate in one interview. You will be asked several questions. I will tape record the interviews so I don't have to make so many notes. You will not be asked to state your name on the recording.

Your responses to interview questions will be kept confidential. At no time will your actual identity be revealed.

Please tick the initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

4. I agree to the interview / focus group / consultation being audio recorded

______________________________  ________________________  ______________________
Name of Participant                Date                        Signature

______________________________  ________________________  ______________________
Name of Researcher                Date                        Signature

Appendix 3: Information given to participant prior to participation

25 Bradley Street
Summer Strand
Port Elizabeth
Telephone: 0782115391
E-mail: s208022532@live.nmmu.ac.za
08 June 2013

An expression of South African youth identity: Understanding delinquency, violence and vandalism amongst the youth in selected informal settlements

To whom it may concern

Violence has become part of people’s daily life in South Africa. South Africa is among the countries that have the highest levels of violence and crime. Many young people are involved in violence as both victims and perpetrators. Apart from being victims and perpetrators of violence, many youngsters
witness violence. As a result, the high level of violence among young people is increasing. Youth violence is one of the major problems facing South Africa and if it is not well managed, the economic and social development of the country will be highly affected.

It has been reported that violence amongst and perpetrated by the youth in South Africa is higher than that amongst other age groups, and continues to increase. In addition to that, the number of young people being arrested because of violent crime continues to increase, and the South African youth form a large proportion of those in the justice and correctional system.

I therefore request your assistance in answering the questions provided and asked during the interviews as part of a research project for a Master’s Degree in Conflict Transformation and Management at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. This study primarily aims to explore why the youth are predisposed to violence and violent crimes in informal settlements. The potential findings of this study will deepen the understanding of why young people are involved in violence and violent crimes. It is therefore important that you participate to this survey as fully and honestly as possible. The information you provide will be handled with utmost confidence and the interview will not take more than two hours of your time. I would appreciate your participation during the interviews.

Thanking you in advance
Yours sincerely

KENEUOE M. MOHALE                      Professor ISAACS-MARTIN WENDY
Student/ Researcher                   Supervisor

Appendix 4: Institutional permissions

25 Bradley Street
Summer Strand
Port Elizabeth
Telephone: 0782115391
E-mail: s208022532@live.nmmu.ac.za
08 June 2013

An expression of South African youth identity: Understanding delinquency, violence and vandalism amongst the youth in selected informal settlements

Dear Sir/Madam

Violence has become part of people’s daily life in South Africa. South Africa is among the countries that have the highest level of violence and crime. Many young people are involved in violence as both victims and perpetrators. Apart from being victims and perpetrators of violence, many youngsters witness
violence. As a result, the high level of violence among young people is increasing. Youth violence is one of the major problems facing South Africa and if it is not well managed, the economic and social development of the country will be highly affected.

It has been reported that violence amongst and perpetrated by the youth in South Africa is higher than that amongst other age groups, and continues to increase. Furthermore, the number of young people being arrested because of violent crime continues to increase, and the South African youth form a large proportion of those in the justice and correctional system.

I therefore request your assistance in collecting the data from young people as part of a research project for a Master’s Degree in Conflict Transformation and Management at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University by getting permission to make use of the community hall during focus group interviews. This study primarily aims to explore why the youth are predisposed to violence and violent crimes in informal settlements. The potential findings of this study will deepen the understanding of why young people are involved in violence and violent crimes. It is therefore important that the permission is obtained from you before the interviews commences.

Thank you in advance

Yours sincerely

KENEUOE M. MOHALE
Student/ Researcher

Professor ISAACS-MARTIN WENDY
Supervisor