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ABSTRACT

This study was concerned with analysing the school context for factors that promote or impede resilience among middle adolescent learners. The study aimed to find out if black high school learners perceive themselves as resilient or non-resilient. It also investigated the aspects perceived by learners as retarding or enhancing resilience within the school context and to identify qualities of the school that enhance or impede resilience in learners.

Four schools within the Pinetown district in KwaZulu Natal were chosen as a sample. Random sampling procedure was used to ensure that any of the schools falling within the four wards of Pinetown district had the same probability of being selected. All grade 10 learners, mostly those falling within the ages of 15 to 20 were asked to participate in data collection. The self-evaluation instrument that was used to collect data about whether learners perceived themselves as resilient was specifically designed to measure this variable. This instrument was designed at the University of Pretoria as part of a research project aimed at making a comparative study of middle adolescent perception of resilience (ranked high or low). The research instrument was statistically proven to have demonstrated content validity and construct validity. This instrument has statistically demonstrated its reliability in terms of internal consistency. The questionnaire had to be translated into isiZulu as most learners were first language Zulu speakers. Learners first had to undergo a self-evaluation process to test how resilient they perceived themselves to be. The second aspect of the questionnaire was to rate, in order of importance, those factors within the school environment that they perceived

either enhanced or impeded resilience. A 5-point Likert-type scale was used with a series of levels of degree expressing positive or negative response to the questionnaire. The researcher used at least 3-5 items in the instrument measured similar idea. All items were interspaced to avoid predictability of questions. The learners indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement. No numbers were given as learners might have mistaken them as values that are used for grading learners. Learners had to express their own views on Structured open-ended questions in order for the researcher to better understand the use of resilience. Data collected was integrated and analysed collectively to give a comprehensive understanding of resilience.

The majority of learners rated themselves as resilient despite the many difficulties faced in their environment. They also affirmed all the resilience promoting factors as important to their life at school. The main characteristic of a good school highlighted by black South African adolescents in this study, was an appreciative, caring and supportive environment where respect for self and others prevails. Good schools in this study provided opportunities for learners to engage in a variety of extra-curricular activities and the resources needed by the learners were made available. The adolescents in this study appreciated a well organised school where rules and regulations were consistently followed. A good physical environment was seen also as conducive to teaching and learning. Educators who offered relevant information and empowered learners to deal with the challenges of life were viewed as great assets according to the findings of this study

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- My dear friends Lindo and "abahlobo" I will forever be grateful for the contribution you have made to my life.

DEDICATION

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED TO:

My husband Sandile, my two sons Sizolwethu and Thoba, family and friends.

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I Nontobeko Precious Angela Buthelezi hereby declare that this work is my own work both in conception and execution, and that all the sources I have referred to or quoted have been acknowledged and indicated by means of complete references.

Signed:..... Date:.....

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CHAPTER

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

1.1 Motivation for the study

The adolescent stage is a transitional phase involving complex growth of physical, biological, behavioural, social and value systems. The impact of developmental changes and social challenges such as HIV and the AIDS pandemic, high levels of crime, the high unemployment rate and poverty, create barriers for adolescents in becoming competent and productive adults. Studies (London, 1999:3; Reed-Victor, 2003:4) demonstrate that educators and schools play a very important role in helping learners survive a troubled childhood. Knowing the risk factors children face is essential, but of more critical importance is identifying the protective factors that can serve as buffers for children when they are faced with adversities. Knowledge of such factors could promote resilience (Reed-Victor, 2003).

When compared to other schools within Ethekwini region, it was found that in the Pinetown district schools experienced more challenges according to the result of 2003 Snap Survey (Department of Education, 2003). Often the schools are vandalized and there is a high rate of unemployment in this circuit. The township and its surroundings was highly affected by political violence and for some schools, the reputation acquired during the uprising has not been shed. Instead, it has to a large extent determined the culture and the ethos of some schools. Some adolescents in high school for example, grow up in communities where these adversities result in them adapting differently to their environment. During the adolescent stage these challenges and the responses to them manifest in different forms of maladaptive behaviour.

The resources that the learner is exposed can determine the level of adaptability. The resources are viewed as a protective factor against the risk factors that a learner at high school level is exposed to (Bernard, 1993:47; Winfield, 1991). The school can serve as a strong source of support for such a learner. School context should therefore be seen as a social arena for enhancing successful coping strategies and creating awareness of learners' inherent strengths, abilities and weaknesses.

The school as a learning site has an enormous challenge to provide an environment that will ensure that adolescents become competent, confident and functional adults despite being exposed to unfavourable circumstances and disadvantages (Werner & Smith 1992:2). Therefore the Department of Education should provide high quality education and a sustained high level of participation by learners to ensure their personal empowerment, improvement in health status, positive economic development and the mental emancipation of both learners and educators.

The school environment needs to support, develop and protect the learner. It should proactively engage them in activities that can potentially counteract adverse circumstances or consequences. It is adults who can foster or discourage resilience through their attitude towards youth, their ability to build relationships with them and through the use of key strategies (Thomsen, 2000:35). It is through this interaction that natural resilience is triggered or retarded. The main focus of this study on resilience is to establish the protective factors that enhance the learners' ability to strive despite disadvantaged circumstances.

Rutter (1990:5) ascertains that a decreased exposure to risk factors and stressful life events minimised vulnerability and promoted resilience. Resilience is a protective factor along with optimism, connectedness, self-efficacy and motivation in the classroom (Rutter, 1990). Hunter (2004:3) states that resilience is a synergy of effect of protective factors into a healthy state of mind,

which enables one to resist being vulnerable to negative factors". There are externally and internally-based factors that determine the outcome of school related behaviour. These include factors such as supportive relationships, peer acceptance, social competence, and problem solving skills, autonomy and a sense of purpose for the future resulting in aspiration, persistence, hopefulness and sense of bright future (Gelman, 1991; Bernard 1991; 1993; 1995 in Krovertz, 1999:3).

A range of factors has been associated with resilience and has developed into fully-fledged studies focusing on risk and protective factors. These factors are within the context of personality, family and environment. Personal innate factors include temperament, goal orientation, flexibility, familial factors related to a supportive home environment and extra-familial environmental factors, which may involve a supportive school environment, and prosocial organisations (Baldwin, Baldwin, & Cole, 1990; Battistich, Solomon, Waston, & Schaps, 1995; Bradley, Whiteside, Mundfrom, Casey, Kelleher & Pope, 1994; Garnezy & Masten, 1994; Werner & Smith, 1992).

The concept of resilience has evolved over several years to encompass a number of factors associated with high-risk children. The researchers (Arend, Gove & Sroufe, 1979:951; Werner & Smith, 1992; Masten, 1997; Richters & Martinez, 1993; Werner, 1993:454) emphasize examining the processes and intervention strategies that contribute to positive adaptation in situations that could typically result in maladaptation. The African population group in South Africa has been historically deprived of educational opportunities and it has been shown that Africans, especially in KwaZulu-Natal, have had a decreasing learner attainment as less learners enrol at schools, there is a high drop-out rate and a dramatic decline in classroom contact time (HEARD 2001; Maharaj, Kaufman & Richter, in Hunter & May 2001:27-28). These challenges make it clear that it is

imperative for the education system to provide an enabling environment that would empower the learner to cope with different adversities.

One of the social ills the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was geared towards addressing the backlogs created by the apartheid regime where many historically disadvantaged communities were characterised by poor quality education and a lack of resources that resulted in poor socio-economic status (RDP, 1996:8). Support for the learning context becomes critical to ensure the retention of learners and the implementation of strategies that would discourage school drop-out.

This becomes more critical in KwaZulu-Natal as Statistics South Africa (2000) results found that close to 50% of households are poor. In this study, poverty is linked to limited educational opportunities. This is supported by the University of KwaZulu Natal Shock Wave study (2001) that found that the mean per capita expenditure of ultra poor people in Durban ranged from R116, 40 - R76, 96 per month. According to this study the poor and ultra poor communities were characterized by 93.40% - 95. 90% of African representation. Such poverty is viewed as detrimental to effective learning.

According to the Report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS), (1999), there are key barriers to learning and development of learners as outlined in White Paper Six (2001). These barriers can be located within the learner, within the centre of learning, within the education system and within the broader social, economic and political context. These barriers reveal themselves in different ways. They only become obvious when learning breakdown occurs. This is when learners 'drop out' from the system, or when exclusion becomes visible.

These key barriers to learning and development according to the Department of Education White Paper Six (2001:18) includes, amongst others, the following:

- Socio-economic barriers, such as lack of basic services; poverty and underdevelopment; and any factors, which place a child at risk.
- Negative and damaging attitudes towards differences within our society.
- Inflexible curriculum.
- Language and communication.
- Inaccessible and unsafely built environment.
- Inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services.
- Lack of enabling and protective legislation and policy.
- Lack of parental recognition and involvement.
- Disability resulting in learning breakdown and exclusion when needs are not met.
- Lack of or inadequate human resource development strategies.

These barriers are manifested in the life of the learners at different levels. Functional integration involved in the creation of synergy between and within the different domains in the life of learners will determine the level of resiliency.

Researchers (Bernard,1993; Osher, Kendziora, Van Den Berg & Dennis, 1999; Werner & Smith, 1992) have noted that there are three interrelated domains that have influence on the presence of resilience. These are:

- Individual characteristics
- Family climate
- Extended social environment

The different domains can serve as protective or risk factors depending on the personality type, family characteristics and access to support within extended social environment.

Resiliency theory (Bernard, 1993:47) argues that if members of an adolescent's family, community or school care deeply about them, or have high expectations and purposeful support for them and value their participation, they will maintain a faith in the future and can overcome almost any adversity. This theory points out four attributes common amongst resilient children.

- Social competence. This is the ability to elicit positive responses from others thus establishing positive relationships with both adults and peers. This is supported by Miller's (1999) study which found that racial socialisation acts as a buffer against negative racial messages in the environment and thus affects resiliency amongst minority children.
- Problem-solving skills. This is planning that facilitates seeing oneself in control of a situation and resourcefulness in seeking help from others.
- Autonomy. This is a sense of one's own identity and an ability to act independently and exert some control over one's environment.
- A sense of purpose and future. This includes sense of goals, educational aspirations, persistence, hopefulness and a sense of a bright future (Krovetz, 1999:3).

The four attributes are typical characteristics of resilient learner. The school environment has to enhance the resilience of learner by creating a conducive learning environment that will allow these attributes to flourish. Werner (1989) and Kurt (1999) confirmed that resilient children approach problems proactively, gain positive attention from others, accept and face life challenges. Resilient learners effectively utilise internal and external assets at their disposal especially during times of crisis and life challenges.

Resilient children do not only show strong personality attributes that make them more successful, they also take advantage of socio-emotional supports beyond their immediate family. Parents,

peers, neighbours and elders, frequently serve as resources for advice and support in times of crisis and life changes (Gelman, 1991). At school, a favourite teacher can be a constructive role model. The school context is an extension of learners' home and serves as a medium to explore and nurture effective personality disposition. A supportive and caring school context can alter vulnerabilities into protective factors at different developmental stages by teaching and modelling acceptable behaviour.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The school context in the life of an adolescent has critical influences that can result in a future well-adjusted or dysfunctional adult. It therefore becomes essential to have a contextual understanding of the external and internal processes involved that promote or impede resilience of adolescents, more especially in KwaZulu-Natal. Reliance on static epidemiological markers to predict pathological outcome has been replaced by an exploration of the interaction between risk and protective factors that influence both poor and healthy developmental outcomes (Birkett, 2001).

The influence of resilience enhancing factors on adolescents will assist the Department of Education Support Services, educators and all other relevant stakeholders in developing key strategies aimed at increasing resilience. The findings of this study may be used to strengthen and proactively implement those assets that have been discovered to promote resilience. Searching and categorically identifying specific protective factors has proved to be an elusive exercise as protective factors can serve both as risk, moderating, and even protecting factors depending on the expected outcome of the observer.

It is imperative to search for clues to resiliency across diverse and heterogeneous environments and not to assume that what has been discovered is applicable in all circumstances. This will enhance our understanding of resilience in all cultures and communities. Garmezy (1985:218) state

that "...so for now one search for clues to resiliency across diverse cultures whatever their heterogeneity with regard to type of stressors, child cohorts, investigative modes, and measure of adaptation". Garmezy (1985) further argues that merely identifying children who are exposed to stress as a resilient factor is not enough; one needs to investigate the correlates of adaptive behaviour in various situational contexts. This could then facilitate the search for processes and mechanisms that underlie the manifestation of stress-resistant behaviour in children.

The current study will to a large extent identify factors that enhance or impede resilience and investigate the role played by the learner's circumstances in integrating the correlates of adaptive behaviour of such resilient learners.

This study attempts to address the following questions:

- 1.2.1 Do black high school learners perceive themselves as resilient or non- resilient?
- 1.2.2 Do urban and rural learners differ in the way they perceive resilience?
- 1.2.3 What resilient factors do learners perceive as very important in the school context?
- 1.2.4 What are the good qualities of school that promote resilience?
- 1.2.5 How do learners deal with challenges they encounter when they are at school?
- 1.2.6 How does the school prepare learners to develop resilience?
- 1.2.7 What could learners do to improve the quality of their life at school?

1.3 Research aims

- 1 To find out if black high school learners perceive themselves as resilient or non-resilient.
- 2 To find out whether there is any relationship between learner's perception of resilience and the school attended.
- 3 To investigate factors in the school context that learners perceive as critical in promoting their resilience.

- 4 To identify good qualities of the school that promote resilience.
- 5 To investigate how learners deal with challenges they encounter at school.
- 6 To find out how the school prepares learners to develop resilience.
- 7 To find out aspects of the school that need to be improved in order to enhance the quality of life of learners.

1.4 Hypotheses

1.4.1 Learners from different schools will show resilience.

1.4.2 There will be an association between school and perception of resilience.

1.5 Definition of concepts

1.5.1 School context

School context in this study means the school environment in the form of its structure, school ethos and the culture of learning and teaching practice, in particular the learning site which in this study is the school. This culture is composed of values, norms and roles existing within an institutionally distinct structure of governance, communication, educational practices and policies (Owens, 1995:308).

1.5.2 Resilience

Resilience in this study shall mean the ability to respond actively and positively to life conditions such as stress and traumas in such a way that enables an individual to 'bounce back' and continue to approach life with positive actions. 'Bouncing back' according to Christiansen, Christiansen and Howard (1997:2) means being resistant to the effects of adversity. The resilient individual has a disposition to identify and utilize personal capacities and competencies (strengths and assets) in contexts when faced with perceived adverse conditions. The interaction between the individual and

the contexts elicits sustained constructive outcomes that include continuous learning (growing and renewing) and flexibly negotiating the situation.

1.5.3 Adolescent

Adolescent in this study refers to learners falling around the ages of 14-20 years or /and are in grade 10 in terms of the South African education system.

1.6 Methodology

A literature search on risk factors that make children more resilient and those that promote resilience amongst children was conducted. The perceptions of learners and the relationship of school achievement towards resilience were explored. The study on resilience in school context was conducted as a field study. The research tools included self-evaluation instruments and an open-ended scale.

Four secondary schools in each ward within the Hammarsdale circuit in the Pinetown district were selected. This area forms part of Ethekeeni cluster. A total sample of four schools was selected. All grade 10 learners present on the day of data collection in the Hammarsdale circuit schools were selected. The data on biographical variables with respect to participants included: name of school, gender, age and academic level of parents.

In this study learners firstly had to undergo a self-evaluation process to test how resilient they perceived themselves to be. The second aspect of the questionnaire they had to rate, in order of importance, factors in the school environment that they perceived to enhanced resilience. The last part of the questionnaire required respondents to answer four open-ended questions relating to their school context.

Open-ended directive and non-directive questionnaires were scored through quantitative analysis. The open-ended questionnaire and the data collected from the interviews were analysed using frequencies and rated in ascending order. Categories were also formed reflecting the different themes that emerged from the data.

1.7 Research Plan

This study is organised as follows:

CHAPTER ONE

This chapter consists of a motivation for investigation in this study, a statement of the problem, outlining the aims of the study and a plan for organization of the whole research report.

CHAPTER TWO

Chapter two provides a theoretical background to the study. This background considers and discusses the following:

- Review of school related factors that have been established internationally as influencing resilience in learners and details of theories on resilience.
- A literature search on risk factors that make children more resilient and those that promote resilience among children. The study of perceptions of children and the relationship of school achievement towards resilience.

CHAPTER THREE

This chapter details the research design and methodology. Discussed in this chapter among other things are the data collection scales, the selection of participants, a plan for the organisation of data and an analysis of the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter four concerns itself with an empirical investigation, that is, it describes how fieldwork was carried out and the scale with which it was administered. This chapter also contains the analysis and interpretation of data. The hypotheses formulated in chapter three were tested in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Chapter five presents the main findings of this investigation. A summary of the analyses of factors that promote resilience in adolescents in the school context are also included in this chapter. It also concludes the research report and outlines recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Secondary school years are crucial in the adjustments of learners as they represent the transition from a relatively structured life, namely that of primary school to adulthood. The responsibilities and pressures exerted on adolescents in the form of social and psychological factors can predispose the immature youth to different forms of maladaptive behaviour.

In South Africa a great deal is expected from the youth as social and economic resources to sustain and propel our country to a first world state are scarce and youth is viewed as the country's hope for development. It is therefore important that all stakeholders within the learners' context nurture the adolescent in a conducive environment that will facilitate and promote psychological well-being.

This chapter focuses on the definition of resilience, the multivariate use of the concept and the framework within which the resilience process can be promoted or hindered. The impact of the school context should be examined together with various resilience models. This chapter also incorporates a literature review both of South African and international studies related to resilience in school context and middle adolescence. The literature review on school effectiveness and resilience studies are reviewed and theories on resilience are discussed this chapter.

This chapter further attempts to demonstrate the interrelation of external and internal factors, which can impede or enhance resilience of learners within the school context. Much has been said regarding the resilient school, but of greater importance is creating the link between the studies on

school effectiveness and resilience. This chapter is further aimed at creating the link between school effectiveness and the resilience framework.

2.2 ADVERSITIES FACING ADOLESCENTS

KwaZulu-Natal is characterised by a high incidence of HIV and AIDS (HEARD, 2003). This therefore calls for dramatic measures to enhance the ability of adolescents to cope with such a situation despite numerous adversities and setbacks.

Regarding the HIV and AIDS epidemic, the Sub-Saharan region remains the area of the world worst affected. It is estimated that by 2002 over 28 million people were living with HIV and AIDS in this region (UNAIDS, 2000). According to sentinel sero-prevalence surveys of women attending public antenatal clinics in South Africa in the year 2000, the prevalence rate of HIV infections at the age below 20 years was 16.1%. The pandemic is further compounded by a large population in certain parts of the country. According to a report by Smith (2000), KwaZulu Natal (KZN) has a population of 8.4 million or about 20.7% of the total population of South Africa, yet only makes up 7.6% of the land area. This high density is accompanied by population demographics that show a very high proportion of young people of the population are younger than 25 years of age (64.6%). The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education is currently responsible for the education of approximately 2.8 million learners (Grade R to 12) in 5,986 schools and for 74,684 educators (Snap Survey, 2003).

The shock wave study (Hunter & May 2001:11) found that 57% of households within Ethekwini region are poor and these findings correlate with the Statistics SA, 2000 which estimated the poverty rate at 50% in KwaZulu-Natal. The ultra poor has household expenditure of R654, 49 per month and the poor households R851, 72 per month. Families from poor and ultra poor households are more likely to have teenagers who experience a drop-out episode than families from non-poor

households (Hunter & May 2001:10). The conclusion drawn from this research is that adolescents that experience spells of drop-out are more likely to come from a poor household and also from families that have experienced a household shock such as death in the family or loss of employment.

In the face of these challenges our society needs to focus on positive approaches and make a shift from a risk and deficit approach to one of resilience. Henderson and Milstein (1996) focus on positive approaches that create an awareness of the potential to overcome challenges and create a sense of self-efficiency. This is even more significant during adolescence if we hope to provide a productive future for adults.

2.3 DEFINITION AND CRITICAL CONCEPTUAL ISSUES ON RESILIENCE

Researchers Prior and Smith (1992) and Rutter (1993) agree that resilience is a complex phenomenon that cannot be captured by any single indicator. A learner can be resilient in one domain and not in another. It is essential to understand the circumstances in the school context that either promote or retard resilience in adolescents. It is therefore important to investigate the different contexts that promote resilience as a complex phenomenon because there is no single definition of resilience that can be applied to all children across many different contexts.

2.3.1 Definitions of the concept of resilience

The fluid nature of the concept of resilience has resulted in discrepancies in the way the term is used and also in the way people rate themselves as either resilient or non-resilient. This is evident in Rutter's (1990) definition of resilience as a relative term in which resilience is defined together with a construct such as vulnerability, as the opposite pole of the continuum reflecting susceptibility to adverse consequences, or to consequences upon exposure to a high risk circumstance. At the other ends of the continuum, 'resilience can be the absence of diagnosis or the perceived positive

response to adversity as opposed to expected negative outcome' (Rutter, 1990:181). It appears that resilience levels are on a continuum where at different life stages, a person may be more resilient than in another life stage.

Thomsen (2002:9) suggests that "there are seeds of resilience within each person and outward appearance or behaviour should not blind us". As much as there is common understanding that all people are resilient at different levels in their lives, there is great variety in the manner in which this resilience is exhibited.

Research on resilience must take into account not only the multiplicity of potentially adverse experiences, but also differences in the nature of specific stressful experiences (Kinard, 1998:676). The different resources available at the time, the variables and the protective factors that enhance resilience are all dynamic. A further aspect that makes definition so fluid is the variability that each researcher takes as evidence of "bouncing back", a common term used to define regaining one's ability to adapt despite adversity (Kinard, 1998:676).

Blieseners and Korferl Loser (in Glantz & Johnson, 1991:18), state that "there is a multitude of constructs that are related to invulnerability such as resilience, hardiness, adaptation, adjustment, mastery, plasticity, person environment fit or social buffering". The definition of resilience changes from year to year. There has been a move by some researchers (Blieseners & Korferl, Loser in Glantz & Johnson, 1991) to relate resilience to terminologies such as adaptive behaviour, competence, invulnerability and hardiness.

Creating a healthy and democratic educational community is essential to resilience education. This forms the very foundation upon which persons facilitate development of resilience. Within a healthy and democratic educational community, young people develop and learn how to build caring

relationships with adults and other young people with an emphasis on a pro-social learning environment (Bernard et al., 2001:25). This could facilitate successful adjustment to the dynamic environment of adolescents (Werner, 1993:452).

2.3.2 Resilience as an outcome of risk and protective factors

Literature (Master, Best & Garnezy, 1990) presents different types of resilience and these are used as a point of departure when investigating the concept resilience. The three types of resilience that can be distinguished are:

- One which puts emphasis on positive outcomes despite experiencing a high-risk environment.
- Resilience is also defined as competent functioning in the face of acute or chronic major life stressors
- Recovery from trauma

Thomsen's (2002:9) definition of resilience encompasses these three aspects. He defines resilience as a person's ability to remain steady or to bounce back in spite of adversity drawing on strengths both internal and external environmental to overcome challenges. The risk and the protective factors within the external and internal environment are interchangeably defined. These could lead to poor adaptation or a positive outcome depending on the circumstances in the environment. Learners are considered resilient if they function within the normal and acceptable bounds on measures of competence with respect to behaviour, social and cognitive functioning.

Kaplan (in Glantz & Johnson, 1999:19) in his analysis of the definition of resilience focuses on four main distinctions that make the definition of resilience so variable and intertwined. Firstly Kaplan (in Glantz & Johnson, 1999:19) views resilience as an outcome which can be positive or negative in

the face of adversity. The problem with such a definition is that some outcomes are considered maladaptive depending upon the perception taken.

Secondly definitions of resilience lack standardised dependent and independent variables or base-line criteria that can be used in different context when investigating resilience. This has resulted in variation in outcomes where resilience is used interchangeably with outcome.

Thirdly the definition of characteristics of investigators context, in which resilience is investigated, differs in cases, where resilience and outcome distinction is made.

The fourth source of high variability when defining resilience is caused by the fact that those outcomes and their putative causes are defined in terms of variable risk factors. The researcher also needs to give a clear indicator of what she viewed as the outcome of resilience and the context in which resilience is promoted or hampered. The emphasis on the environment in the Master's (1994:4) definition is evident where it is stated that resilience demonstrates how effectiveness in the environment is achieved, sustained and recovered despite adversity.

The concept of resilience which Garmezy and his colleagues found so striking 50 years ago is just as compelling when observed today (Glantz & Sloboda, 1999: III). Cicchette and Garmezy (1993:497) state that it is especially refreshing to explore the more optimistic component of the psychopathology- risk equation, namely, resilience.

What individual, familial or societal factors stem the trajectory from risk to psychopathology, thereby resulting in adaptive outcomes even in the presence of adversity? We need a paradigm shift from risk and deficit approaches to resilience, which creates an awareness of the potential to overcome challenges and to create a sense of self-sufficiency (Henderson & Milstein, 1996).

According to Turner (in Kumpher, 1999:179) a shift in focus from risk to resilience, has developed particularly from frustration with the pervasive emphasis on identification of risk factors. A risk-focused approach has been very helpful in the public health field in the reduction of infectious diseases. More complex diseases of lifestyle require a more comprehensive approach, including *protective and resilience mechanisms*. Kumpher (1999:180) states that, a systematic application of methods for increasing resilience could improve child outcomes and prevent future problem behaviours and poor life adjustment, which are increasingly costly to treat.

Several definitions of resilience have been given in this chapter because of disagreement in understanding this elusive concept. Kumpher (1999: 182) has identified operationalisation of concepts and challenges and stressors as stumbling blocks in the research process of the concept resilience. The use of the concept resilience has shown high levels of flexibility which has made it an elusive concept to grasp. However there seems to be an agreement on the positive nature on the use of the term resilience. The use of the term indicates a strong link between adversity and the ability to 'bounce back' despite all the odds. There are however various conceptual factors that have made the term resilience difficult to apply.

2.3.3 Critical conceptual issues of resilience

The researchers (Kumpher, 1999); Kaplan in Glantz & Johnson, 1999; Glantz & Sloboda in Glantz and Johnson, 1999) have identified a number of factors that have made the term resilience difficult to standardize and apply as with many other educational and psychological concepts. This has somewhat hindered the research on this concept and caused inconsistencies in its use as it tends to be heavily laden with subjective assumptions. The issues raised by researchers (Glantz & Sloboda in Glantz & Johnson, 1999:110) concerning resilience are:

- The concept of resilience is used variously and indiscriminately as a trait, quality, a process or an outcome.
- There is no consensus on the referent of the term, standards for its application, or agreement on its role in explanations, models and theories.
- The problems and inconsistencies in measurements, findings, and interpretations in the published literature raise serious questions about utility and heuristic value of the concept of resilience.
- Positive outcomes only need to be accounted for when significant negative determinative factors are present and the predicted negative outcomes do not manifest themselves. This view assumes that normal function and behaviour is by nature basically healthy and adaptive and that negative outcomes must therefore be the product of negative influences. The “normative positive” models are not designed to account for positive outcomes in the face of negative determinative factors; the result is often the invocation of a vaguely conceived conceptualization of resilience.

2.3.4 Challenges for operational definition of resilience

Different operational distributions of resilience result in disparate findings when summarizing the critical components of resilience or determining estimates of the rate of resilience in a similar target of population in high-risk youth. The concept of resilience is operationalised as the positive end of a distribution of outcomes in a sample of high-risk children (Egeland, Carlson & Scroufe, 1983). Kumpher (1999:182) further states that, additional research in this field suffers from the difficulties separating cause and effect, and for locating good measures for resilience variables.

Addressing the methodological issues of resilience can be a difficult task for researchers and leads one to ask: resilience in whose eyes; by whose standards and compared to what? In general,

children facing adversity are considered resilient if they function within normal or acceptable measures of competence with respect to behavioural, social and / or cognitive functioning (Henry, 1999: 4).

The six key issues as outlined by Kinard (1998:671) that have continued to pose major challenges for formulating an operational definition for this research are listed as follows:

- Distinguishing between factors determining resilience and factors related to resilience;
- Selecting the source of the data;
- Deciding how many sources of data to use;
- Choosing scoring criteria to measure resilience;
- Examining resilience over time.

In longitudinal and cross sectional research, various sources of data for measuring the construct resilience have been used. Some of the data sources include "material ratings, teacher ratings, peer ratings, children's self reports, intelligence tests, achievement tests, and school performance" (Kinard, 1998:671). The question that arises if one studies a variety of sources is which one is more likely to yield the most reliable results. For the purpose of this study self assessment and school performance as measures of resilience shall be used.

Previous research (Achenbach, 1991) reveals that there is little agreement between parent and teacher ratings of child behaviour. This problem is compounded by there being no conclusive evidence which reveals whether this is due to an actual difference in children's behaviour in different environments or to other characteristics.

2.3.4.1 Behaviour as a measure of resilience

The behaviour of a resilient learner can be one measure of resilience. The problem is that behaviour is judged in the context of both the observers and the observed. The business of behaviour is inherent and there is no objective way to judge appropriateness and acceptability for people who have different characteristics and that are influenced by different external factors.

Another challenge in measuring resilience by using educators as a source of data is that educators have “limited contact” with “children in a structured” environment (Kinard, 1998:671). There is evidence that “teacher ratings are influenced by characteristics of children’s families, such as child gender, socio-economic status or ethnicity” (Kinard, 1998:671).

2.3.4.2 Cognitive ability as a measure of resilience

There is a continuing debate as to whether resilience should be defined as innate ability or as current performance. Intelligence tests, academic achievement tests, grades in school and parent and teacher ratings are popular methods of rating whether a person is resilient or not resilient (Kinard, 1998:671). All these measures focus on different kinds of cognitive functioning and have their own challenge. For example, intelligence or achievement tests are desirable because they are a standardized measure with considerable normative data, but there are questions of cultural bias in these tests.

School grade reflects performance, but grading standards differ within and across school systems, making it difficult to compare children from different schools. Children in special schools are graded according to more appropriate criteria. Children may score within acceptable ranges of intelligence or achievement tests, but perform poorly in school in terms of grades or vice versa.

In the study of maltreated children (Kinard, 1998: 672), a larger proportion (13, 5% for reading and 20, 3% arithmetic) of children with wide Range Achievement Test scores below grade level were considered in the normal range by teachers. Kaufman *et al.*, (1996) in their study of maltreated children reported that 64% were classified as resilient on a standardized test of cognitive functioning, but only 43% were considered resilient according to teacher assessment of overall academic performance. The discrepancy between the teacher's rating and the standardised test demonstrates inconsistency on the different measures of resilience.

In the study by Gonzalez and Padilla (1997) they used academic grades as criteria for resiliency. They examined factors that contributed toward academic resilience and achievement in 133 resilient and 81 non-resilient Mexican American high school students. The characteristics of a cohort of tenth-grade Mexican American students according to Gonzalez and Padilla were resilient or invulnerable students, that is, students who maintain a high grade point average in the tenth grade despite coming from a low socio economic background.

In another study (Gray, Waxman & Padron, 2003:5), children reported a higher level of educational support from their teachers and friends and were more likely to feel encouraged and prepared to attend college, enjoy coming to school and being involved in high school activities, experienced fewer conflicts and difficulties in their inter-group relations with other students and experienced fewer family conflicts and difficulties.

Multiple measures of a cognitive ability, such as standardized tests, grades and teacher ratings would provide a more reliable yard stick to judge or predict resilience in a child in various academic settings.

2.3.4.3 Children's self reports

Children's self reports of competence do not necessarily match external assessments on other raters or sources of data (Kinard, 1998:672). Children's self reports about behaviour, self-esteem, locus of control, or depression are sometimes used to determine resilience and are also sometimes regarded as protective factors, leading to resilience. Children may overrate themselves due to post-setting or treatment-setting.

2.3.4.4 Number of data sources

The number of domain uses has an impact on the research. For example, the use of a single domain may ignore significant factors that impact on resilience, whereas multiple use of domain may sideline or make it difficult for an individual to be categorised as resilient. Some studies (Baldwin *et al*, 1990) used a single domain to define resilience, while others (Bradley *et al*, 1994; Masten, 1990; Smith & Prior, 1998) used several measures to define resilience.

How does the investigator decide on the criteria for defining resilience, if there are multiple sources of data? This is a difficult question to answer. Resilience is sometimes classified separately for each source of rating and the analysis is conducted separately for each classification. This approach eliminates the difficulties encountered where there is disagreement among multiple raters. Other researchers use multiple measures of behaviour, or adjustment, in cluster analysis to develop profiles of competent functioning. Another approach involves constructing a summary variable reflecting the number of different areas in which children demonstrate competence.

2.3.4.5 Scoring criteria for defining resilience

In Gray *et al* (2003) study, those who scored the one-third were labelled resilient. In some studies, the remaining sample is divided into low functioning and middle functioning groups (Smith & Prior,

1998). Other researchers (Baldwin *et al*, 1990; Masten *et al*, 1990) divide the entire sample at the mean and classified those above the mean as resilient and those below the mean as non-resilient. In this study, the first two positive items of the scale will be used as the cutting line to identify those that are resilient and those that are not resilient.

In the current study if the respondent scores himself or herself within the first two positive items in the scale, that would be used as an indication of resilience. Definition is made more difficult because resilience may not be a single construct, but a complex of related processes that deserve to be identified and studied as discrete constructs (Gordon & Song, 1994, in Kumpfer (1999:182). This results in a different conclusion in the way the definition of the term is conceptualised. There is also lack of gender, age or culturally unbiased definitions of the success outcomes that are indicative of a resilient person. There is no consensus on definition of environmental risk protection and primary self-characteristics of a resilient person.

2.4 Internal and external resiliency characteristics that can promote/impede resilience

There is a common understanding amongst some researchers such as Reed-Victor (1999:3), Ross and Deverell, (2004:18), Theron (2004:317), that risk and protective factors manifest themselves in the individual, family characteristics and the extra-familial environment. The personal protective factors are innate and include goal orientation, temperament and familial protective/risk factors which depend on the socio-economic aspects of parents, consistency and the support network or the ability of parents in nurturing (Baldwin *et al*., 1990).

The extra-familial factors are sometimes referred to as environmental or external characteristics include involvement in prosocial organizations, a good school, supportive educators and attachment to prosocial adults (Theron, 2004:317).

Reed-Victor, in the article *Innovations and Perspectives* (1992:3), divided these protective and risk factors into two categories that is individual characteristics and environment characteristics. Baldwin *et al* (1990) distinguish between three levels that are at individual level, the familial level and the community level, which all incorporate environmental characteristics. The researchers analysed and summarised the collaborative studies conducted amongst stress-resilient children and identified a number of protective and risk factors. These factors integrate the individual, family and extra-familial characteristics.

Table 2.1: Examples of Risk and Protective Factors

DOMAIN	RISK FACTORS	PROTECTIVE FACTORS
Child	Premature, low birth weight Perinatal stress Poor sensory motor development Irritable disposition	Easy going disposition Problem solving skills Sociable Interested
Family	Chronic poverty Low maternal education Divorce Disorganisation	Warm and supporting care giving Stimulating and organised care Parental emotional stability High expectation
School	Inadequate resources Lack of cohesion Poor sense of community among staff, student and family	Caring community High expectations and mentoring Opportunity for meaningful engagement and interest development

Salmon, K. L., Davidson, P. J. & Cole, P. M. (1986). Stress-resistant families and stress resistant children.

It is possible to view three major precursors of resilience from the above table. These are the following:

1. Temperament or positive personality disposition
2. Supportive family milieu (family cohesion and warmth)

3. Availability and use of an external support system.

These three major precursors form the basis of most frequently reported internal protective processes; interpersonal resources; and external support and skills.

Killian (2004) conducted a study on community based programmes offering psychological support to vulnerable children, especially those affected by HIV and AIDS, poverty, and violence. Using different sources Killian identified the most frequent reported protective processes; the most frequently reported interpersonal resources as well as the most frequently reported external support and skills. These are listed below.

The most frequently reported internal protective processes

- Internal personal strengths
- Good intellectual skills
- Sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem
- Autonomy and sense of control over one's own life
- Achievement oriented
- Problem-solving skills
- Creative, innovative, resourceful personality
- Appealing / or easy temperament
- Talent valued by self and society
- Ability to focus and maintain attention
- Ability to experience and express a wide range of emotions
- Ability to regulate themselves socially

The most frequently reported interpersonal resources

- Trusting relationships
- Secure attachments
- Sense of humour
- Sense of being loveable
- Receiving recognition for achievement
- Social competence
- Ability to empathise and consider situations from another's perspective
- A sense of meaning in life, usually in the form of faith and religious affiliation

The most frequently reported external support and skills

- Caring supportive parents
- Connections to caring and competent adults
- Parental encouragement, praise and active involvement
- Positive role models
- Emotional support outside of the family
- A sense of belonging, cultural and family heritage
- Socio-economic advantage
- Stable school
- Community resources
- Access to health facilities
- Routines and rituals
- Child-aware and sensitive community and country

According to Reed-Victor (2003:3) the primary sources of protective factors are based on healthy children's development that is free from stressors, good family circumstances and an environment

that is free from stressors. Individual characteristics that have been cited to promote resilience in children, according to research conducted by Reed-Victor (2003:3) include the following:

- Affectionate, engaging;
- Resourceful, good problem-solving skills;
- Sociable, actively interested and involved;
- Good humour, essentially dependent upon good temperament, intelligence and the ability to form a healthy relationship.

Resilient learners should exhibit some of the characteristics cited above. The school in conjunction with other relevant stakeholders must create an environment that would enhance the development and strengthen the existing resilience characteristics.

Project Resilience in Washington DC, (Bickart & Wolin, 1999:1), in their study of children who experience traumatic experiences such as war, death of a parent, family disruption and extreme poverty, identified seven common resiliency themes. These were:

- (i) Insight: making a habit of asking a thoughtful questions and providing honest and answers.
- (ii) Independence: establishing emotional and physical distance from difficult feelings.
- (iii) *Relationship: making sustaining fulfilling ties with other people.*
- (iv) Initiative: pushing for mastery, taking pleasure from solving problems.
- (v) Creativity: representing one's inner self in art forms.
- (vi) Humour: having the capacity to laugh at one-self and one's troubles.
- (vii) Morality: acting on an informal conscience.

The individual characteristics appear to be the foundation upon which the learner can integrate other domains to build a protective environment. Self-knowledge and openness to new ideas are critical for the learner to access the assets at his or her disposal.

Families play a critical role in promoting the well-being of an adolescent, but can predispose an adolescent to maladaptive behaviour if the family system is dysfunctional. The importance of a family is supported by Jones (2001) who states a family ethnic, racial, cultural and linguistic identity strongly influences their values and beliefs regarding disability, education, healing and health care, child rearing and intervention.

The condition in which resilience is nurtured is related to affection, closeness, warmth, care, responsiveness, consistency, structure, encouragement (Egeland & Erickson, 1990). One can conclude from the argument presented by the above authors that the family has a lot of influence in the outcome of a well adjusted and secure learner who upholds appropriate ethics and values.

Families need to be empowered and incorporated in to the bigger picture of resilience as they have an important role to play in promoting resilience. Children manage to grow up, adjust and become competent, if their families are supportive and warm, have high expectations, are responsive and accepting of behaviours and where consistent rules are known and applied (Hanson & Carta, 1996). Such conditions buffer the individual from experiencing adverse conditions.

Listing of such factors is not enough as one factor proceeds, or is preceded by another, in order to make a holistic impact. Understanding the mechanism and processes used to interact the concepts of causality related to resilience would assist in grasping the construct of resilience.

Research studies by Baldwin *et al.*, (1990); Battistich *et al.*, (1995); Bradley *et al.*, (1994) and Werner and Smith (1992) highlight the interaction of risk and protective factors in bringing about positive or negative outcomes. These studies place great emphasis on positive attributes, as opposed to risk factors. The researchers identified different factors that can act as buffers against risk factors as depicted in the table that follows.

Table 2.2 Outcomes of Protective and Risk factors

STUDY	RISK FACTORS	PROTECTIVE FACTORS	OUTCOMES
Baldwin, Baldwin & Col (1990)	Neighbourhoods with high crime rates and limited economic resources	Family warmth High parental Expectations Close monitoring	High academic achievements
Battistich, Solomon, Waston Schaps (1995)	High poverty neighbourhoods	Caring school community	Student engagement Sense of belonging High academic achievement
Bradley, Whiteside, Mundfrom, Casey, Kelleher & Pope (1994)	Premature, low birth Weight Low maternal education Poverty	Responsive & accepting caregiver Stimulating & organized care Safer and less crowded housing	Good health Normal cognitive social/ adaptive developmental gains in early childhood
Heatherington, Stanley-Hogan & Anderson, (1990)	Divorce	Child temperament Custodial parent's emotional stability	Positive adjustment
Werner & Smith, 1992	Perinatal stress Chronic poverty Disorganised family Low parental education	Child characteristics Warm care giving Mentoring Growth opportunities Value oriented Organisations	Graduation Employment Life satisfaction Family stability

Source: Reed-Victor (2003) Supporting Resilience of children and youth. Project Hope Virginia Commonwealth University: Virginia

The outcomes highlighted in table 2.2 give hope to historically disadvantaged communities of South Africa and for learners faced with difficult circumstances, because they indicate that protective factors can outweigh risk factors. The key to positive outcomes lies with a positive environment and positive attributes to utilise the assets in all domains. The ecological system of the learners has to be empowered with practical ways to promote a positive adaptation.

2.5 The resilience framework

The focus of this research is based on the resilient factors within the school context, but effective development of the adolescent is nurtured by a number of complex interconnected systems within the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:6). According to Kumpher (1999), the resilience framework is made up of six major constructs as demonstrated in figure 1.

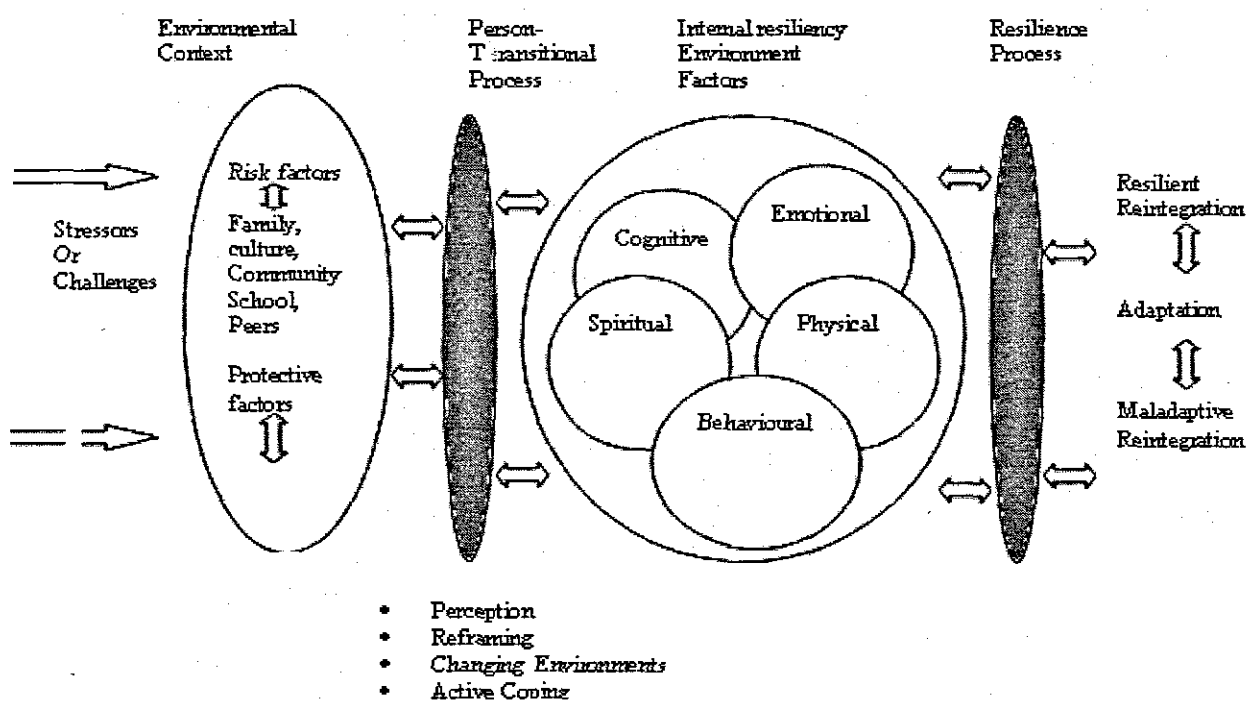


Figure 2.1: Kumpher's (1999) Resilient Framework

The resilient framework should be understood as the combination of outcome and process constructs. This framework incorporates ideas and constructs that have been added in a number of research studies on resilience (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; Werner & Smith, 1992; Rutter, 1987)

Person-environment interactional processes as defined in Kumpfer's (1999) resilient model are critical in understanding resilience, especially if the focus is on one context of the systems of the individual. The relationship between external and internal factors will determine the outcome namely, adaptive or maladaptive behaviour of the resilient process. The external environmental factors involves the family, community, culture, school and peer group, depending upon age and specific culture, geographic location and historical period of the individual child.

Internal resiliency environmental factors integrate spiritual, cognitive, social or behavioural physical and emotional or affective competencies. All these factors are essential for the individual to succeed in different developmental tasks, different cultures and different personal environments. This model clearly defines the relationships that exist in an ecosystem that makes it difficult to separate the individual from the community of which the individual is part.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) adopted the use of the social ecology model or person-process context models to study the relationship of contextual risk and protective factors, intervening processes and individual characteristics. The integrations of all dynamic systems in the functioning of the learner is a critical aspect of resilience.

Stressors or challenges according to the homeostasis stress (Kumpfer, 1999:183) model rely on an individual to perceive and interpret the event as stressful or threatening. This cognitive appraisal of the event as stressful may cause the individual to become resilient or non-resilient, depending upon the outcome or the response of the individual to the perceived stressful event. One of the problems

with this model of understanding resilience is that it presupposes interpretation of an event as stressful. The question that needs to be asked is 'What if the event is not interpreted as stressful by the individual, but is taken as the norm depending on the individual circumstances'?

In the process of understanding resilience, all the above models are important as they assist in linking the individual to the external and internal sub-systems of the individual. The focus of this research is however based specifically on the factors within the school context that promote or impede resilience of learners. Therefore the Resiliency Wheel by Henderson and Milstein (1996:27) will be adopted in this research as it is seen as the most appropriate model because its main focus is on promoting resilience in school context.

2.5.1 The Resiliency Wheel model

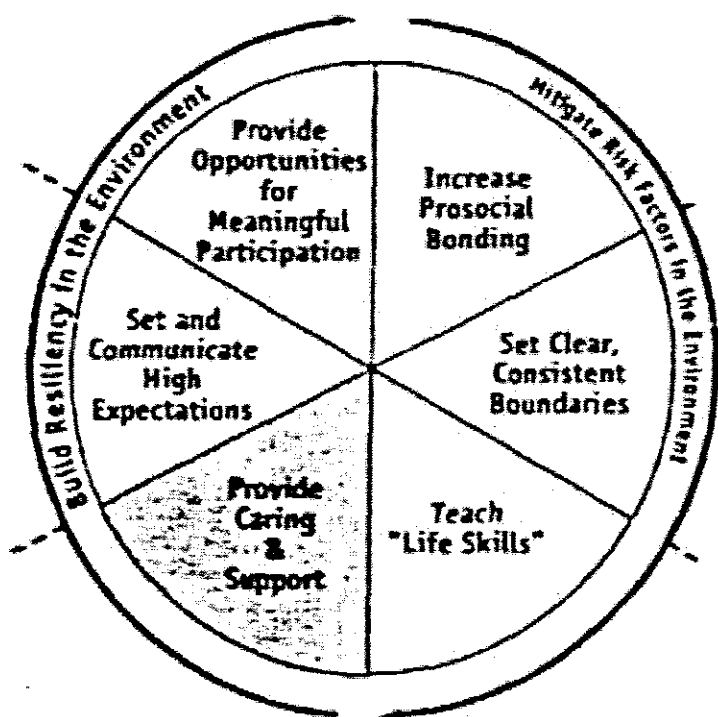


Figure 2.2 Resiliency at school

Source: N Henderson & M. Milstein, the Resiliency Wheel (1996).

The Resilience Wheel developed by Henderson and Milstein (1996) as shown in figure 2 gives a good starting point to analyse possible factors that are interrelated and either enhance or retard resilience in the individual. Resilience does not occur in a vacuum, but certain factors within and outside the individual have to interrelate in a certain way to create a resilient person.

A person is a psychosocial being who interacts with others at a social level, but operates at a psychological level and has physiological aspects that have direct and indirect effects on the individual's behaviour (Kumpher, 1999). The school must take into account all the levels that contribute towards holistic development of the learner. The importance of life-skills education and exposure to enriching activities within a conducive environment contribute to learners' adaptive behaviour.

Based on the Resilience Wheel there are certain aspects of the environment that enhance resilience in an individual learner. A resilient school is a school that provides a caring and a supportive environment where learners feel a sense of belonging and acceptance and their efforts are acknowledged and rewarded. This fosters resilience. A resilience promoting school according to Henderson and Milstein (1996) sets and communicates high expectations through positive goals that are obtainable.

In such schools, educators show confidence in themselves and in learners to reach their highest potential and to achieve to the best of their ability. Such school environments provide opportunities for meaningful participation where learners' believe they are important and have influence on the decisions being taken, and can make a meaningful contribution to the lives of others. When learners are given opportunities to engage in challenging activities with confidence, these may further nurture their resilience.

As much as there are positive potential opportunities for growth in the environment, there are also challenges that are potential risk factors. The Resilience Wheel places emphasis on promoting the mitigating factors in the environment that would counteract the risk factors. One of these mitigating factors is increasing pro-social bonding by ensuring that there is at least one caring adult in the school to avoid the feeling of isolation.

Learners who engage in a number of extra-curricular activities and have more opportunities to interact with other peers both formally and informally, are most likely to develop positive relations with their peers at school. Such participation creates a fertile ground for the development of positive self-esteem. The school also needs to set clear, consistent boundaries where all stakeholders collaboratively write policies and rules. Where learners feel that they have contributed and have a say in policies that govern them, they are more likely to abide by those policies (Henderson & Milstein, 1996).

The learner grows through a number of stages of development, each of which is characterised by different challenges. Therefore there is a need for ongoing instruction on how to negotiate the different stages successfully as they grow. Schools need to create opportunities for teaching “life-skills” relevant to the different developmental stages and to the cultural and social demands of learners in their school (Thomsen, 2002:4). This helps to limit the number of potential problems as adolescents grow into adulthood.

2.6 School effectiveness in relation to resilience

Potterton and Christie’s (1998) studies of school effectiveness have a significant impact on the rationale for this study as they demonstrate why studying resilience in the school context is still necessary. These studies have not incorporated resilience into their research, but have indirectly highlighted what could promote or retard resilience.

In many schools in the previously disadvantaged communities, and even in some former model C schools, the ratio between learners and teachers is high, making it difficult for individual attention to be given to each individual learner. As a result, schools lose focus on the unique aspects of each learner in order to meet the needs of larger majority (Thomsen, 2002: 47).

The main focus of our current education system is on the age rather than upon readiness of the child, with just a few deviations in cases of the highly gifted or below average learners who receive the privilege of an individualised education programme (Thomsen, 2002).

2.6.1 The characteristics of effective schools

Potterson and Christie (1998:24) have identified a few characteristics of effective schools. Their research on school effectiveness identified the following characteristics of effective schools:

- Professional leadership
- Shared vision and goals
- A learning environment of teaching and learning
- Purposeful teaching
- High expectations
- Positive reinforcement
- *Monitoring progress*
- Pupil's rights and responsibilities
- More school partnerships
- A learning organisation

The conclusion one can make based on the above mentioned factors is that resilience is embedded in the nature of the relationship between the adult and adolescent or care-giver in the context of a supportive society in order to provide for learning and development. Brown, D'Emidio-Custon & Bernard (2001:17) state that relationships are the medium for supporting and promoting development. Such protective factors are not just merely the opposite of risk factors, but are defined independently of risk factors.

Research in school effectiveness conducted in schools in the Eastern Cape by Potterton and Christie (1998:25) identified features of resilience in the dynamic and interactive features of the changing cultures of schools. These features can be summarised as follows:

- Sense of responsibility and willingness of school to do things for itself
- Participation and consultation of staff by leadership
- Prioritizing teaching and learning resulting in better students and highly motivated educators.
- Safety and organisation is promoted by creating consistency in starting time, teachers and learners observe teaching time/ contact time
- Authority and discipline consistently applied
- Concern for all in school where personalised relationships between learners and staff are encouraged.

Potterton & Christie (1998) clearly emphasize that the schools need to have a clear vision which encourages appropriate decision-making. This leads to action. Learning should be viewed as the main purpose of school attendance and has to be prioritised. Leadership, responsibility and capacity need to be nurtured at all levels. A safe and secure school for all is another critical element in promoting the resilience and effectiveness of the school (Potterton & Christie, 1998). The school also

needs to develop appropriate and legitimate disciplinary procedures and not just involve parents as a back-up system when all else has failed. Meaningful parental involvement should be encouraged in the form of the school governing body or as individual parents.

2.6.2 The relation between school effectiveness and resilience

Placing all the emphasis on the school and hoping to achieve a holistic 'moulding' of the individual learner is not enough. Research conducted by Potterton & Christie (1998) highlighted the importance of school effectiveness in promoting resilience, but has not indicated that other aspects integrated in the resilience processes, such as individual and family assets, that could also promote or hinder resilience.

The educators need to further understand the perceptions of the individual learner from what they perceive to be factors that promote or hinder their resilience. A number of schools have necessary infrastructure and good policies. Yet even when using results as a measure of resilience, there is a fluctuation in the pass rate in different schools. Year by year the quality of learners who leave the institution is different and their achievement is also different. Therefore there is a need to constantly investigate the dynamic factors that enhance or retard resilience.

The integration of individual responsibility, by taking into consideration the context from which the learner comes such as effective/non-effective schools, is most likely to yield a better understanding of resilience. This can be summarised effectively by the research literature (Owens 1995:308) who suggested that "...the most persuasive research suggests that student academic performance is composed of values, norms and roles existing within an institutionally distinct structure of governance, communication and educational practices and policies and so on".

Successful schools have cultures that produce a climate or “ethos” conducive to teaching and learning (Department of Education *Issues on Gender in Schools*, 2002:21). In this publication it further states that efforts to change schools have been most productive and enduring when directed towards influencing the entire school culture achieved via a strategy that involves collaboration, planning, shared decision-making and collegial work in an atmosphere that is friendly to experimentation and evaluation. For us to understand what in the school context makes learners resilient, we need to go beyond just looking at truancy rates or the percentage of delinquent youths in school. We need to look at “the process of school change, emphasizing the central role of the school and its culture” as this will enhance our understanding of dynamics within schools (Owens, 1995:308).

Beliefs and ideologies may be profoundly unconscious. We are often not even aware that we have certain beliefs. They often become habits and as such, may become an automatic part of our speech, our way of thinking and behaving (Owens, 1995). For this reason, it is very difficult to alter our beliefs. It is here that the education system can play a crucial role in the curriculum by influencing the belief system of learners (Department of Education *Issues on Gender in Schools*, 2002:21).

This can be achieved by creating an ethos or culture in the school that is conducive to self-discovery and affirm the inherent ability of learners to deal with adversities in their lives in a positive manner. The school context can model and shape behaviour that is accepted by the larger community and create further opportunities for learners to acquire relevant life skills.

Thomsen (2002:48) compares the present education system with one-room schoolhouses, where students and teachers stayed together for many years, where one teacher taught every child rather than specific grades.

Such schooling environment created an environment in which sound relations could be developed between educators and learners. This learner centred- approach to education promoted resiliency and character. Thomsen (2002) termed this “character education”.

A study on drop-outs by the Human Science Research Council (1997) found that 20% of boys in grades 8-12 were between 19-22 years of age. In rural areas many boys still engage in herding cattle or farming until they are sent to school a few years later than their peers. In some areas, learners have to travel a long distance to school resulting in parents waiting longer to enrol their children when they are older and fit to travel. This sometimes even encourages school drop-outs. Drop-out from school is also possibly encouraged because some just do not attend classes, whilst others have learning difficulties that are not picked or identified by the school system (Human Science Research Council, 1997). Others are incorrectly placed in their particular schools.

2.6.3 The school context that promotes resilience

A school that embraces a resilience philosophy creates and promotes a positive learner-educator relationship (Bernard, 1995). Such a school builds learners’ self-esteem and resiliency skills, nurtures educator development, and provides an opportunity for learner-to-learner relationships. Such a school uses various methods such as peer tutoring, cross age grouping, cooperative learning activities and also encourages positive teacher-parent relationships through home activities, linking parents to community resources and support, which nurture family activities (Bernard, 1995).

It is important for the school to develop resilience in learners. Success adaptation of learners depends upon this, as well as strengthening the protective factors in the school environment. Learners that are at risk demonstrate characteristics such as low academic achievement, retention in grade, poor school attendance, low socio-economic status and low self-esteem (Christiansen *et al.*, 1997:87) The educators, family members and the larger society can serve as buffer against risk

factors to 'mould' resilient learners. Resilient learners are responsible, positive, self reliant, committed and socially skilful in different contexts (Joseph, 1994:3).

There are a number of strategies the school can use to eliminate or alter risk factors within the school context. According to the findings of Bickart and Wollins (1997:2) in their Project Resilience in schools they suggested the following strategies could be useful in enhancing resilience. Children are involved in assessing their own work and in setting goals for themselves. They participate in developing a standard for their work. They have many opportunities to work collaboratively and participate in meetings to solve classroom problems. They have an opportunity to make choice. They feel connected in a classroom structured as a community, that is, a classroom that has no authority-based hierarchies. In such classrooms there is humour and a sharing process that involves more co-operation than competition, where children play an active role in setting rules for classroom life and where there is transparency, consistency and fairness in the way that the rules are applied.

The role of the school and educators is critical in ensuring that learners develop into socially well-adjusted and capable individuals who will take their rightful places in a society, regardless of their background. The education system needs to provide a learner-centred infrastructure and adjust the curriculum to suit the needs of the learner.

Smith-Read (2000) identified four areas within the school context that could either contribute to academic failure or promote resilience in schools. These are the teacher, the curriculum, instruction, and the organization and culture of the school. The school has to ensure that the learning environment is well structured to allow acquisition of high quality knowledge, through interaction with professional and supportive educators.

Adolescents are still struggling with issues of identity and autonomy. In order to develop autonomy from their parents and educators, such adolescents require supportive adults in order to develop a positive self-image. The high school environment of an adolescent can have a negative impact as it tends to become an increasingly more "competitive and impersonal" context, (National Institute of Mental Health (2003:8) for the immature learner. Findings from research studies by Garnezy (1991); Werner (1990) and Bernard (1993), suggest that broader intervention efforts in schools, communities and institutions outside the family may encourage the development of a more positive self-concept and serve as a protective shield for adolescents to withstand the adversities of life.

"When schools anticipate the needs of each child, they can create a learning environment that protects the child, supports the developing needs of each child and fosters the characteristics that increase resilience in children", (Christiansen *et al.*, 1997:5). Schools need to actively seek out opportunities to develop connections that could enhance the child's adaptability and to make schooling more meaningful to learners.

There are models that may be used in a school setting to encourage positive participation of learners who are skilled in adapting to adverse conditions and create an environment that could support them. One such model is the PORT-able Model which was created by Brown *et al* (2001:32) using different research findings (Werner & Smith, 1986; 1989; 1993; Werner & Berman & French, 1971; Werner & Smith, 1992). The Port-able Model consists of four elements of resilience education that can be applied in the school system and within the familial and extra-familial context.

PORT is an acronym for Participation, Observation, Reflection and Transformation. Participation refers to authentic active engagement with knowledge, content, students, and learning processes that are focused in the present moment. Observation refers to noting experiences without judgment, such as intrapersonal, interpersonal and systemic interactions, using verbal and non-verbal

communication. Reflection refers to interpreting experiences, including content reflection and meta-reflection. Transformation refers to awareness of, and responsibility for, an act, process or instances of change.

According to Brown *et al* (2001) this model was used in a school setting to encourage positive participation by learners who were skilled in adapting to adverse conditions and creating an environment that could support them. The challenges posed by this model lie in the manner in which the school context creates an environment that would challenge the perception of learners. If awareness is created within the adolescents to link actions with consequences, they could feel capable of dealing with challenges in their lives. They could also learn from their experiences and have greater chance of being functional adults.

2.7 Conclusion

To create a condition where resilience flourishes, one needs “goodness of fit” of the various systems of each child at home, at school and within the community context. There is a great emphasis on how protective and risk factors are associated. If one hopes to improve resilience, it is necessary to incorporate these protective factors within educational and social activities, in order to ensure successful adjustment.

Separate classification of resilience by source is likely to yield the greatest understanding of the development of resilience in learners. It is advisable not to combine different domains or sources of information as this will tend to mask the distinction of the resilience process according to the source of the data.

Resilience is a dynamic phenomenon present in all conditions no matter how good or bad these conditions are. The most important thing for the researcher is to identify and find strategies to

enhance the protective factors within the learners' environment that serve as a buffer in difficult circumstances.

The current chapter highlighted the difficulties involved in creating a conceptual framework of the term resilience because some protective factors can be perceived as risk factors depending on the conditions prevailing at the time. Resilience is an outcome of the interplay of risk and protective factors of the individual personality traits, the family characteristics and the environmental support structures.

There are internal and external factors that have been established as promoting resilience. The resilience framework of Kumpher (1999) demonstrated the processes involved in the development of a resilient individual. The role of the individual in dealing with a challenging situation is strengthened by the type of family and the level of support he or she gets from the extra-familial environment.

Theories on resilience were discussed as the foundation of this study in order to understand the way the school can enhance or impede the resilience of learners. Researchers over the years have developed a number of models to explain the interactional processes involved in understanding the relationship between the external and internal factors within the individual that determine the outcomes of the resilience processes. Kumpher's (1999) model, which integrated the social ecological model within the context of risks and protective factors, was discussed as it gives a more global perspective of the individual within the system.

However the Resilient Wheel of Henderson and Milstein (1996) forms the basis of this study, as it not only incorporates the mitigating factors within the environment, but it also clearly demonstrates how these factors are linked to resiliency-building factors within the school context. The profiles of schools that promote resilience and those that retard the resilience of learners are important if one hopes to

create an environment that promotes the resilience of learners. Good grounding of resilience theories could assist in implementing resilience-enhancing interventions and also in devising strategies relevant to the school context being studied.

Considerable research has been done on school effectiveness. The priority of effective schools is effective learning and teaching in a conducive environment. Educators in such schools are caring and they instil a sense of responsibility by the manner in which school policies are implemented. They also teach learners life-skills and encourage participation of all stakeholders in resolving challenges with which learners are faced. The resilience theories highlight the role that an effective school play in promoting resilience in learners. Resilience is enhanced if learners are given opportunities and resources to engage in meaningful opportunities to learn and develop themselves provided by well organised schools. If learners experience success and are acknowledged for good work, they become aware of their ability and develop a sense of self worth.

Much has been said about what promotes resilience and much work still needs to be done to understand factors in the school that learners perceive as key elements that promote their resilience, as in the current study. The focus of the following chapter will be on the research design that will be used to gather information on factors in the school context that promote resilience among adolescent learners.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the external and internal processes involved in promoting positive or negative resilience of an adolescent. This chapter outlines briefly the research site, the different research methodologies and their design, the sample design and research instruments, as well as the research method that was used in this study. KwaZulu Natal is the third largest province in South Africa (Department of Social Development, 2000). It has the highest population, estimated at 9.1 million. It is situated on the eastern coast of the Indian Ocean.

According to the Statistics on the National Report of Social Development (2000), 5.5 million residents of KwaZulu Natal are predominantly rural and 3.6 million are urban. The African population makes up 76 percent. These are predominantly isiZulu speakers. This is followed by the Indians, which make up 14 percent; the Whites constitute 7 percent and the Coloured population 3 percent.

The schools within the Hammarsdale circuit have been historically disadvantaged in terms of economic resources. Of the communities within which the schools are situated, about 41% of them have permanent houses, about 25% have water, about 29% have flush toilets about 41% have female headed households, about 93% are African, about 2% have a household member educated up to grade 10, and have about 8 mean household size (Hunter & May 2002:11). The results of the shock wave study of Hunter and May (2002) compares closely with other studies of poverty in South Africa (World Bank, 1995).

The Hammarsdale circuit is made up of some 33 secondary schools out of the 151 in this district. The pass rate of the school identified in Table 3.1 shows the matriculation results over a three-year period. The examination results of grade 12 were used to establish and compare the rate of

academic success as a gauge for resilience in the four schools. The grade ten exams are internally controlled; therefore they could be unreliable if used as a measure in comparing the academic success of each school. The Hammarsdale circuit is an ideal place where one is likely to find resilience as learners still manage to improve their results despite difficult circumstances.

Table 3.1 Matriculation results over a three-year period.

NO.	SCHOOL NAME	2002 SCE PERCENTAGE	2003 SCE PERCENTAGE	2004 SCE PERCENTAGE	PERCENTAGE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN 2003 AND 2004
1	KwaBazothini	56.06	84	97.87	13.87
2	Myeka	58.51	58.33	73.26	14.93
3	Phezulu	35.71	26.47	88.52	62.52
4	St Julius	59.55	95.24	88.55	-6.72

3.2 Aims of the Study

The aims of the study are as follows:

3.2.1 To find out if black high school learners perceive themselves to be resilient or non-resilient.

3.2.2 To find out whether there is any relationship between learner's perception of resilience and school attended.

3.2.3 To investigate factors in the school context that learners perceive as critical in promoting their resilience.

3.2.4 To identify good qualities of the school that promotes resilience.

3.2.5 To investigate how learners deal with challenges they encounter at school.

3.2.6 To find out how the school prepares learners to develop resilience.

3.2.7 To find aspects of the school that needs to be improved in order to enhance the quality of life of learners.

3.3 Methodology

The method of enquiry will cover aspects of the study population, research design, study sample, pilot study, data collection and data analysis.

3.3.1 Study population and research design

The study population includes secondary school learners doing grade ten aged between 14 and 20.

The study will collect data from learners on aspects which they perceive as promoting or retarding resilience. Open ended and closed ended questionnaires were used concurrently.

The main aim of the research design is to ensure that proper planning of empirical study is done to test the assumptions. The research design for selecting subjects, research sites and data collection procedures should show the individuals studied, when, where and under which circumstances they were studied (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:157).

This study used two broad categories of data collection methods which encompass the qualitative and quantitative techniques. Creswell (2003:15) argues that the use of multiple methods to study psychological traits increases the validity of the results. This so-called “multi-method matrix” of data collection in a single study allows the researcher to use both qualitative and quantitative methods together.

Combining methods allows for triangulation and this technique was used in the current research. The combined methods of the qualitative and the quantitative approach help to develop or inform each

method (Creswell 2003:16). The advantages here are that one method can be nested within another method to provide insight into different levels or units of analysis (Tashakkovi & Teddli in Creswell 2003:160.)

This study mixed qualitative and quantitative approaches involving open and closed-ended questioning. The mixed method approach has three general strategies that are advocated by Creswell (2003: 16). These are as follows:

➤ **Sequential procedure**

Sequential procedures aims to elaborate and enhance understanding of the findings obtained. There is an exchange of method application, that is, the researcher can first use qualitative approaches, and then follow up with quantitative approaches and vice versa.

➤ **Concurrent procedure**

Concurrent procedures helps in situations where simultaneous collection of data using both the qualitative and quantitative methods, are analysed together in order to give an integrated interpretation of the findings. This allows the researcher to “nest” one form of data within the other in order to explore variables.

➤ **Transformative procedures**

In transformative procedures the researcher adopts a theoretical line and makes predetermined decisions on which data collection methods will be used, either in a sequential or in a concurrent approach. The concurrent procedure, where data is simultaneously collected in one study using both qualitative and quantitative methods and analyzed together to give an integrated interpretation of findings, was utilised in this study.

3.3.2 Study sample

The schools that were chosen were all within the Ethekwini Region (Durban Metropolitan Magisterial District) in Kwazulu-Natal. Using the demarcation boundaries of the Department of Education, there are three districts, namely Pinetown, Umlazi, and Ilembe. The schools that were chosen are situated in Pinetown district. This has four circuits, which are the City of Durban, Phoenix, KwaMashu and Hammarsdale.

A total sample of four schools was selected to give a valid number of schools in the sample. All grade ten learners in the four schools whose ages fall between the ages 14 to 20 were asked to participate. All grade ten learners available on the day of data collection in the Hammarsdale circuit schools participated. Grade ten is a transition period when compulsory education ends and learners have to make their own choices concerning career paths.

The sample consisted of grade ten learners falling between ages 14 and 20. However those learners who were in the same grade, but falling within a higher age category were not excluded from the sample. Table 3.2 gives a brief summary of the composition of the sample.

TABLE 3.2 Composition of the research participants.

NAME OF SCHOOL	FREQUENCY	GENDER		PERCENTAGE OF REPRESENTATION OF SCHOOL
		Female	Male	
KwaBazothini School	88	46	42	16.7%
Myeka School	183	94	89	34.7%
Phezulu School	97	51	46	18.4%
St Julius School	159	83	76	30.2%
Total of respondents	527	274	253	100%

The number of schools at which research could be effectively conducted considering time and cost factors, was limited. The schools were grouped according to circuits and a stratified random sample method was used, which allowed the researcher to compare the findings of the different subgroups. A stratified random sample method allows the researcher to compare the findings of the different subgroups ((McMillan & Schumacher 1999:162). Random sampling procedure was used to ensure that any of the schools falling within the different categories had the same probability of being selected. Schools belonging to different wards were selected using a "random numbers table" (Babbie, 2001)

3.3.3 Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted to ensure that the instrument was valid and reliable. The process of validation of the instrument involved two learners of the opposite sex. These were used to ensure that the questions of the instrument were understood and that the learners were given an opportunity to seek clarity after the questionnaire was completed. This allowed the researcher to identify those items that require re-wording or re-phrasing.

3.3.4 Data collection

The questionnaire was used for data collection and the respondents were expected to respond to written questions. These elicited reactions, beliefs, and attitudes of the respondent. The researcher chose, or constructed a set of appropriate questions and asked the respondents to answer them (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:4). The respondents were asked questions which they were expected to indicate the extent to which they either agreed or disagreed with the statement, depending upon their choice.

The self- evaluation instrument, that was used to collect the data about how learners perceive of themselves as resilient or no-resilient, was specifically designed to measure this variable. This

instrument was designed at the University of Pretoria as part of a research project aimed at making a comparative study of adolescent perceptions of resilience (ranked either high or low). The research instrument has been statistically proven to have content validity and construct validity. The instrument has statistically demonstrated reliability in terms of internal consistency. The reliability of the instrument had to be established, as it has been translated.

The researcher considered that translating existing resources saves time and gives a better insight to the subsequent user. As a result the challenges experienced by the developer of the instrument in its first or initial application are reduced. If the researcher can locate an existing questionnaire, it can save time and money and may find an instrument with an established reliability and validity (Macmillan & Schumacher, 1993: 239).

The advantages of using the questionnaire are that the researcher obtains large sums of data collected in a relatively short space of time. Such data is easily manipulated and categorised. It is easy and efficient to administer such a questionnaire. It allows the data to be easily quantifiable and amenable to statistical analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2000:101).

The disadvantage of this instrument is that respondents are aware that they are being studied. This could negatively influence these results, because they can under-estimate, over-estimate or exaggerate the circumstances. They may also refuse to share their true feelings and thoughts.

The two questionnaires had to be translated into isiZulu as most learners were first language isiZulu speakers. The numbering of items of the questionnaire was not changed in order to simplify the interpretation on findings. Firstly, learners had to undergo a self-evaluation process in order to establish how resilient they perceived themselves to be. The second aspect of the questionnaire was to rate, in the order of importance, factors within the school environment that they perceived to either

enhance or impede resilience. The data on biographical variables of the testees included the name of the school, the gender and age of the learner and academic level of their parents.

A 5-point Likert-type scale had a series of levels of degree expressing a positive or a negative response to the questionnaire after each question or statement. At least 3-5 items in the instrument measured the identical idea. All items were interspaced to avoid predictability of questions. No numbers were given as learners could mistake them as values that are used for the grading of learners. A true Likert scale is one in which the items includes a value or direction and the respondent indicates agreement or disagreement with the statement (McMillan & Schumacher 1995:244).

The instrument was slightly modified in order to improve its reliability and validity. The instrument was assembled from components from different instrument. It is advisable that the researcher assembles an instrument from components of several instruments (Creswell 2003:157) to save time and costs. All relevant sources of information used to construct this questionnaire to identify the factors that promoted or impeded resilience in school were acknowledged.

3.3.5 Data Analysis

The data collected was integrated and analysed collectively to give a comprehensive understanding of resilience. The open-ended questionnaire and the data collected from the interviews were categorised into theme and then coded. Open-ended directive and non-directive questionnaires were scored through quantitative analysis, coded and a statistical analysis was completed.

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme was used to calculate frequencies. Chi-square and cross tabulations were done during the analysis of data. The results of learners'

perceptions of the resilient factors in the school context were interpreted in relation to the findings obtained from the open-ended questionnaire.

3.4 Ethical considerations

The schools were approached to participate in the research. Permission was sought from the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal in order to conduct this study in these schools. The management of schools and the senior education managers, as well as the circuit manager and district manager were informed to ensure full co-operation. The researcher also requested permission from the learners to participate in the study. None of the learners gave their name, to ensure confidentiality of information. The information from the learners in different schools was accessible to the researcher and research assistants.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter explored the research methods that were used for sampling, data collection and data analysis. The ethical issues that had impact in this study were briefly highlighted. The rationale for the use of a mixed method, which combined open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires, was also explored in this chapter.

No research work can be seen as value-free. It is therefore important for researchers to clearly elaborate upon the assumptions made as a matter of good research practice. This has the potential to reduce bias, which could otherwise be evident in the research process. The analysis of the qualitative and the quantitative data has allowed many forms of data retrieval to be possible.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The present chapter deals with the analysis of the data. Information was collected through questionnaires which were answered by all participants. The participants gave biographic data, answered two close-ended questionnaires and one open-ended questionnaire, where they expressed their views about their school environment.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF DATA

This study has seven aims and one hypothesis to be tested. Reiteration of the aims and hypothesis to be tested precedes the data presented in tabular form. The biographical data of the respondents is reflected in annexure B (p.125). The biographic details included gender, age in years, and number of respondents per school as well as their parent's highest level of education.

4.2.1 The first aim was to find out if black high school learners perceive themselves as resilient or non-resilient.

The results of the above aim show that a majority of learners (94, 7 %) perceive themselves to be resilient. The resilient and non-resilient learners were identified using SPSS statistical analysis. All the items were ranked from 1 to 5. A value of 1 represented response was not true of the respondents and a value of five represented responses that were true of the respondent. (See appendix A –Questionnaire, p. 117).

The average score for the respondents was four. All respondents with an average of four and above were identified as resilient. Respondents with a score of three and below were identified

as non-resilient. Table 4.1 gives a summary of respondent's perception of their resilience or non-resilience.

TABLE 4.1 LEARNERS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR RESILIENCE OR NON-RESILIENCE (N = 527)

	PERCEPTION	
	NON- RESILIENT	RESILIENT
Frequency	28	499
Percentage	5.3	94.7

The responses demonstrated the positive perception learners had of themselves. The resilient learners in this study indicated that learners had commitment in what they did and that they did not give up trying. The resilient learners incorporated a number of resilient factors cited in the literature as discussed in chapter two of this study. Resilient learners in this study had the ability to resolve the problems they encountered. They used different problem-solving techniques and they also learnt from their mistakes and used them as the source of resilience. Resilient learners had a strong sense of control and they held beliefs that they had a bright future, despite all the adversities that they had encountered. Resilient learners had a strong sense of self awareness in their abilities, values and beliefs.

4.2.2 The second aim of this study was to find out whether there was any relationship between learner's perception of resilience and school attendance.

The null hypothesis postulated as follows:

Ho: Learners from different schools would perceive themselves as resilient.

H1: Learners from different schools would not perceive themselves as resilient.

TABLE 4.2 PERCEPTIONS OF RESILIENCE AMONG LEARNERS IN DIFFERENT SCHOOLS

(N = 527)

SCHOOLS	LEARNER'S PERCEPTION		TOTAL
	NON RESILIENT	RESILIENT	
KwaBazothini	07	81	88
Myeka	12	171	183
Phezulu	07	90	97
St Julius	02	157	159
Total	28	499	527
Chi-square = 12.5 df = 12 p > 0.05			

The chi-square test showed that there was no association between school and frequency distribution on perception of resilience in learners. A chi-square of 12.5 at 12df was not significant at 0.05. The conclusion was that there was no difference in the way learners from different schools perceived their resilience.

4.2.3 The third aim was to investigate factors in the school context that learners perceived as critical in promoting their resilience.

The majority of learners (89%) indicated that most resilience factors were important to their life at school. The items were allocated values from the most important item with a value of 5. Items that were of little importance were allocated a value of 1 (see annexure A –Questionnaire, p.119). Resilient factors that were important in the school context were categorised under six subgroups.

TABLE 4.3 RESILIENCE FACTORS IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT (N = 527)

RESILIENCE FACTOR	LEAST IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL	MOST IMPORTANT
1. Provide opportunity for meaningful participation	9%	11%	80%
2. Increase prosocial bonding	11%	8%	81%
3. Set and communicate high expectations	6%	8%	86%
4. Provide a caring and conducive learning environment	11%	10%	78%
5. Teach life-skills	5%	6%	89%
6. Set clear and consistent boundaries	15%	10%	75%

Amongst the resilience factors, the most important factor identified by 89% of the learners was the teaching of life-skills. Life-skills in this study could be taught through positive role-modeling by educators. This empowered learners to deal with conflict and included the teaching of life-skills education in the curriculum. The second most important resilience factor within the school context was *setting consistent boundaries*. In this study, boundaries refer to consistency of policies and rules of the school and the existence of disciplinary measures to regulate interactions and actions which could limit conflict.

The third resilience factor related to an increase of prosocial bonding relations. Prosocial bonding in this study related to the mutual respect educators and learners had for each other and the quality of time educators spent with learners. It also referred to the availability of educators to *resolve learners' problems and guard their confidential information*. The bonding relationship was also nurtured through providing opportunities for learners to learn from each other.

Another important resilience factor was that schools provided opportunities for meaningful participation. Meaningful participation in this study, referred to engagement to extra-mural activities. Meaningful participation included engaging learners to collective understanding of the motto of the school.

The school provided a caring and conducive learning environment. A caring and conducive environment referred to the effort made by all stakeholders to make learners feel welcome in the school, whilst not labeling learners negatively.

Another important resilience factor was that of schools that set and communicated high expectations. This was seen as critical in enhancing the resilience. In this study, acknowledging good work through rewards and incentives and celebrating success, enhanced resilience of learners. High expectations the school had of the learners served as a good motivator for learners to achieve high standards.

4.2.4 The fourth aim of the study was to identify good qualities of the school that promoted resilience.

The factors that were identified by the learners are listed in table 4.4 in descending rank order from the most frequently cited good quality to the least cited. The higher the frequency the more important the factor was in promoting the resilience of learners. The factors that were cited by most learners, as good quality of the school, received the highest ranking.

A large number of learners (222) indicated that the good quality education they received from school was the main good quality of the school. Sound interpersonal relations amongst stakeholders that promoted a caring atmosphere were seen as one of the factors that fell from 75th percentile and above according to the learners in this study.

TABLE 4.4 RANK ORDER OF LEARNERS' RESPONSES ON GOOD QUALITIES OF THE SCHOOL. (N = 527)*

LEARNERS' RESPONSES	FREQUENCY OF	
	RESPONSES	RANK ORDER
We receive good quality education/adequate information/opportunity to learn from each other as students.	222	1
Learners and educators respect each other/ opportunity for learners to voice their concerns.	148	2
Educators give us advice on life/teach us about how to behave ourselves / teach life skills	143	3
Given opportunities to participate in sport activities/cultural activities.	131	4
Educator care for learners.	101	5
The school is clean/emphasizes cleanliness//physical structure is attractive/flushable toilets.	92	6
We wear complete/beautiful school uniform.	81	7
We are given the opportunity to show case our talents/learners are talented.	71	8
Good academic performance/ diligent learners and educators/ good matric results/good reputation of school.	57	9
Availability of resources needed by learners/local community SGB supportive.	46	10.5

TABLE 4.4 RANK ORDER OF LEARNERS' RESPONSES ON GOOD QUALITIES OF THE SCHOOL. (N = 527)***CONTINUES.....**

The (good) rules and regulations in my school are adhered to.	46	10.5
Wide scope of curriculum/unusual choice of subjects.	40	12
Most educators are exemplary/educators get on well with each other.	30	13
The principal has good rules and is helpful to learners/ is concerned about welfare and education of learners.	21	14
Our school is fenced/has security personnel.	12	15
School is accessible: fees are cheap/ the school is central/ close to the main road/pay		
Cheaper taxi fare.	11	17.5
Rewards and incentives are given for good work.	9	17.5
They invite other schools to visit our school/ we have school trips.	6	18
We donate money if one of the learners passes away.	5	19

* Respondents gave more than one response.

The second highest good quality of the school cited was the respect that learners and educators demonstrated to each other. Learners also highlighted the fact they were able to voice their concerns. In one of the schools, the learners indicated that they make use of a suggestion box in the school, so that learners could communicate issues to their educators.

Other good qualities of the school falling above the 75th percentile were life-skills education and sport and cultural activities. Life-skills education was rated as the third most important aspect of a good school. According to the responses given, this item includes the advice learners receive from their educators about how they should behave. Sport and Cultural activities played an important role in the life of the learner in a school in that it gave them the opportunity to show case their talent and participate meaningfully at school. The main sports mentioned were netball and boys and girls soccer. The Cultural activities encompassed isicathamiya (group music mainly by boys without instruments), gospel music, Zulu dance, poetry and amahubo (song praises).

Factors that fall below the 50th percentile were the availability of resources that made learners to facilitate their learning. The level of support that learners received from other relevant stakeholders was also perceived as a resource. Another factor that was identified by about 50% of the sample was rules and regulations that were honoured by the learners and educators. There were also factors falling below the 25th percentile which were cited by a small number of learners. The monetary contributions learners made if one of them pass away, was the least mentioned factor of a good school. Other such factors were the rewards and incentives given for good work, school excursions as

well as accessibility of the school in terms of school fees and location of means of transport.

4.2.5 The fifth aim was to investigate how learners deal with challenges they encounter at school.

The fifth aim of the study was to investigate how learners dealt with challenges they encountered at school. Learners gave a range of responses and these were listed in table 4.5 from the most frequently stated response to the least mentioned response.

TABLE 4.5 RANK ORDER OF WHAT LEARNERS DO WHEN THEY ENCOUNTER PROBLEMS AT SCHOOL. (N = 527)*

LEARNERS' RESPONSES	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	RANK ORDER
I ask the educator/trusted/class teacher to help me.	399	1
I talk to my friend that I trust.	113	2
I discuss my problems with my principal.	70	3
I talk /can talk to my parents/family.	60	4
I solve my problems.	57	5
I talk to someone I know e.g. neighbour.	39	6
I discuss my problems with my classmate/ class perfect.	36	7

* Respondents gave more than one response.

The most frequently contacted person by learners was the educator (399). There were educators who served different functions within the school context, and depending on the nature of the problem, one or more educator would be approached. Some learners preferred to discuss their problems with the class-educator and some referred their problems to the subject-educator. Others preferred to speak to a trustworthy educator. The second most consulted stakeholder within the school context was a trustworthy friend. School prefects were listed by the least number of respondents as people to be consulted when learners were faced with challenges.

There were other stakeholders who assisted learners in various ways, such as the principal of the school, parents and other family members and neighbours. Some respondents (57) indicated that they relied on their own abilities to resolve problem issues that they encountered at school.

4.2.6 The sixth aim was to find out how the school prepares learners to develop resilience.

The schools enhanced the resilience of learners by using a variety of strategies. These strategies are presented in descending order from the most frequently given response to the least mentioned response in table 4.6.

TABLE 4.6 RANK ORDERS ON HOW THE SCHOOL PREPARES LEARNERS TO DEVELOP RESILIENCE. (N = 527)*

LEARNERS RESPONSES	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	RANK ORDER
They teach us life-skills (how we should live our lives and give us time to discuss our problems and solutions).	182	1
They teach us self respect and respect for other people.	165	2
Educators give advice (during assembly) on how we can succeed in life.	160	3
They send/bring us relevant people such as doctors, nurses, priests or, involve our parents in resolving issues.	87	4
They try to help us/ talk to us/ willing to help/support/ provide necessary resources.	84	5
The school is doing nothing to prepare us.	43	6

* Respondents gave more than one response.

Learners indicated that all four schools undertook various strategies to prepare them for life's challenges. The most important thing (182) the schools did was to teach learners life-skills and give them opportunity to discuss problems and solutions to these problems. Linked to the life-skills education were practical advices mainly

given during assembly sessions on how learners could conduct their lives successfully. Educators also guided learners by instilling a sense of respect for self and others regardless of the person's socio-economic status. The school ensured that the holistic development of learners took place by involving various relevant people and institutions from various sectors such as health professionals, spiritual counsellors and family members of learners when necessary.

The school also ensured that resources needed by learners were made available and educators served as a strong source of support for learners. They were accessible and always willing to talk to learners if there was a need to do so. There were 43 learners who indicated that their school was not doing anything to prepare them for the future challenges.

4.2.7 The seventh aim was to find aspects of the school that needed to be improved in order to enhance the quality of life of learners.

The last aim of the study was to identify aspects of the school that could change or improve to enhance the quality of life of each learner in order to promote their resilience. These aspects are presented in descending rank order from the most frequently-stated aspect that needs improvement to the least mentioned aspect.

TABLE 4.7 RANK ORDER OF FACTORS LEARNERS WOULD IMPLEMENT TO IMPROVE THEIR LIFE IN SCHOOL

LEARNERS RESPONSES	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	RANK ORDER
Encourage good behaviour (self respect and respect for others/exemplary to others)	177	1
Life skills education through advice/show videos on Exemplary behaviour/discussions.	129	2
Encourage learners to work hard /offer learners bursaries / award good work at school	115	3
Improve the quality of education by changing the curriculum, or to install computers at school.	108	4
I can stop substance abuse as learners are dying of drugs	106	5
Provide resources for effective learning/offer transport to school /give poor learners money to buy essentials	61	6
Make more strict school regulations /conduct body search to stop learners from bringing weapons to school	34	7
Find things learners could do to keep them busy / offer learners job opportunities	32	8
Improve appearance of school	27	9
Have a security guard at school/ fence the school	19	10
Learners who fall pregnant must not be allowed to come to school/attend a separate school	18	11

* respondents gave more than one response.

Respondents mentioned a number of things they would do to improve the quality of life of learners in the school. The factor that fell above the 75th percentile, mentioned by the majority of learners, was encouraging good behaviour. This was identified by 177 learners as one of the things they would do to improve the quality of life of learners in the school. In this item, the respondents highlighted the importance of having respect for self and other people, as well as leading by example as an important element of good behaviour.

The good behaviour links up with the second highest factor that would improve the life of a learner. This was viewed as educating learners on life-skills through various methods. Engaging learners in discussion could teach life-skills where they could brainstorm solutions to their problems. Life-skills could also be acquired through the media where the desired behaviour could be demonstrated and discussions and debates could be conducted. Some learners indicated that they would ensure that learners had practical skills such as first-aid training.

Other factors falling above the 50th percentile were the respondents (34) recommended body searches for all who enter school premises and some called for stricter school regulations. Data analysis also indicated that learners needed to be fruitfully engaged in various activities, varying from reading English newspapers to accessing employment opportunities.

Factors falling below the 25th percentile cited by a lesser number of learners were the security guard and cleanliness of the school. According to 19 respondents, security guards could assist in making the life of learners much better as it will make them feel

safe and prevent non-scholars to enter the school premises. Learners highlighted the need to improve the appearance of the school in order to ensure good quality of life. The item mentioned by the least number of learners (18) was that pregnant learners should not be allowed to attend school with non-pregnant learners. A few went to the extent of indicating that there should be separate schools for girls and boys.

4.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter was concerned with the presentation and analysis of data. The results of the characteristics of the sample presented showed that all learners were in the age category of adolescence. The results were presented according to the aims of the study as cited in this chapter. The learners had a lot of positive things to say about their school but there are aspects of the school that can be improved to enhance their resilience.

The interpretation of findings and the recommendations made based on the findings of this study will be discussed in chapter five.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The results of this study are presented in this chapter. The aims of the study are reiterated in order to guide the presentation and interpretation of these results. This chapter seeks to present an interpretation and discussion of these research findings.

5.2 Findings of the study

The findings will be reported in the same sequence as they appear in the aims of the study.

5.2.1. The first aim is to find out if black high school learners perceive themselves to be resilient or non-resilient.

A majority of learners (94, 7%) perceive themselves to be resilient. There is a small percentage (5, 3%) of learners who perceive themselves as non-resilient. This might be an indication of the underlying struggle learners are dealing with at an individual level. The demographic information of the learners presented in this study reflects that the learners come from poor families and are born by illiterate parents. These findings are similar to those of Werner (1998) who described children as being at risk if born and reared in chronic poverty.

Such children are exposed to a higher than average rate of premature and prenatal stress if reared by mothers with little formal education. In this study, the participants are from historically disadvantaged communities in KwaZulu Natal. Such communities are households with a high rate of poverty. Hunter and May (2001)

found that 57% of households within the Ethekeini region are poor. The area in which the present study was undertaken is part of this region. Poverty being such a predisposing factor, one could expect a majority of learners to therefore have a *negative perception of their resilience*.

The findings of the current study reveal that the internal such as ability to elicit positive response from others and external factors such as supportive school environment that promote resilience of learners play a critical role in determining the survival of learners when faced with difficult socio-economic challenges. The availability of external support structures in the school context and the ability of the learners to further solicit support is an important characteristic of learners' resilience in this study. The school serves as a strong support base for learners to develop social competence viewed by learners as significant element of a resilient person. Miller (1999) identified social competence, that is, the ability to elicit a positive response from others, as important in establishing positive relationships with both adults and peers as the key factor within the schools context.

The findings of the current study indicate that resilient learners receive high levels of support from educators and friends. Such learners are more likely to feel encouraged and prepared to attend school. Learners with a good support structure enjoy coming to school and becoming involved in high school activities. There is likelihood that resilient learners would overcome the negative impact of low socio-economic status and high drop out rate associated with chronic poverty. The findings in this study support conclusions drawn by Gonzalez and Padilla (1997) that a supportive school context is critical in enhancing resilience of learners. The good relations learners

have with their peers and other significant adults promote a positive self-regard and strengthen the learners' belief in their own abilities (Joseph, 2004).

The finding of this study also reveal that resilient learners tend be more assertive and independent. These learners have well-developed personality attributes which allow for clear communication channels in order to express their needs and concerns. These findings are in line with those of Masten (1997) whereby resilient students are defined as not only showing strong personality attributes that make them successful, but also are able to take advantage of socio-emotional support beyond their immediate family. The school in this study and that of Masten (1997), is the source of socio-emotional support beyond the immediate family.

Resilient learners in this study have internal protective factors, such as a belief in their ability to succeed in the tasks they set for themselves. Innate protective elements of resilience such as goal orientation and temperament identified by Thereon (2004) are key factors in enhancing resilience. The opposite is true with non-resilient learners, that is, the non-resilient learners have poor self regard and a lack of internal belief in their ability to achieve their set goals

The findings of the current study also reveal that the elements that enhance resilience of learners in this study include positive personality, good human relations and a warm supportive environment. These findings support those of Baldwin *et. al.*, (1990) who identified three precursors of resilience, namely family support, positive personality disposition and the use of available external support system. The resilient learners integrate personality disposition, family support and the school environment

to serve as protective factors. In the current study, the researcher focused mainly on the school context, but made reference to the role of the family and to personality factors that promote resilience in learners.

5.2.2 The second aim of this study is to find out whether there is any relationship between learners perception of resilience and the school attended.

The hypothesis that learners from different schools would perceive resilience differently is rejected. The statistical analysis shows that there was no association between the school attended and the perception of resilience in learners. Learners in the present study are from urban and rural schools, yet there was no significant difference in their perception of resilience. The disparities between rural and urban communities within the same region are still prevalent. Schools in rural communities in the present study were found to lack certain necessary resources, such as well constructed roads, electricity, libraries and running water.

School effectiveness theory further identified infrastructure, facilities and resources as being the crucial factor affecting the culture of learning and teaching in the targeted schools (Myeza, 2003: 128). School effectiveness is enhanced if resources, facilities and infrastructure are provided. The assumption one could make is that more learners from urban areas, where infrastructure is well developed, could perceive themselves as resilient when compared to learners from the rural communities. However, the result of the current study does not support existing theory on school effectiveness that advocates resources as one of the key elements of effective schools.

The success of the school does not lie solely on wealth and high level of resources because most schools succeed despite limited resources (Harber, 2001:67). The school can promote the ability to overcome adversities despite limited resources by making use of the assets at the disposal of the learner, irrespective of whether the learner is from an urban or rural community. The current study therefore rejects the rural-urban dichotomy.

5.2.3 The third aim is to investigate factors in the school context that learners perceive as critical in promoting their resilience.

The findings of the present study confirm the importance of the elements of the Resilience Wheel (Henderson & Milstein, 1996) in promoting resilience in the school context. The six main elements investigated within the school context (see table 4.3) are listed according to their order of importance. The most important resilience factors were found to be teaching learners' life-skills, setting and communicating high expectations, increasing prosocial bonding, providing opportunity for meaningful participation providing a caring and conducive learning environment and for setting clear and consistent boundaries. The resilience wheel of Henderson and Milstein (1996:21) was used as a framework to understand these factors within the school context that promote this ideal of resilience.

The finding of the current study further reveals that learners consider life-skills education as the most important factor in promoting resilience at school. Life-skills education promotes resilience because it equips learners with age appropriate skills to negotiate adverse situations with which they are faced. The current study supports

existing theory on the importance of acquiring life-skills. Life-skills education is important in that it teaches learners communication skills, problem solving, relaxation techniques, conflict management and further that it discourages inappropriate behaviour.

Learners acquire life-skills through the positive role-models present at school. The findings of the current study support existing research on the importance of a positive environment that models good behaviour (Erickson, 1980:9; Bernard, 2004:13). These researchers further emphasise the importance of unconditional support in the formation of a positive self identity. Learners do not acquire skills in a vacuum, but through interactions with significant others in their lives.

Life-skills acquired within the school environment serve as protective factors which work to counterbalance adverse circumstances in the life of the learners. Protective factors help learners not only withstand, but cope successfully and develop age appropriate ways to turn adversity into positive development (Niesel & Griebel, 2005:5). The findings of this study also reveal that learners consider setting and communication of high expectation as important aspects of resilience. The school sets and communicates high expectations by providing learners with various opportunities where they can display their potential. High expectations include making sure that young people know we believe they can be successful as well as providing resources for them to do so (Thomsen, 2002:4). The educators in schools that promote resilience create a positive environment in which learners can explore their capabilities in order to develop greater confidence in their abilities.

Learners who have a positive image of themselves gain more control of their own situation and also are able to deal with life's challenges more effectively (Henderson & Milstein, 1996). Under-resourced schools limit the scope and opportunities for learners to achieve personal success by not providing enough resources. When the expectations the school have of the learner are high, yet the resources are inadequate, the learner can begin to internalise the "I can't attitude" (Thomsen, 2002:6).

The findings of the present study reveal learners appreciate a school that communicates and sets high expectations by enforcing discipline and encouraging a high level of respect between learners and educators. These findings support existing theory on resilience promoting schools as indicated by Henderson and Milstein (1996) and also Thomsen (2002). The more often that the environment provides a caring and supportive environment, sets and communicates a high level of expectation and provides opportunities for meaningful participation, the better able students are to develop resilience. Learners who feel capable develop an internal locus of control because they feel responsible and can relate their success to their actions. Once they understand their strengths, they use them to build new ones.

The findings of the present study also indicate that setting and communicating consistent boundaries in the manner in which schools policies and rules are adhered to by educators and learners is highly valued by learners. This concurs with the findings of Henderson and Milstein (1996) and Thomsen (2004:4) in their interpretation of the elements of the resilience wheel with respect to the setting of clear boundaries and expectations. They indicate that policies and values that

govern the behavior of youth need to be fair and consistent and developed together with input from youth.

Learners in the current study place a high value on the effort the school makes to consult them in school activities. The activities, in which the learners participate, include reviewing the motto of the school, the drawing up of school policies and regulations, and engaging in sports and extra curricular activities.

Meaningful participation of learners is an important element of resilience (Baldwin et. al., 1990; Garnezy, 1991; Henderson & Milstein, 1996; Thomsen, 2002). Further evidence of the level of support individual learners requires may be found in Killian (2004). Killian (2004) further states that the development of the learner starts at an individual level by supporting teaching and strengthening the relevant competencies necessary to cope with strain, such as problem solving, dealing constructively with conflict, co-operative learning, participation and relaxation methods.

The findings of the current study reveal that learners tend to value a school that makes them feel welcome and also appreciated. They want to feel valued and respected and not labeled negatively. They enjoy study at a school that appreciates their efforts and celebrates the success they have achieved. Caring and supportive environments serve as a buffer to adverse circumstances that learners may find themselves in. This statement is in line with existing current researchers (Bernard, 2004; Thomsen, 2002: 19). These researchers indicate that if a child is born into less than ideal circumstance, a caring environment may override the child's negative surroundings.

The schools have to be a safe haven for learners as the level of crime and the effects of HIV and AIDS continue to undermine, challenge and disrupt the home environment. Bernard (1993:44) identified three characteristics of families, school and communities that protect children growing up in adversity. These characteristics are a caring and supportive environment, positive expectations and opportunities for participation. The current study confirms the importance of all these protective elements of resilience. When the society with its different sub-systems anticipates the needs of each child, we create a learning environment that protects the child and supports the developmental needs of each child (Christiansen et. al., 1997:87).

The current study is in line with Wolins and Wolins (1993) theory of their seven resiliencies, which identified relationships as one of the key factors in promoting resilience. When relationships are functional and fulfilling, they can serve as a source of stability. The supporting school climate that encourages caring is an important asset according to the Asset approach (Search Institute 1997, Thomsen 2002:35).

Findings of the current study regarding a caring and a supportive school context support the findings of Bernard (1991) which states that if we want to build resilient learners we have to focus on the three most important environments in which a child lives, plays and works, namely, the home, the school and the community. Bernard (1991) states, that in these environments, three very important activities ought to be occurring. These are the provision of a caring and supportive environment, high expectations for each individual and the support to achieve them as well as an opportunity for learners to contribute toward these in meaningful ways.

These three environments have not been explored in detail in this study as the main focus was on the school context. The resilience process involves the interplay between internal and external protective factors in the different environments in order to balance the stressor and facilitate return to normalcy or what Kumpfer (1999) calls 'homeostasis'.

5.2.4 The fourth aim of the study is to identify good qualities of the school that promote resilience.

Learners identified a number of aspects of the school they would improve to enhance the quality of life of learners. The findings of the study reveal that learners consider the following factors as important good qualities of a resiliency promoting school. The six elements of a good school that emerged during analysis of the responses of learners include provision of resources, opportunity to engage in extra-curricular activities, a supportive school environment, a well organised school environment; an appealing physical environment, and an informative and high quality education. The categories that emerged in the current study are somehow similar and confirm the theory of Henderson and Milstein (1996:21) on resilience promoting schools.

These factors that have been identified as promoting resilience in the present study are similar to the findings of Smith-Read (2000), which suggested four areas within the school context that can either contribute to academic failure or promote resilience in schools. These areas were the teacher, the curriculum, instruction and the organization and culture of the school. The learners in the present study put these factors as high priority. Learners in this study appreciate an education system

that has learner-centered programmes and a curriculum that is adjusted to suit their needs.

Learners in the present study define a good school as one in which resources are made available to meet their learning needs. Such resources in some schools (mainly Myeka) include computers that are accessible to learners for their education, adequate classrooms, enough furniture, sports ground and facilities. The limited resources within the schools in the study have not deterred learners from acknowledging their good qualities.

Resources play an important role in promoting the acquisition of skills, because they are the means by which learners demonstrate capacity. The availability of resources that fulfills the needs of the learners is critical in promoting resiliency. The success of the school does not just depend on how well the school is resourced, as most schools succeed despite limited resources (Harber, 2001).

The findings of the current study indicate that learners value the opportunity they receive to engage in extra-curricular activities. The involvement of learners in extra-curricular activities gives them the opportunity to participate more meaningfully and create a forum where they can showcase their talents. Learners in this study appreciate the opportunity they get to participate in cultural activities (such as Zulu dance, song, praise, poetry, gospel music etcetera). They enjoy various sports activities, such as, girls/boys soccer and netball.

The competitive extra mural activities in this study encourage mastery and competence. Should the learners win, the school gains an improved rating. According to Brooks and Goldstein (2001) success in challenging activities promotes well-being and the self-worth of the adolescent and is linked to the resilience of adolescents. Brooks and Goldstein (2001:13) emphasised the importance of "islands of competence". These they defined as strengths children possess that need to be promoted to improve their self-esteem and to communicate their strengths, because true self-worth, hope and resilience are based on success in important areas of their lives.

The findings of the present study also reveal that caring educators who give and receive respect from learners are an asset in the school context. The principal who is concerned about the welfare of learners and is accessible to learners is viewed as an important quality of a good school. The school that offers financial aid in the form of bursaries as an expression of care and support for learners, who are capable but cannot afford to pay for their education, is seen as one of the key elements of a good school. The school reduces negative outcomes such as drop out, behavioral problems, low self-esteem associated with low socio-economic status, when learners feel respected and supported. According to Killian (2001) the environment can foster protective processes by reducing negative outcomes and altering the risk the child is exposed to, or by reducing negative chain reactions following risk exposure. A caring and a supportive school send a positive message to learners that they are worthy people.

A caring, accepting and supportive environment has been cited in literature as one of the most important factors in promoting resilience (Joseph, 1994; Bernard, 2004; Thomsen, 2001; Smith & Werner, 1992; Werner, 1998). The current study confirms the importance of caring and supporting environment in promoting resilience. Significant adults can encourage and support children by communicating belief in their worth and develop their natural aptitude and interest (Joseph, 1994:34). Relationships, which provide secure attachment and trust, foster resilience. In such relationships, learners need a stable, positive emotional relationship with at least one key person such as a “parent” who gives attention to the needs of the child and responds adequately (Niesel & Griebel, 2005:5). Such a “parent” need not be the biological parent.

These researchers also stressed the importance of positive relationships with peers as the means of showing and receiving support when faced with adversity. The active engagement of family members in school activities increases the success of an at risk child in developing resilience and personal strength (Christiansen, *et al.*, 1997:80).

A caring, accepting and supporting environment has been cited in literature as one of the most important factors in promoting resilience (Joseph, 1994; Bernard, 2004; Thomsen, 2001; Smith & Werner, 1982). Significant adults encourage and support children by communicating a belief in the worth of children and develop their natural aptitude and interest, (Joseph, 1994:34). The caring and supportive environment highlighted in the current study supports the theory of Thomsen (2002) on character education and the building of resilience. Building resiliency is a process during

which adults interact with children to nurture their innate needs for resiliency (Thomsen, 2002:45).

The main emphasis in Thomsen (2002), and also in this study, is the manner in which educators interact with learners in order to build character. Such interaction is respectful and it models and teaches good behaviour.

Every child needs all the elements and stakeholders involved in an integrated ecosystem for support to foster resilient (Christiansen, *et al.*, 1997:87). It is the resources in the social system that have been shown to be the decisive factor in promoting learning and the development of resilient attitudes and behaviour, that also foster long term personal development and growth (Niesel & Griebel, 2005:6).

The findings of the current study also indicate that the manner in which the school is organised is a critical element of a quality school. The school environments that promote resiliency are well organised and they set clear boundaries to create a sense of safety and order. Potterton and Christie (1998) identified certain features of resilience in some dynamic schools in Eastern Cape. One such feature is when the organisation creates consistency in the starting time which teaches learners to observe teaching time/contact time (Potterton & Christie, 1998:28).

Learners highlighted organisational features such as educators not missing their classes, observing correct starting time, tight security and rules and regulations as important features of a good a quality school. A good school is viewed as safe and has effective security, for example, a person manning the gate, the school is fenced,

and learners do not leave the school premises during breaks. In a good school, learners indicated that rules and regulations are adhered to by both educators and learners. In such good schools, educators do not miss their classes and all school members observe allotted periods.

Schools in the present study are well organised and they set clear boundaries to create a sense of safety and order in the life of learners. When rules are adhered to by all, this builds character and creates consistency in the minds of learners. This important aspect is linked to Thomsen's (2002:16) findings. Character education is built when adults model the behavior they expect learners to imitate and specific consequences follow when students overstep the boundaries collaboratively agreed upon. When educators set and communicate high expectations such as modeling appropriate behaviours by following and enforcing rules and regulations consistently, learners can meet the level of expectations (Thomsen, 2002; Henderson & Milstein, 1997). Resilience places great emphasis on setting and communicating high expectations and providing clear, consistent boundaries on behaviour.

The school as a social network can also serve as a protective factor if positive experiences within educational institutions are based on clear rules and structure. Over and above that, performance expectations should be high, but adequate and constructive feedback is consistently provided in order to promote resilience (Niesel & Griebel, 2005:5). Educational settings and community outside the family play a very important role in the development of resilient attitudes and behaviours (Niesel & Griebel, 2005:6).

Another important quality of a good school that emerged in the current study is that learners place high value in the manner on which the physical environment is nurtured. The nurturing of the physical environment includes a clean school yard, a well maintained physical structure and a beautiful garden. A clean environment is important for learners as it creates a sense of worth, especially among learners from poor homes.

The school has a unique opportunity to provide an environment conducive to resilience in that it overcomes feelings of deprivation which could reduce the impact of other predisposing factors. This provision of a positive learning environment is emphasized by Thomsen (2002:19) in that if a child is born into less than ideal circumstances, a caring adult or positive experiences in another environment may override the child's own negative surroundings.

A well maintained physical school environment fosters love for school because it strengthens the association of the school with order and cleanliness. What learners lack in their everyday environment can be compensated at school. A positive learning environment boosts self-esteem (Bernard, 2004; Joseph, 2004).

5.2.5 The fifth aim of the study is to investigate how learners deal with challenges they encounter at school.

The finding of the present study reveals that to a large extent learners use external rather than internal sources to resolve their problems. The person most consulted is the educator, followed by a trustworthy friend. A small number (56) of learners indicated that they solve their problems themselves. Stakeholders outside the

school such as parents and persons known to learners, who are not necessarily members of the family, are important in resolving problems that learners deal with. Learners separated the role of educators from that of the principal in resolving the problems they encountered at school.

The findings of the current study support existing theory relating to the importance of relationships within the school context. Mentors in the school context, who take a special interest in children by developing a nurturing relationship, can enhance resilience (Christiansen *et al.*, 1997:88). Resilience is not a stable, innate personality characteristic, but rather a competence achieved in an interactional process of a child in his / her developmental context and may be subject to changes depending on circumstances and phases of development, (Niesel & Greibel 2005:5).

Research conducted on resilience has identified certain protective factors that work as a counter balance, helping children not only to withstand, but also to cope successfully and develop further in an age-appropriate way, thus turning biographical disruptions into positive development (Rutter, 2000). The presence of a significant adult in the life of learners has been emphasised as an extremely important factor in promoting resilience in children (Bernard, 1994; Joseph, 2004; Thomsen, 2002). According to Thomsen (2002:14), during the growing years, resilient learners had at least one very positive relationship with a significant adult who positively influenced their self-concept and process of decision-making. Learners may also use some available external and internal assets.

The current study suggests that an external asset such as supportive networks in the form of educators, a principal or persons known to learners such as neighbours, play a critical role in assisting learners to deal with the challenges they encounter at school. The findings regarding external and internal assets as outlined in Thomsen (2002:35), on the external assets as a form of support. Support as one type of asset can come from family, some other adult relationship, a caring neighborhood, a caring school climate and also parental involvement in schooling.

The different schools in the current study provide a caring and encouraging environment. This ties in with Wolins and Wolins (1993), study of seven resilient behaviours. One of these resilience behaviours includes relationships which relate to fulfilling ties with others that provide stability, nurturing and love. Positive relationships between learners and educators also promote resilience, but learners should be taught gradually to think and make their own independent decisions. Henderson and Milstein (1997), in their Resilience Wheel, also emphasise the importance of problem-solving, assertiveness refusal skills, healthy conflict resolution and healthy stress management. These are important skills that learners need to acquire, although they are not mentioned explicitly in this research. Learners in this research show that they are flexible in the manner in which they deal with problems. The most appropriate person, including themselves, is involved in dealing with the challenges encountered. This aspect is critical in problem-solving as it allows the learners to generate many solutions to one problem. This study supports Joseph (1994:31), who states that flexible thinking involves the ability to see a situation from different perspectives and generate different solutions for problems. A supportive

school environment, represented mainly by a trustworthy educator, counterbalances the negative factors and reinforces the learners' ability to withstand life's challenges.

5.2. The sixth aim is to find out how the school prepares learners to develop resilience.

The findings of this study reveal that the school does prepare learners for life's challenges through teaching them life-skills. The life-skills are taught through advice given during assembly and in everyday interaction between educators and learners. Educators serve as positive role-models and show respect to learners. Educators also give advice on how to live a better life. Life-skills can be further developed through bringing in relevant role-models such as doctors, nurses, priests and parents who can provide advice to learners. Learners are encouraged to develop resilience by being given the opportunity to talk to educators and also to brainstorm in order to receive many various solutions to their problems.

Learners may also be provided with the necessary resources to achieve their goals. The quality of advice and support in a non-judgmental environment promotes resilience amongst learners (Christiansen *et al.*, 1997; Joseph, 2004; 31). The findings of this study are in line with the existing environmental theories on resilience. Such environments promote positive outcomes by teaching life-skills despite adversity (Bernard, 2004; Joseph, 1994; Thomsen, 2002). Developing the necessary coping skills in learners enhances self-efficacy and further fosters a strong belief in oneself. Positive self-esteem is enhanced when learners are able to resolve their own problems and use different coping strategies.

The findings of the current study also indicate that schooling involves various relevant people such as health professional, spiritual counsellors and family members to resolve problems of learners. The integration of internal and external assets is supported by existing research on the interplay of social systems. Kumphers (1999:182) resilience framework gives a good background concerning the processes involved in the interplay between internal and external factors that either promote or impede resilience. This idea is similar to transitional theory which emphasises that transition competence is a characteristic not of the individual child alone, but is a function of communication and interaction of all participants, that is, the competence of social system (Niesel & Griebel, 2005).

The findings of the present study confirmed the importance of providing resources for the learners to achieve their goals. These findings support existing theory on the importance of resources as a means to foster resilience (Joseph, 2004; Killian, 2004; Thomsen, 2002). Resilience in children can be fostered by creating an environment that would ensure access to assets at the disposal of the child. This would strengthen the child to deal with related future demands with competence, especially during his/her critical life events. This can be achieved by fostering the four protective processes which are: reducing negative outcomes by altering the risk or the child's exposure to the risk; reducing negative chain reaction following risk exposure; establishing and maintaining self-esteem and self-efficacy; and opening up opportunities for youngsters to participate in meaningful activities (Killian, 2004). Such environments strengthen the learners' ability to deal with challenges and future demands competently. The school can create a platform for learners to acquire new and challenging skills that would allow them to reach new levels of competence.

The findings of the current study further confirm that educators serve as a strong source of support for learners. Educators provide love of a nurturing adult, who becomes an important role-model for the child and helps the child to develop a basic sense of trust (Joseph 1994:42). Having a supportive environment in which life-skills are taught, is viewed as part of a resilience promoting school in the Henderson and Milstein (1996) study, as well as in this study. By taking the context from which the learners originate, this could yield a better understanding of resilience. An important feature of a resilience promoting school in the Eastern Cape, according to Potterton and Christie (1998:21), is a concern for all in the school. In such schools personalised relationships between learners and educators are encouraged.

A major concern raised by learners in the current study suggested that the school is doing nothing to prepare them for life's challenges. This raises concerns on the implications of this for the life of learners. A follow-up study would be necessary to discern how learners feel about how the school could prepare them for the future. A learner without life-skills presents as one who would exhibit inappropriate behaviours and would rarely practice assertiveness refusal skills, healthy conflict resolution, good decision making and problem solving or healthy stress management (Henderson & Milstein, 1996; Thomsen, 2002).

5.2.7 The seventh aim is to find aspects of the school that needs to be improved in order to enhance the quality of life of learners.

The finding that emerged from the majority of learners in this study is that, they would improve the behaviour of learners. Improving the behaviour would begin by

encouraging positive interaction amongst learners and between learners and educators. This interaction includes exemplary educators who will model and encourage good behaviour as well as teach life-skills to promote resilience in learners. Such educators would not only serve as a source of reference for learners to learn acceptable behaviour, but will also teach life-skills through the advice they give. Learners indicated that they would use different strategies to enhance the acquisition of life-skills.

Relationships provide a secure attachment and trust, foster resilience. Learners need a stable emotional positive relationship with at least one key person such as a "parent" who gives attention to the learner's needs and responds adequately. "Parents" need not be biological parents (Niesel & Griebel, 2005:5). Niesel & Griebel (2005) also stress the importance of positive relationships with peers as a means of showing and receiving support when faced with adversities. The findings of the current study support the findings of Werner (1998) research, that caring adults are the single most important way of making a difference for 'at risk' students.

According to the present study, educators could improve the quality of education and introduce more variety in the curriculum. They could engage more in co-operative peer-to- peer interaction. Learners also indicated that they would appreciate greater incentives for good work. Most of the elements identified as key ones to improve the quality of life of learners, are similar to those in the existing literature on character or resilience-promoting schools (Christiansen *et al.*, 1997; Werner, 1998).

The findings of the current study indicate that learners would improve the standard quality of education and introduce more variety in the curriculum. Learners suggested that the curriculum could be adjusted to suite the needs of the learners by offering access to programmes, such as computer studies and consumer studies. Christiansen *et al.*, (1997) and Niesel and Griebel (2005) support the notion of an education system that provides learner-centred infrastructure and programmes. Learners in the present study would appreciate the good quality education offered by professional educators. The learning environment should be conducive to teaching and learning in order to ensure that purposeful learning takes place.

The learners in the current study suggested that they would further introduce strict school regulations and promote body searches. These measures could discourage learners from carrying weapons to school and also minimise the incidents of learners who get drunk at school. These measures would be part of the school policy. The findings of the current study strongly reveal that learners perceive the current school regulations as not setting clear boundaries. Learners also indicated that the school needs to enhance security measures, for example, by having a security guard manning the gate, by erecting a fence around the school and installing lockable gates. Authority and discipline according to Schauderville *et al* (1998) needs to be consistently applied, once this is an aspect highlighted in this present study.

Findings of the current study reveal that learners could be encouraged to work harder. The best ways to motivate learners to work hard include offering incentives such as bursaries and to creating many platforms to acknowledge good work. Learners in the current study emphasized the importance of positive reinforcement in

the form of bursaries for good work. Positive reinforcement is one characteristic of effective schooling outlined in the Potterton and Christie (1998:4) findings on effective schools.

Learners in the present study also indicated that they would like to participate in meaningful activities that would keep them busy. Such activities that could enhance their quality of life include reading English language newspapers and getting job opportunities. Meaningful participation in this study is seen as an important element of a resilience-promoting school according to Henderson and Milstein (1996) and Thomsen (2002).

Learners indicated that they would ensure full participation of learners in drawing up school policy. The involvement of learners in the formulation of school policies is seen as the key to the implementation of school regulations. This is supported by Potterton's & Christie (1998) research on effective schools whereby schools promote partnership with learners who know their rights and responsibilities.

One aspect identified by a few learners which has not featured in the research on resilience promoting schools, is that of pregnant learners. Learners have suggested that pregnant learners should not be allowed to attend mainstream school, but should rather be accommodated in a separate school. The reasons for the exclusion of pregnant learners were not explored in this study. A high rates of pregnancy in this study seems to be associated with poor discipline and lack of self-control in learners.

5.3 Implications of the present study

In light of the above discussion, the following practical strategies for promoting resilience are recommended:

- Regular staff meetings are required to identify the needs of such at risk children, and to take positive steps to help learners cope successfully with the challenges that they are facing.
- Active engagement of family members in school activities could increase the success of at risk learners in developing resilience and personal strength. Development of the school social calendar, where families interact with educators in a relaxed atmosphere can strengthen the relationship between home and school. The school support team can also let parents know that the school is concerned about their welfare and that they are working together to help learners.
- The school needs to engage in special assemblies where schools can invite outside agents to re-enforce the life-skills programme. It is necessary to link the curriculum with events and people in the community so as to relate with real life situations.
- Provide an opportunity for one-on-one learner-educator interaction and tutoring after school activity/ homework. Educators must continue to give positive feedback to learners. This could increase their level of competence and boost their self-esteem.
- Schools can assist learners in developing special interests or hobbies using a variety of strategies, such as extra-curricular activities that cater for the needs of each learner. The celebration of milestones in the mastery of academic, spiritual, cultural and artistic areas could help to foster holistic development.

When learners experience success it can create a sense of mastery in their lives.

- There is a need to put risk management plans into place to avoid situations that learners do not need to face. Schools need to build social competence as well as academic skills, such as refusal skills, coping skills, friendship skills negotiation and mediation skills. There is a need to teach positive self-talk to enhance a positive self-regard and to encourage peer group interaction, where learners can talk about their problems. Small advisory groups at all levels of development could be formed.
- There is also a need to foster a high expectations environment in which learners strive and make resources available in order to meet these expectations. Learners could be taught methods to access general school and community resources to support their needs. Educators should familiarise themselves with local resources and prominent community leaders who make things happen in their school community.

5.4 Limitations

The limitations of the current study presented in this section should serve as a way to improve the research process in the future.

- The research participants were not representative of all demographic groups within South Africa. This study was composed mainly of isiZulu speaking learners from historically-disadvantaged communities within the Ethekewini region. The results could not be generalized to all racial group learners in South Africa.

- The time allocated for the research was the last period before the final break. This made learners impatient to finish the questionnaire. The researcher and the research assistants had to check all the questionnaires but despite all this effort, some learners still did not fill in all the details as requested. Incomplete questionnaires were discarded during data analysis.
- The validity of the instruments could not be confirmed as the items of the research instrument had to be translated into IsiZulu and English. Translating from one language to another was a challenge as the meaning of the words is sometimes lost or the understanding of the same concept when read in another language might be differently understood. Back translation did not serve to establish validity conclusively.
- The sample size was not large enough for a more comprehensive data analysis. As a result the implications of the findings of being a resilient or non-resilient learner could not be generalised with a measure of confidence.
- The questionnaire had open and close-ended questions. The close-ended questions were not allocated enough time as these were at the end of the questionnaire.
- Simple data analysis methods were used, such as frequencies and Chi-square calculations. The use of various data analysis methods could have yielded more comprehensive understanding of the findings.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the current study the following recommendations are made:

- 5.5.1 There is a need to increase the number of participants to ensure that the results can be generalised to the enter population of South African high

school learners. The research instrument should be structured to allow for better manipulation of data and for a more integrated interpretation of the data.

5.5.2 A combination of positive and negative items needs to be included in the scale in order to establish reliability in the way learners have answered some questions.

5.5.3 Future study should accommodate more demographic groups within South Africa in order to establish the applicability of these findings.

5.5.4 Powerful statistical analysis could improve the quality of research as it will yield authentic data.

5.5.5 The use of in-depth interviews to clarify meanings learners attach to critical concepts such as life-skills could be considered in any future study.

5.6 Conclusion

The conclusion one can draw from this study is that the needs of the learners in the school environment can be addressed by developing both the external and internal assets of the learner. The types of external assets that may be developed are support within the family, at school and in the larger community. Empowering learners with different roles within society can play a big role in the holistic development of learners. Clear boundaries within the home and increased

community and school expectations would high enhance resilience. Resilience may be promoted by engaging youth in meaningful creative activities and programmes.

The internal assets that can be encouraged are educational commitment to achieve, engaging meaningfully in the learning process, encouraging learners to do homework and reading for pleasure. It is considered essential to foster certain values, such as a caring attitude, integrity, restraint, honesty and other values, so that learners can face life's challenges successfully. Life-skill education should focus on developing social competences such as planning and decision making, interpersonal competence, cultural competence, resistance skills and peaceful conflict resolution. Learners need to have a positive identity in order to build up self-esteem and be able to exercise improved self-control, as well as a sense of purpose.

The majority of learners perceive themselves as resilient despite all the difficulties that they face in their environment. They also affirmed all the resilience-promoting factors viewed as important to their lives at school. The main characteristic of a good school highlighted by black South African adolescents in this study was the appreciation of a caring and supportive environment where respect for self and others prevails. Good schools in this study provided an opportunity to engage in a variety of extra-curricular activities. They also provided resources needed by the learner. The adolescents in this study appreciated a well organized school where rules and regulations were consistently followed. The physical environment should also be conducive to sound teaching and learning. Educators who offer relevant learning material, information and empower learners to deal with life's challenges are viewed as an asset according to the findings of this study.

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APPENDIX: A

PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CONTEXT OF ADOLESCENT LEARNERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS- KWAZULU-NATAL.

SECONDARY SCHOOL

ENGLISH & ISIZULU

Dear Learner

Please complete the following checklist, which will help you to find out more about yourself and learning environment.

Some of the sentences describe you better than others do and some describe your learning environment better than others.

Read each sentence carefully. Indicate how much you agree, by putting a cross in the box that best describes you. In questionnaire number three you are expected to briefly express your opinion.

There are no right or wrong answers. Please give a true and honest picture of yourself. It is very important.

Your answers will be kept secret. Remember to answer every statement and please mark only one box for every sentence.

Please fill in the biographical data below. It is for my own use, **nobody in your school will have access to your answers.**

Thank you very much for your help.

Nontobeko Buthelezi

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA/ PERSONAL PARTICULARS

Kindly fill in the blank or cross in the appropriate category.

- 1. *Name of the school*_____
- 2. *Province:*.....
- 3. *Circuit:*.....
- 4. *Gender:*..... *Male/Female*
- 5. *Age in years:* *14 to 15; 16 to 17; 18 to 19; 20 and above*
- 6. *What is your family’s level of education?*
Mother.....
Father.....

Questionnaire 1

Sentence		Very true of me	Often true of me	About half true of me	A Little true of me	Not at all true of me
Umusho		Kuyiqiniso eliphelele ngami	Kuyiqiniso isikhathi isingi ngami	Akulona iqiniso eliphelele ngami	Kuncane okuliqiniso ngamii	Akulona iqiniso ngami
1	My family accepts me the way I am Umndeni wami uyangamukela ngendlela engiyiyona					
2	I work hard at school Ngiyazimisela isikoleni					
3	When I have a problem, I try to solve it Ngiyazama ukuzixazulula izinkinga					
4	I like to learn about new things Ngiyathanda ukwazi ngezinto ezintsha					
5	I always look at different ways to solve a problem Ngiyaye ngibheke izindlela ezintsha zokuxazilula izinkinga					
6	When I believe that I am right I am not afraid to show it Angikwesabi ukutshengisa ukuthi ngiyazi					
7	I am able to see when someone is happy Ngiyakwazi ukubona umuntu mayejabulile					
8	My friends know they can trust me Abangane bami bayazi ukuthi					
9	I like to be in control of things					
10	I take part actively in class Ngiyahlanganyela ngokuzimisela ekilasini					
11	I like helping other children at school Ngiyathanda ukusiza abanye abafundi esikoleni					
12	I get along with other children Ngiyazwana nezinye izingane					
13	I learn from my mistakes Ngiyafunda ngamaphutha ami					
14	If I try hard I know I will succeed Uma ngizimisele ngiyaphumelela					

Sentence		Very true of me	Often true of me	About half true of me	A Little true of me	Not at all true of me
Umusho		<i>Kuyiqiniso eliphelele ngami</i>	<i>Kuyiqiniso isikhathi isingi ngami</i>	<i>Akulona iqiniso eliphelele ngami</i>	<i>Kuncane okuyiqiniso ngamii</i>	<i>Akulona iqiniso ngami</i>
15	If people can know how I really am inside, they will love me <i>Uma abantu bengazi ingaphakathi lami bengangithanda</i>					
16	I believe that I have talents					
17	I do not give up trying					
18	I like to celebrate when I get things right <i>Ngizithokozisa uma ngenze kahle</i>					
19	I feel sorry when I have hurt others <i>Kungiphatha kabi ukuhlukumeza abanye abantu</i>					
20	Nothing will ever keep me down					
21	I feel better after talking about my problems with people I love <i>Kuba ngcono uma ngixoxela umuntu engimthandayo izinkinga zami</i>					
22	I have successfully survived bad events in my life <i>Ngizinqobile izimo ezinzima empilweni yami</i>					
23	I believe I can have a bright future <i>Nginekusasa eliqhakazile</i>					
24	There is always someone to help me <i>Kuhlale kukhona umuntu ozongisiza</i>					
25	I have good role models <i>Nginabantu abayisibonelo esihle kimina</i>					

FACTORS IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

How important are these to your life at school?

Questionnaire 2

	Sentence Umusho	<u>Very important</u> Kubaluleke kakhulu	<u>Important</u> Kubalulekile	<u>Somehow important</u> Kubalulekile nje	<u>Little Importance</u> Kubaluleke kancane	<u>Not Important</u> Akubalule -kile
1	The school makes me feel welcome. Ngiziwa ngamukelekile esikoleni.					
2	My school has positive rewards/ incentives for good work. Isikoleni kunemiklomelo nokunconywa uma wenze kahle.					
3	Efforts are made to improve the school buildings. Isikole siyazama ukwenza ngcono izinga lezakhiwo.					
4	Individual effort is viewed as important at school. Ukuzikhandla komuntu kubalulekile esikoleni.					
5	Learners are involved in setting policies and rules of the school. Abafundi bayinxenye yabantu abenza imigomo nemithetho ebusa isikole.					
6	Learners and educators treat each other with respect. Kunokuhloniphana ngendlela abaphathana ngayo abafundi nothisha.					
7	The motto of the school is agreed upon and communicated. Isiqubulo sesikole siyaziwa futhi siyahambisana naso.					

	Sentence Umusho	<u>Very</u> <u>important</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>Somehow</u> <u>Important</u>	<u>Little</u> <u>Importance</u>	<u>Not</u> <u>Important</u>
		Kubaluleke kakhulu	Kubalulekile	Kubalulekile nje	Kubaluleke kancane	Akubalule -kile
8	The teachers in my school are positive role models for the learners. Othisha bayiyisibonelo esihle kubafundi.					
9	The school has a supportive environment. Isikoleni kunomoya wokusizana nokusekelana.					
10	My school has belief in my ability to achieve my goals. Esikoleni bayangethemba ukuthi ngingakwazi ukuphumelela ukufeza izifiso zami.					
11	Opportunities are given for participation in school extra mural activities. Siyawanikwa amathuba emidlalo nokunye.					
12	My school emphasise discipline and control. Esikoleni kuyagcizelelwa ukuhlonishwa kwemithetho nokuphatha.					
13	Learners are not labeled negatively. Abafundi ababizwa ngezici.					
14	My school believes in my ability to achieve high performance standards. Kuyaziwa ukuthi ngingaphumelela ngamalengiso.					
15	Learners spend lots of positive time with educators. Abafundi bathola isikhathi esanele sokuncela ulwazi					

	Sentence Umusho	<u>Very</u> <u>important</u> Kubaluleke kakhulu	<u>Important</u> Kubalulekile	<u>Somehow</u> <u>Important</u> Kubalulekile nje	<u>Little</u> <u>Importance</u> Kubaluleke kancane	<u>Not</u> <u>Important</u> Akubalule -kile
	kothisha.					
16	Learners are not judged based on their socio-economic class. Ababukwa abafundi ngokuthi bavela emakhaya anjani ngokwempilo.					
17	My school applies rules and regulations consistently. Imithetho nezinqubo mgomo zesikole zigcinwa njalo ngokufanelekile.					
18	Educators get on well with each other. Kunobudlelwane obuhle phakathi kothisha.					
19	Conflict does not occur regularly. Izingxabano azihlali ziqubuka njalo.					
20	Learners are taught lifeskills. Abafundi bayafundiswa ukuthi babhekane kanjani nempilo					
21	Celebrations of successes are practiced at school. Imibungazo yempumelelo iyenziwa esikoleni.					
22	Resources needed for academic purposes are readily available. Izinsiza kufundisa zitholakala kalula.					
23	Educators are people that can be trusted with confidential information. Othisha ongabethemba ngezindaba zakho eziyimfihlo.					
24	My school has a caring climate. Isikole sinomoya					

	Sentence Umusho	<u>Very important</u> Kubaluleke kakhulu	<u>Important</u> Kubalulekile	<u>Somehow Important</u> Kubalulekile nje	<u>Little Importance</u> Kubaluleke kancane	<u>Not Important</u> Akubalule -kile
	wokunakekela.					
25	My parents are active and involved in school community. Abazali bayazimbandakanya kokwenzeka esikoleni.					
26	Learners are taught how to deal with conflict. Siyafundiswa ukuthi sibhekana kanjani nezingxabano.					
27	If one has a problem there is someone one can talk to at school. Uma unenkinga kukhona umuntu ongakhuluma naye esikoleni.					
28	The school offers interest based extra-curricular activities. Isikole sinikeza amathuba emidlalo nokunye okudingwa abafundi.					
29	Learners are given the opportunity to learn from each other. Abafundi bayanikezwa ithuba lokufundisana.					
30	The school is viewed as part of the community. Isikole sami siyingxenye yomphakathi esikuwo.					

Questionnaire 3

1. What are the good qualities of your school?

Yini enhle ngesikole sakho?

2. What do you do when you encounter problems at school?

Wenzenjani uma uhlangana nobunzima isikoleni?

3. How does the school prepare you to face life's challenges?
Isikoleni sakho sikulungiselela kanjani ukuthi ubhekani nesimo sempilo?

4. If you were to improve the quality of life of learners in your school, what would you improve?
Uma ungenza ngcono izinga lempilo yabafundi yiziphi izinto ongazenza ngcono?

Appendix B

DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS IN THE FINAL STUDY (N = 527)

Criteria	Levels						Total
Grade	10						
Gender	Male	Female					527
	253	274					
Age in years	14-15	16-17	18-19	20 + ...			
	103	235	151	38			527
No of respondents per school	KwaBazothini	Myeka	Phezulu	St Julius			
	88	183	97	159			527
Parent's highest level of education	No schooling	Grade 1-7	Grade 8-11	Grade12	Tertiary	Do not know	
Mother	50	171	121	71	9	105	527
Father	42	95	143	84	10	153	527