THE VIEWS OF STREET CHILDREN ON HOW STREETISM CAN BE PREVENTED

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DECLARATION

This dissertation was done at North-West University under the supervision of Dr M.J. Malindi. This is my original work and has not been submitted for examination at any other university. Where the work of others has been used, it has been duly acknowledged in the text.

.....

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SUMMARY

Streetism is a world-wide, socio-economic problem and vulnerable children continue to migrate to the streets due to personal and contextual reasons. Attempts have been made to prevent streetism however; these interventions tend to ignore the need to recognise and incorporate the views of street children. In other words, current interventions are based on the views of adults (adultist views) working in the field of social work and psychology excepting the views of street children themselves. This is where this study is located. The study sought to explore the views of street children on how streetism can be prevented.

This study was a qualitative, phenomenological study in which semi-structured focus group interviews were used as data collection methods. Twenty street children volunteered to participate in this study. All of the children fell into the category of children on the streets who still had connections with their parents and guardians. Their ages ranged between 10 and 16, and were all attending school.

The following themes emerged from the data: families should be strengthened to prevent streetism, sound peer support can prevent streetism, schools can be used to prevent streetism, having access to social services can prevent streetism, churches can prevent streetism, a supportive community can prevent streetism and access to government services can prevent streetism. These findings provide insight into how, according to the views of street children, streetism can be prevented. The findings add to theory and have implications for practice.

Keywords: protective resources; risk processes; resilience; street child; streetism; vulnerable

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Streetism is a growing global phenomenon that is characterised by vulnerable children migrating to the streets in urban areas in developed and developing countries (Oyaya & Esamai, 2001:624; Le Roux, 2001; Van Niekerk, Coetzee, Monyeki & Pienaar, 2007:127). Research shows that the street child phenomenon is not a new socio-economic problem (Altanis & Goddard, 2004:299; Barrette, 1995:1; Mahlangu, 2002:1; Schurink, 1994:4). For a long time, vulnerable children whose personal and ecological resilience resources were depleted have been adopting streetism in order to fend for themselves or supplement family income (De Moura, 2005:193). As a result, the street child phenomenon has become an essential feature of the urban countryside of primarily, but not exclusively, developing countries (Hecht, 1998:4). In South Africa, a country that is yet to beat poverty and underdevelopment, the phenomenon of streetism is merely a result of the political system of racial discrimination and forced isolation based on race that has been in place since 1948 (Le Roux, 1996:1).

It is not easy to define street children because they are a heterogeneous group of children, and the term itself bears serious emotional overtones (Guernina, 2004:100; Panter-Brick, 2002). In this regard, Mahlangu (2002:13) notes that there are many attempted definitions of street children; however, there is no single, universally accepted definition of street children. Notwithstanding these definitional variations, Lewis (1998:10) and De Moura (2005:193) see street children as young people, under the age of eighteen, who have made a decision to leave their homes and live on the streets in order to take care of themselves without the support and protection from their parents or guardians. In other words, street children are a heterogeneous group of street-involved children who grow up in high-risk environments without parental care and supervision.

Street children have been categorised as *children on the streets* (those who work on the street during the day and go home at night) and *children of the street* (those who live permanently on the streets and have totally lost contact with their families) (Montane, 2006:8; Raffaelli & Koller, 2005:251; West, 2003:8). It is however noteworthy that former street children, who reside in shelters and those who spend time at rubbish dumps, in addition to working on the streets, which includes begging, are still referred to as street children (South Africa, 1998, 2005). Street children in sheltered accommodation have opportunities to bond with caregivers at the shelter, and this bonding is substituted for the lost ties with their families (Ayuku, Devries, Mengech & Kaplan, 2004:25).

The street child concept is also used to refer to street children who do scavenging and rubbish picking, in addition to living and working on the streets (Panter-Brick, 2002:149; Terrio, 2004:15; Van Rooyen & Hartell, 2002:191; West, 2003:10; Youth Zone, 2005). Among those children who do scavenging and rubbish picking, there are those who stay permanently outside their homes with no family ties (children of the street) and those who occasionally return to their homes (children on the street). These categories further magnify the heterogeneity of street children as a group and emphasize definitional difficulties.

It is equally difficult to know how many children live and work on the streets, since street-involved children are a mobile group of at-risk children who occasionally enter and exit the aforementioned categories of street children. Therefore, the mobility of street children is the main reason why the number of street children cannot be confirmed with sufficient certainty (Malindi, 2009:74). The persecution of street children by the police, the search for '*greener pastures*', and the bullying that occurs among them also adds to their constant mobility.

Street children are exposed to an assortment of risks to resilience that characterise their lives. As an at-risk group, street children contend with resilience risks such as drug abuse, violence, gangs, HIV infection, illiteracy, incomplete schooling, delinquency, neglect, poor health and nutrition (Montane, 2006:8; Schurink, 1993:10). Furthermore, street children survive on the streets through conventional and unconventional ways (rubbish picking, shoe shining, flower selling, petty crimes,

drug abuse, begging, prostitution and drug trafficking), they also develop passive and aggressive attitudes, replacing their families with the street gangs and experiencing social, sexual, physical and emotional abuse (Grundling, De Jager & Fourie, 2004:97; Schurink, 1993:10; South Africa, 1998, 2005; West, 2003:10). Although some of these mechanisms are atypical, they enable street-involved children to cope resiliently with their lives in the harsh context of streetism.

According to Malindi and Theron (2010:319) & Theron & Malindi (2010), at-risk youth, including street children, often demonstrate hidden resilience, which involves adopting atypical ways of coping with adversity such as begging and petty theft, although they are not regarded as resilient children in popular literature. Resilience promotion could serve as a way of enabling vulnerable youth to cope resiliently and prevent streetism.

It is not easy to pinpoint the causes of streetism, however, the phenomenon of streetism, locally and internationally, is believed to be caused by personal (for example, the quest for autonomy and perceived attractiveness of streetism) and ecological factors (for example, poverty, parental mortality due to HIV, neglect, abuse, urbanisation and parental alcoholism). It may also be caused by a combination of personal and ecological factors (De Moura, 2005:194; Le Roux, 2001:107; Lewis, 1998:14; Malindi, 2009:4; Montane, 2006:9; Pare, 2004:221; Plummer, Kudrati &Yousif, 2007:1532; Vogel, 2001:244; West, 2003:12).

Global concern for the plight of street children has grown over the years. Governments and community organisations have attempted to design interventions in order to ameliorate the plights of street children. These interventions tended to reflect the medical approach (deficit-focused and find-and-fix-what-is-wrong approach) as well as the charity approach (rescuing them from the hazards of street life) (Malindi, 2009). Despite these interventions, it has proved very difficult to prevent or deal with streetism, as current intervention programmes tend to ignore the views of street children themselves. This is where the researcher positioned her study. She intended to give street children a voice by encouraging them to say how streetism could be prevented. She therefore conducted an exploratory qualitative

study in order to examine the views of street children on how streetism can be prevented.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Several attempts have been made to prevent streetism and support children involved in it. Schurink (1993:240) argues that the street child phenomenon has many sides and requires the establishment and development of support programmes, welfare policies and legislation in order to both prevent and support children involved in it. According to Dybics (2005:765), interventions regarding streetism are categorised as primary and secondary intervention programmes. Primary prevention strategies focus on children who live in abject poverty but have not yet adopted street life. Secondary prevention strategies focus on children who have adopted street life to work and supplement family income but maintain regular contact with their families.

In this regard, Schurink (1993:258) stresses the creation of community resources that should consider child-care and after-school care, job creation programmes, parent training, advice centres and support programmes. Plummer *et al.* (2007:1532), on the other hand, maintain that child welfare agencies should take steps in order to prevent the problem through the creation of preventative educational programmes for working with these children.

According to Pare (2004:237), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have implemented many programmes aimed at preventing the street child phenomenon and preparing them for the world of work. Most of these NGOs use orphanage as a solution for the problem of children who are living on the streets. One of the major disadvantages in providing prevention services to street children is their not-yet known resilient nature. It is clear that the prevention of streetism needs comprehensive intervention programmes (Raffaelli, 1999:23).

Street children are still seen from the medical perspective, which places emphasis on what is wrong in clients (Duckworth, Steen & Seligman, 2005) as well as the charity perspective that aims to rescue street children from street life and house them in residential care (Tolfree, 2003:6). The medical approach is based on

curative approaches that involve the diagnosis and treatment of the client or patient. The charity perspective considers clients as victims who are permanently dependent and deserve pity and support (Peters, 2004). In other words, the medical and charity perspectives would reduce street children to people who are helpless, who need care as well as treatment while ignoring the strengths that they have (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2006:190).

It is also clear that there is much that needs to be learned with regard to the prevention of the phenomenon of street children. It can be concluded that programmes have been established, but they have not achieved the goals of preventing streetism because they excluded the views of street-involved children. Literature contains what other people, namely adults with no street life experiences, are suggesting should be done in order to prevent streetism. Nothing is said about what the street youth themselves are suggesting as ways of preventing streetism. Therefore, this study will seek to shed light on how street children themselves think streetism can be prevented instead of relying on “adultist” assumptions of what children need (Ennew, 2003).

The central question that guides this study is the following:

What are the views of street children on how streetism can be prevented?

1.2.1 The aim of the study

The aim of this study was to explore the views of street children on how streetism could be prevented in South Africa. In order to achieve the above aim, the study answered the following secondary questions:

- What is streetism?
- What causes streetism in South Africa?
- Which risks are inherent in streetism?
- How can streetism be prevented according to street children?

1.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Fouche and Schurink (2011:308), research design is described as the approach that the researcher chooses in order to study a particular phenomenon. Likewise, this study adopted a research approach that involves two distinct phases, namely *literature study* and *empirical research*, both aimed at answering the research questions already mentioned. These two phases will be outlined below.

1.3.1 Phase 1: Literature study

The researcher conducted a literature study, as part of phase one, in order to learn and understand the incidence of streetism globally and locally, its causes, risks involved in street life and intervention strategies aimed at preventing and dealing with streetism. She consulted the library for books, journals and recently completed studies on these issues. Additionally, the researcher exploited search engines such as Google and EBSCO in order to gain access to peer-reviewed articles. Following is a table that illustrates the themes that she gleaned from the aforementioned literature review exercise.

THEME	SOURCES
The growth of streetism continues unabated	Oyaya and Esamai (2001) Le Roux (2001) Van Niekerk *et al.* (2007)
The street child phenomenon is not new	Altanis and Goddard (2004) Barrette (1995) Mahlangu (2002) Schurink (1994)
A street child is not easy to define	Guernina (2004) Panter-Brick (2002) Mahlangu (2002)
Street children are cosmetically placed in different categories	Ayuku *et al.* (2004) Montane (2006) Panter-Brick (2002) Raffaelli and Koller (2005) West (2003) Terrio (2004) Van Rooyen and Hartell (2002)

There are difficulties in enumerating street children	Malindi (2009)
Street children demonstrate hidden resilience	Malindi and Theron (2010) Theron & Malindi (2010) Ungar (2007)
Personal and contextual factors cause streetism	De Moura (2005) Donald *et al.* (2006) Le Roux (2001) Lewis (1998) Malindi (2009) Montane (2006) Pare (2004) Plummer *et al.* (2007) Vogel (2001) West (2003:12)
Street life involves numerous risks	Montane (2006) Schurink (1993) Grundling *et al.* (2004) South Africa (1998) South Africa (2005) West (2003)
The prevention of streetism needs comprehensive intervention programmes	Pare (2004) Raffaelli (1999)
The medical and charity perspectives predominate intervention strategies for street children	Donald *et al.* (2006) Duckworth *et al.* (2005) Peters (2004) Tolfree (2003)
The "adultist" approach is adopted when researching street children	Ennew (2003) Driessnack (2006)

Table 1.1: Literature Reviewed

1.3.2 Phase 2: Empirical study

The researcher pursued a phenomenological study in order to explore and understand how streetism can be prevented according to the views of street children. A phenomenological study is described as a study that tries to understand people's perceptions and understanding of a particular situation or phenomenon (Leedy &

Ormrod, 2010:141). Creswell (2009:13) adds that in a phenomenological study, the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about phenomena as described by participants. In this regard, the phenomenon that was focused on in this study was the enduring streetism, and the researcher desired to understand how it could be prevented according to street children.

The approach that was followed in order to investigate the views of street youth on how to prevent the problem of streetism was the qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is described as a form of inquiry that explores phenomena in its natural settings and uses different methods to interpret, understand, explain and bring meaning to it (Anderson, 1998:119). Qualitative research is descriptive in nature, meaning that data that is collected may take the form of words or pictures rather than numbers, and qualitative research occurs within the participants' natural settings or contexts (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007:5).

In qualitative research, researchers are the key instruments in the research process, since they gather data themselves by either interviewing, observing participants or making translations of what they see, hear or understand (Creswell, 2009:175; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007:4; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). In this regard, street children were studied in contexts in which they subsisted, and no attempt was made to alter their natural settings.

1.3.3 Data Collection Procedure

The research method that was used in order to investigate the views of the street youth on how to prevent streetism was semi-structured focus group interviews. Semi-structured focus group interviews were used because they would allow for open-ended responses and the researcher would be able to explore more in depth the interviewees' views, ideas, beliefs and attitudes about how streetism can be prevented (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:188; Nieuwenhuis, 2007a:87; Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh & Sorensen, 2006:480).

Furthermore, Bogdan and Biklen (2007:79) add that focus group interviews are flexible enough for the interviewer to collect data. Interviews allow the interviewer or

the researcher total control over the line of questioning (Creswell, 2009:179). Interviews were employed because they would enable the researcher to establish a relationship with participants and therefore gain their cooperation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:188). Scott and Usher (1999:110) add that the interviewer offers numerous clues on how the interviewee should respond. When conducting the interviews, the researcher ensured that she created a safe atmosphere in order to put the interviewee at ease. She stated the nature and purpose of her study, but she took care not to unduly influence the participants (Ary *et al.,* 2006:412).

The researcher designed an interview guide that guided the focus group interviews that she was going to use in order to collect data. She conducted the interviews in the language that the participants preferred, namely Sesotho. The interviews were translated into English. She asked a competent Sesotho speaker to back-translate the transcript into English so as to detect and correct inconsistencies.

The researcher met the participants at the drop-in centre in the afternoon, which is their natural setting, since they assembled there after school. How the interviews were conducted and the conditions surrounding these interviews are explained in detail in Chapter 4. In capturing data gathered from the participants, the researcher recorded the interviews on audio tape (Greeff, 2011:359). Recordings on tape were done with permission granted by the participants (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a:89).

1.3.4 Data analysis

All recorded interviews were transcribed for inductive content analysis to occur (Creswell, 2009:183). The researcher read the transcript closely several times and studied the notes in order to develop a clearer understanding of the data (Malindi & Theron, 2010:321; Nieuwenhuis, 2007b:104; Pope, Ziebland & Mays, 2000:116). In Chapter 4, she explains in detail how she coded the data or sections thereof (Creswell, 2009:185).

1.3.5 Sampling

The targeted population for this study was all street children in South Africa. Since it is impossible to study whole populations, researchers often select smaller groups (called samples) that represent the target group through scientific sampling procedures. The process of selecting participants for a study is called sampling. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007a:79), sampling is described as the process that is used to choose a part of the population for the study. The researcher used a non-probability purposive sampling procedure in order to select 20 youth with street life experiences (Maree & Pietersen, 2007:176). However, more participants were added until data saturation was achieved.

The participants consisted of African boys and girls in the Free State who were classified as children on the street since they had ties with their families. The participants visited the drop-in centre for meals and life skills programmes. These boys and girls were between the ages of ten (10) and sixteen (16). All of them also attended schools albeit irregularly. The reason why African boys were more than girls is that due to the apartheid policy that sought to disadvantage and impoverish Africans, street children in South Africa are typically African and male (Le Roux, 2001; Malindi & Theron, 2010).

1.3.6 Research Paradigm

A paradigm is a collection of logically related assumptions, propositions, beliefs and concepts that guide a particular study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007:24; Wiersma, 2000:12). The study followed the interpretivist post-positivist paradigm, since the reality to be studied contained people's (street children's) subjective experiences of the real world. The interpretivist post-positivist paradigm was selected because it goes hand in hand with the research design that the researcher had chosen and the method that she was going to use in order to gather data from the street youth.

Seen through the interpretivist post-positivist lens, phenomena are understood through the meanings that people attach to them. Interpretivists focus on perceptions, opinions and experiences that people have. Interviewing as the method

that the researcher has chosen, focused on the participants' perceptions, opinions and experiences, and it relied on the subjective relationships that existed between the researcher and the research participants (Terre Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim, 2006:7).

1.4 TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007b:113), trustworthiness is a crucial aspect of qualitative research. Therefore, a qualitative researcher should take steps in order to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of findings. The steps that follow were taken to promote trustworthiness.

1.4.1 Credibility

Schurink, Fouche and De Vos (2011:419) describe credibility as the alternative to internal validity. According to Ary *et al.* (2006:504), in qualitative research, credibility concerns the truthfulness of the research findings. Credibility therefore relates to how believable or convincing data is. This can be achieved through peer debriefing and referral adequacy (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:277), and by using representative quotations from the text are transcribed (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004:110). In order to achieve peer debriefing, the researcher requested caregivers and social workers who are attached to the NGOs that cared for the participants to review her themes, conclusions, perceptions and analyses.

Their views and recommendations were incorporated into the final report. The fact that interviews were going to be tape-recorded ensured adequate preservation of data for later reference. Readers of the researcher's work will therefore be able to check her interpretation. The audit trail that will be appended will show how the researcher processed data. In order to establish credibility, data that is relevant from the research findings was not systematically excluded and no irrelevant data was included (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004:110).

1.4.2 Transferability

According to Ary *et al.* (2006:507) and Graneheim and Lundman (2004:110), transferability is described as the degree to which the findings of a qualitative study can be generalised or transferred to other contexts or similar groups of participants. Schurink *et al.* (2011:420) add that transferability can be described as the alternative to external validity or generalisability, where the researcher is able to take findings and transfer them to another context. In order to facilitate transferability, the researcher provided a clearer description of culture and context, selection procedure and the participants' features, collection of data, and how they would be analysed (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004:110).

The research process is described, including that data was purposefully sampled. The researcher described the setting in detail and chose quotes carefully so that data is not misinterpreted. To enhance transferability, she ensured that the presentation of the research findings and quotations were rich and vigorous (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004:110). These steps determined how far her findings could be transferred. Qualitative findings cannot be generalised, but one may provide a thick rich description of data, which may make the findings applicable in a similar context.

1.4.3 Confirmability

Ary *et al.* (2006:507) describe confirmability as the extent to which the research is free from bias in the procedures and interpretation of findings. Therefore, confirmability refers to the degree to which other independent parties can confirm or corroborate the findings of a particular study. Confirmed data minimises the possibility of researcher bias in drawing conclusions, interpreting data and making recommendations. Schurink *et al.* (2011:421) describe confirmability as the ultimate procedure in achieving objectivity. With that said, in order to ensure confirmability, the researcher ensured that the data of the study was interpreted without any bias and that caregivers and social workers could confirm the findings.

1.4.4 Dependability

According to Graneheim and Lundman (2004:110), dependability is described as taking into account the instability and phenomenal factors, i.e. the degree to which research data changes over time and alterations that are made in the decisions undertaken by the researcher during the process of analysing the research findings. The researcher attempted to heighten the dependability of her findings by including an interview excerpt and an example of preliminary open and axial coding.

1.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before commencing with the study, the researcher wrote a letter to the NGOs responsible for the centre in Free State in order to obtain permission to conduct the study at the centre. The participants and NGOs were informed about the nature and purpose of the study. The participants gave consent to participate in the study by signing a consent form that was co-signed by the caregivers. The participants were made aware that participation was voluntary and that they would be free to withdraw if they so wished (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:101; Strydom, 2011a:117).

The participants were not compensated because if they were compensated, it might have compromised the aim of the study (Strydom, 2011a:121) and taken away the participants' right to decline to participate. When conducting semi-structured interviews, the researcher initially asked for permission from the participants to record the interviews on audio-tape. The researcher made arrangements for the debriefing of the street children in order to deal with the problems that might be generated by the research (Strydom, 2011a:122).

The participants were informed that information gathered through interviews would remain confidential; even when reporting, their names would not be mentioned or revealed. The final report and articles will only bear quotations and pseudonyms (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:102). The findings of the study were honestly reported without misinterpreting the participants' views.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will add to theory and practice on how to prevent the problem of streetism. The views and ideas would be from those who were directly involved, namely street children themselves. It will benefit the following stakeholders: psychologists (prevention and counselling); social workers (prevention, placement and counselling), and schools (decrease the school dropout rate and what to do to ensure that those who have dropped out return to schools). Lastly, NGOs will be able to know how streetism can be prevented.

1.7 CHAPTER DIVISION

The proposed layout of the study will be as follows:

Chapter 1: Orientation and problem statement

Chapter 1 provided a general overview of the study, which included an introduction and outline of the problem statement, research questions, research design and research ethics.

Chapter 2: Street child phenomenon

This chapter will explore streetism with a view to understanding what it is perceived to be from an adultist view.

Chapter 3: Resilience phenomenon

The chapter will explore resilience and refer to risk and protective resources.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

Chapter 4 will provide a description of the process of research in detail, including the research method and research design employed in the study.

Chapter 5: Data presentation

Chapter 5 will present the research data and findings.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations

In Chapter 6, the findings of the study will be summarised, and recommendations will be made.

CHAPTER 2

THE STREET CHILD PHENOMENON

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided a background to the study. This chapter will provide a detailed exploration of the street child phenomenon. The concept of the *street child* will be defined, the factors that cause the street child phenomenon will be outlined, the problems they are faced with on the street and the prevention strategies according to the adultist views will be discussed. The diagram below outlines the layout of Chapter 2.

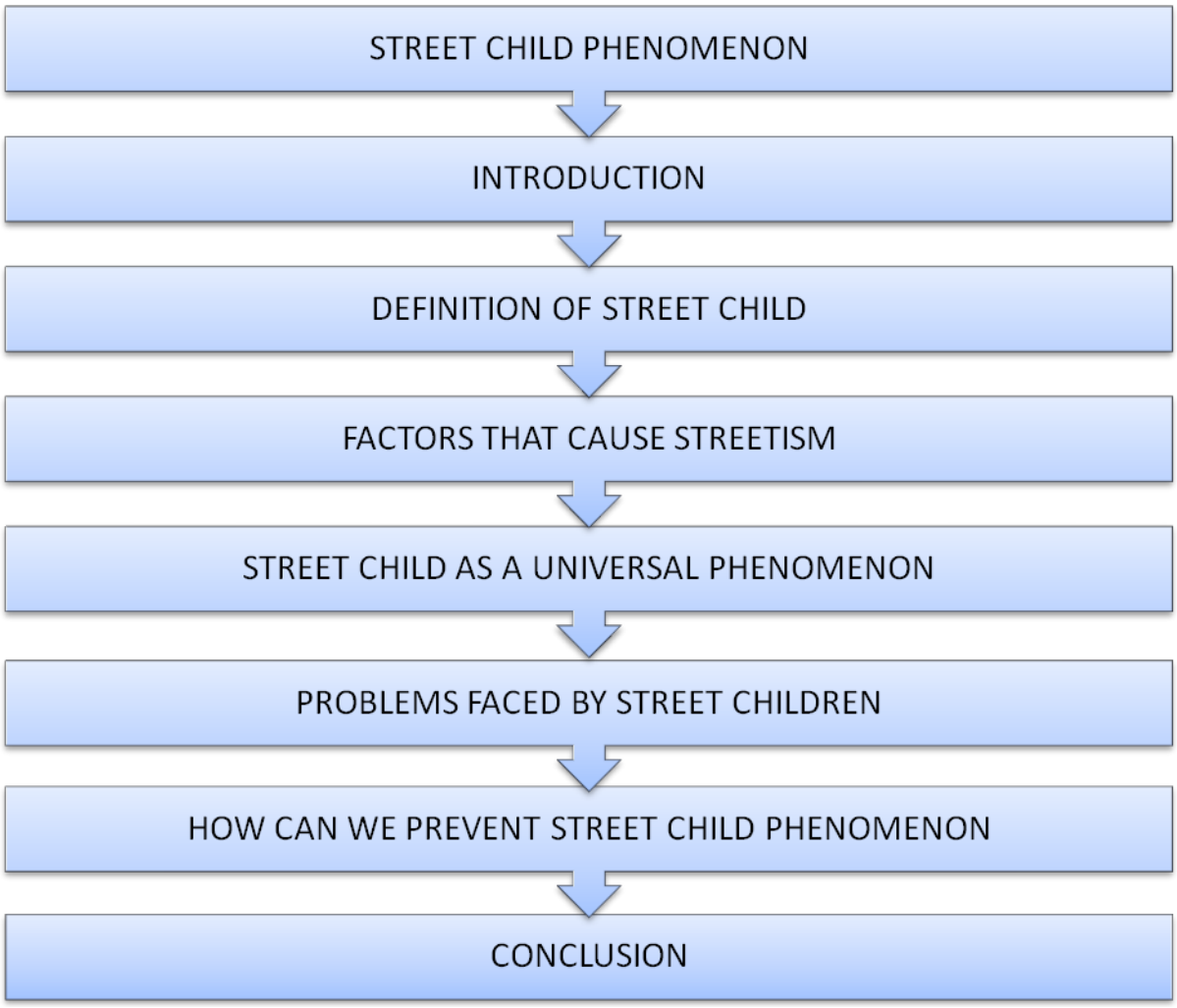

Figure 2.1: Overview of Chapter

2.2 DEFINITION OF STREET CHILD

According to Mahlangu (2002:1) the street child phenomenon is not new. This means that there has always been a steady exodus of at-risk youth to the streets, where they grow up without parental care and supervision. The earliest reference to street children was by Barrette (1995:1), who traced the phenomenon to the Middle Ages and the Industrial Revolution. It is noteworthy that the street child phenomenon is a worldwide phenomenon. The exact numbers of street children are hard to determine in any one country since these children move consistently and, in fact, they enter and exit streetism on a regular basis (Malindi, 2009).

Notwithstanding the aforementioned, Le Roux (2001:95) stated that there were many street children in South Africa, most of whom were African and male. The meaning of the street child concept is highly contestable among researchers because of the heterogeneity of the street child population. Research shows that the street child term is an umbrella term that is problematic for a number of reasons. For example:

- it erroneously suggests that these children are a homogeneous group;
- it characterises street children according to the public spaces that they use or occupy; and
- it is riddled with derogation and bears negative emotional overtones (Evans, 2002; Guernina, 2004; Panter-Brick, 2002).

Le Roux (1996:1) views the street child phenomenon as the result of the pervasive political system of apartheid in South Africa that was based on racial discrimination. This policy systematically disadvantaged and subjected them to the state of servitude. Research shows that the street child phenomenon has many sides to it (Schurink, 1993:240). For that reason, it is understood differently.

In South Africa, street children are defined as children who are:

- living mainly on the streets for survival;

- institutionalised and are from homelessness situations and are at risk of returning to the existing homelessness;
- removed from their families and move from one place to another;
- living in a temporary shelter like abandoned houses or building; and
- who still have ties with their family but due to poverty; overcrowding in the family; and sexual, physical or emotional abuse, they spend some nights and most days on the streets (South Africa, 1998:4 & South Africa, 2005:17).

The common themes that can be gleaned from the above are that street children subsist on the streets, they are in institutions, homeless, mobile, and have or do not have links with their families. Research shows that street children can be categorised into various groups (West, 2003:8; Tudoric-Ghemo, 2005:14; Donald *et al.*, 2006:190; Kaime-Atterhog & Ahlberg, 2008:1345; Malindi, 2009:62). For example, there is a group of at-risk children who migrate to the streets and routinely work, and sleep in abandoned buildings or on pavements (Malindi, 2009:62).

It should be noted that this group of children lives permanently on the streets, and that they have totally lost ties with their families. They constitute 25% of children living on the streets. These children are categorised as *children of the street* (West, 2003:8; Tudoric-Ghemo, 2005:14; Donald *et al.*, 2006:190; Kaime-Atterhog & Ahlberg, 2008:1345; Lefeh, 2008:19). These children have either been orphaned, abandoned or ran away from their families as a result of very difficult situations (Malindi, 2009:62). Children of the street consist of boys and girls who view the street as their home, but there are few vagrant girls visible on the streets (Kaime-Atterhog & Ahlberg, 2008:1345). Most girls who turn to the streets end up being prostitutes and engaging in unlawful drug dealing as sources of income (Le Roux, 2001).

Other children of the street are forced to sleep under the bridges, in old buildings, in shop doorways, or in parks (Malindi, 2009:63). They are often forced to satisfy their basic needs by begging, being engaged in prostitution, drug abuse or stealing (Altanis & Goddard, 2004:300).

The street child construct also refers to a large percentage of children who turned to the streets to beg for money but return home in order to contribute their earnings to their families. This group of children consists of children who work on the streets during the day and return home at night. This means that they have not lost ties with their families, however they have only opted for street life in order to meet their basic needs. This group is categorised as *children on the streets* and constitutes 75% of children living on the streets (Malindi, 2009:63; Grundling *et al.*, 2004:97; Raffaelli & Koller, 2005:251; Montane, 2006:8; West, 2003:8; Kaime-Atterhog & Ahlberg, 2008:1345; Lefeh, 2008:19).

Furthermore, Malindi (2009:64) argues that children on the streets engage in activities such as begging, shoe shining, washing cars, picking rubbish, and selling sweets and cigarettes to the public in order to get something in return. These behaviours often result in irregular school attendance, which may result in school dropout, if they permanently stay on the streets.

There are children who have decided to leave their homes and families without parental permission in order to live permanently on the streets (Le Roux, 2001:106). This group of children has totally lost ties with their families. They eat and live on the street (Mahlangu, 2002:15; West, 2003:8). They have left their homes because of negligence, abuse or serious conflicts between parents; lack of resources to meet their basic needs; and overcrowding (Donald *et al.*, 2006:190). This category of street children is known as *runaway children* (Mahlangu, 2002:15). This group overlaps with the group of children of the street.

Another category of children living on the streets is known as *dump youth*. These children depend mainly on the rubbish dumps to look for food on a daily basis in order to survive. They can be seen on the dumping sites in many towns and cities (Tudoric-Ghemo, 2005:15). Children who frequent rubbish dumps double as children of the street, children on the street or both.

Mahlangu (2002:16) highlighted the contemptuous and derogatory terms that are used to describe and refer to street children across the world. Those terms reflect more the perceptions that communities have of street children rather than their situations and their personal traits (Tudoric-Ghemo, 2005:16; Vogel, 2001, 229, Le Roux, 2001:105).

Table 2.1 outlines those terms.

TERM	DEFINITION	WHERE CAN WE FIND THEM?
Chinches	Bed bugs	Colombia
Gumin	Urchin	Colombia
Marginais	Criminals	Brazil
Pajaro Frutero	Fruit birds	Peru
Polillas	Moths	Bolivia
Resistolero	Little rebels	Honduras
Buidoi	Dust children	Vietnam
Malalapipe	Street children who sleep in the storm water pipes	In parts of South Africa
Strollers	Street children loitering along the urban streets	Cape Town, South Africa
Twilight children	Street children who are only active in the dark	Johannesburg, South Africa
Malunde	Street children sleeping on the streets	Johannesburg, South Africa
Scugnizzi	Spinning tops	Italy

Table 2.1: Terms used to describe street children

From the above-mentioned terms it can be concluded that the terms that are used to describe street children worldwide are derogatory and less sensitive to their plight. Streetism is not seen by societies as a way in which street children manage their own lives and satisfy their own needs, (Le Roux, 2001:106).

2.3 FACTORS THAT CAUSE THE STREET CHILD PHENOMENON

It is not an easy task to pinpoint the causes of the emergence of the street child phenomenon. Nevertheless, it is believed to be locally and internationally caused by personal factors such as the quest for autonomy and perceived attractiveness of streetism and ecological factors such as poverty, parental mortality due to HIV, neglect, abuse, urbanisation and parental alcoholism, and a combination of personal and ecological factors (De Moura, 2005:194; Le Roux, 2001:107; Lewis, 1998:14; Malindi, 2009:4; Montane, 2006:9; Pare, 2004:221).

According to Oyaya and Esamai (2001:624) and Mahlangu (2002:30), the street child phenomenon cannot be related to a single causal factor. There is a multiplicity of factors that cause the problem of streetism and these risk factors are context specific. Most researchers agree that the leading causes of streetism are extreme poverty, unemployment, family breakdown (divorces), child abuse and neglect (West, 2003:12; Montane, 2006:9; De Moura, 2005:194, Le Roux, 2001:107; Malindi, 2009:4; Lewis, 1998:14; Pare, 2004:221; Plummer *et al.*, 2007:1532, Vogel, 2001:244, Mahlangu, 2002:18); dropping out of school; behavioural disorders; sensation seeking; and civil war (Mahlangu, 2002:18).

These factors can be divided into two categories, namely *indirect causes* (causes that pave the way towards streetism but do not directly cause the child to be on the streets, and *direct and immediate causes* (causes that lead the child to reside on the streets, away from home (Anon, 2003). Direct and indirect causes of streetism are illustrated in figure 2.5.

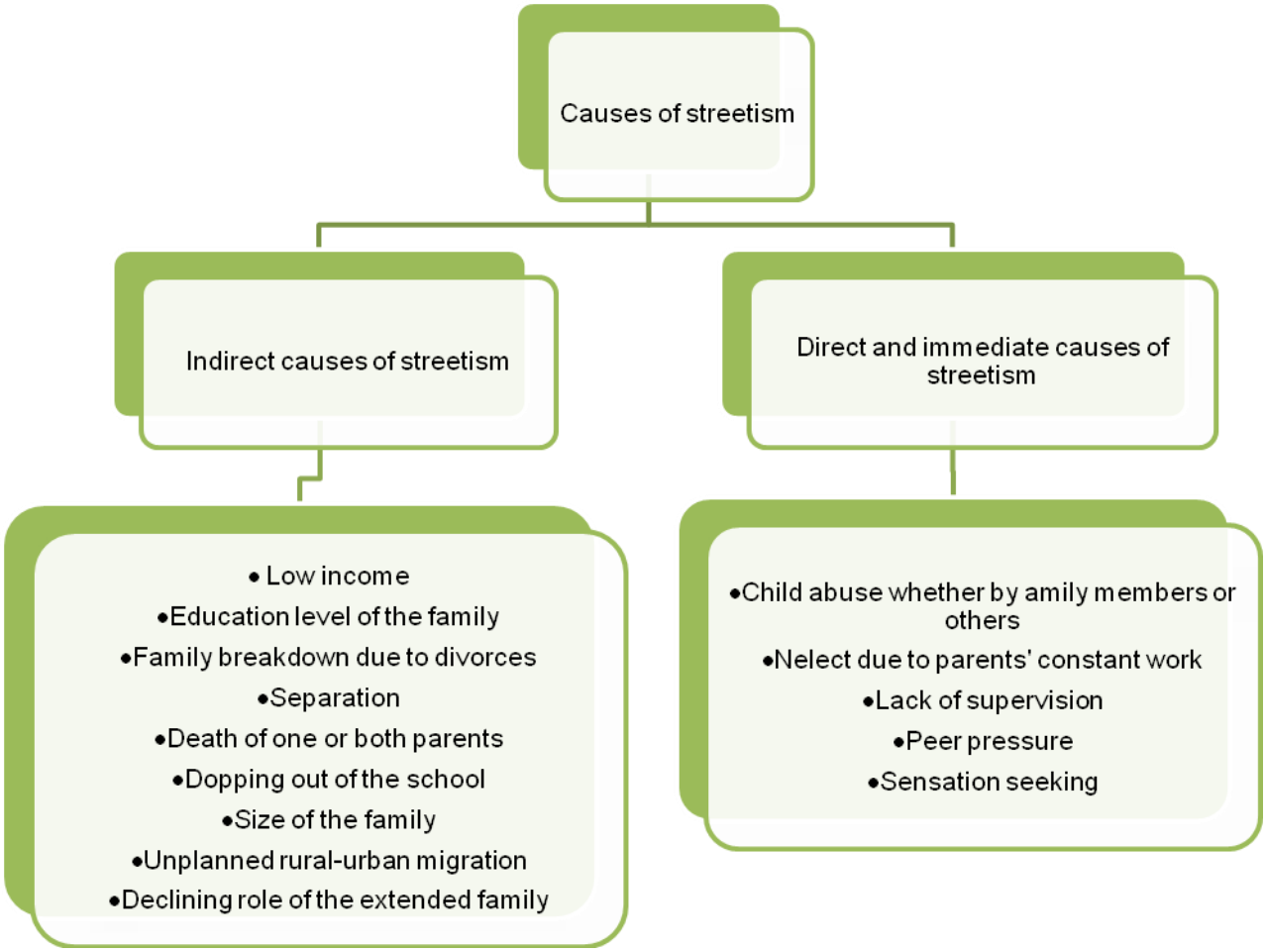

Figure 2.5: Direct and indirect factors that cause streetism

It is important to note that the causes or risk factors that are implicated in the initiation of streetism are either personal, contextual or a combination of the two (Donald *et al*., 2006). These risks are among the risks that were noted as resilience risks that will be discussed in chapter three. Furthermore, Mahlangu (2002:30) affirms that there are many factors that cause the street child phenomenon.

Hardships such as unpredictable climatic conditions and unsuitable methods of farming persuade rural communities to migrate to the cities. Therefore, the urban areas cannot satisfy their needs and accommodate their expectations. This results in frustrations, poverty and unemployment (Lewis, 1998:14; Pare, 2004:221; Schurink, 1993:137). Research shows that urbanisation is one of the social factors that cause the street child phenomenon (Mahlangu, 2002:34). Donald *et al.* (2006:190) and Mahlangu (2002:18) add that progressive urbanisation in relation to insufficient

access to proper housing and health and welfare causes the children to migrate to the streets. It should be noted that urbanisation combines with other contextual factors in causing children to leave their homes.

Due to urbanisation, parents are forced to work unusually long hours for a low pay and leave their children without proper supervision, care and adequate support systems. Mahlangu (2002:39) and Schurink (1993:137) confirm that most parents spend most of their time at work than at home. As a result, the family weakens and the relations deteriorate. In this case, the children become primary victims who no longer have values that are set by the parents. They mostly leave their homes to live on the streets and never come back.

These families become disintegrated, which results in other family members, especially children, opting for the street as their solution (Mahlangu, 2002:35; Vogel, 2001:244). Research shows that streetism a result of neglect, abandonment, family displacement, political conflicts, natural disasters, illness and mortality, poor socioeconomic conditions, family discord, and child abuse (Cheunwattana & Meksawat, 2002:88; Conticini & Hulme, 2007:201; Le Roux, 1996; Orme & Seipel, 2007:489; Schimmel, 2006:211; West, 2003:12).

In South Africa most breadwinners are faced with a high rate of retrenchment from work. This results in many families or parents being unable to meet their children's basic needs. Then the families are forced to search for an alternative source of income in order to support their families. That being the case, the inability of parents to meet their children's needs compelled the children to opt for street lives in order to earn the money that would satisfy their basic and other needs (Mahlangu, 2002:35; West, 2003:16).

Mahlangu (2002:35) and Plummer *et al.* (2007:1532) noted that in most developing countries, the growth of the population supplants the growth of the economy as a result of the migration from rural to urban areas. Because of poverty, parents end up abandoning their children (West, 2003:16; Le Roux, 2001:107; Alenoma, 2012:78).

Discrimination and stigmatisation based on parental HIV statuses are other social factors that cause children to migrate to the city streets. When parents are living with HIV or die of AIDS-related illnesses, their children are stigmatised and this situation forces these children to run away and live on the streets (West, 2003:17). This occurs especially when the next-of-kin reject orphaned children.

The economic recession has been experienced around the world and it has put a lot of strain on individual families. In South Africa, another economic factor, the increasing rate of inflation, has been experienced over the years (Mahlangu, 2002:36). This problem has limited the abilities of families to take care of the most vulnerable, namely children. Children then turn to the streets for survival and to have supplementary family income through begging or vending (Anon, 2003:4; Mahlangu, 2002:36).

West (2003:8) and Donald *et al.* (2006:10) regard overcrowding to be related to unemployment and poverty. There is a scarcity of affordable housing for black families, even though there are houses that are being built. Because of lack of housing, people have to rent some houses or shacks with high rental fares.

Family disintegration has been implicated in the initiation of streetism. The structural disruption of the family through the death of one or both parents or divorces might be one of the reasons the children migrate to the streets (Anon, 2003:4; Mahlangu, 2002:22; Schurink, 1993:137). When a divorced parent enters into a new marriage, his or her children might be abused by a step-parent, which will lead to isolation, trauma, and a child's hostility from his or her family. Mahlangu (2002:37) and Alenoma (2012:79) point out that after the parents' divorce; most children opt for street life as they can no longer cope with their new family situation. They do this as a way of seeking comfort. The presence of step-parents in their homes has increased hatred and the deterioration of the required parental care. These kinds of situations caused many children to run away from their homes and live on the streets (West, 2003:17; Donald *et al.*, 2006:10).

According to West (2003:17), the migration of the children to the street revolves around family, parents or other community members. They even discard these

children. The family backgrounds of the majority of street children are characterised by violence, abuse, neglect and rejection. These children are exploited and rejected from their families, and this makes their lives difficult. These conditions resulted in children becoming aggressive, delinquent, anxious, having low self-concept, depressed, and running away from their homes to live and work on the streets (West, 2003:8; Mahlangu, 2002:37). It is estimated that there are 1.7 million children who are kicked and beaten by their parents; 46 000-75 000 are beaten, and 45 000 are attacked with guns (Mahlangu, 2002:38). These children often feel that they are worthless and not wanted when being physically and emotionally abused by family members.

Many children are born out of wedlock in South Africa. Most of the children who are illegitimate and born under poverty are at risk of being abused, neglected and abandoned. This results in children running away from their homes to seek survival on the streets (Montane, 2006:9; De Moura, 2005:194; Le Roux, 2001:107; Lewis, 1998:14; Mahlangu, 2002:40; Schurink, 1993). These children view this as unjust and as rejection by their families; therefore, they feel that the street is the solution to their problems (Donald *et al.*, 2006:10; West, 2003:8; Mahlangu, 2002:15, 40).

Schurink (1993) argues that being alcoholic disables parents to supply for and satisfy their children's basic needs of food, education, clothes and others. According to Mahlangu (2002:40), alcoholic parents have a tendency to shout at and fight each other after drinking. They (alcoholic parents) become impatient with their children, and this result in them beating up their children for no reason. Schurink (1993) affirms that alcoholism weakens the bond between parents and their children. In cases where alcoholism is linked to overcrowding, lack of food, poor conditions of living, lack of physical and emotional comfort, and the weakened bond between the parents and their kids breaks up completely. Therefore, children give up on their parents and migrate to the streets.

Donald *et al*., (2006) and Mahlangu (2002:42) point out that Individual factors such as stress and personality functioning contribute towards the problem of street children. Many children experience rejection, conflict, violence, failure, and stigmatisation at school. Other children can be bullied by either their teachers or

other children at school. They mostly become psychologically withdrawn from their educators, school activities such as extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, and others (West, 2003:18). This leads to a situation where they will seek friends who will satisfy their needs or comfort them rather than criticising them. These children are faced with enormous school pressure, such as the volume of school work and anxiety about good performance (West, 2003:18). Most parents have a lack of interest in the progress of their children at school, whereby the failure of children causes conflict at home (Mahlangu, 2002:43). For these reasons, they decide to migrate to the streets to search for friendships (West, 2003:18).

Furthermore, Alenoma (2012:77) summarises other causes of the street child phenomenon as recognised by adult and/or the guardian of children who took street life as the solution to their problems. Those causes are as follows:

- they need to raise pocket money for school for the next day or to support their families financially
- avoid idleness at home
- guardian too old to work and provide for the household

The above causes of streetism beset several communities in the developing and developed world. They severely impact the developmental trajectories of children by reducing their abilities to cope resiliently.

2.4 STREET CHILD AS A UNIVERSAL PHENOMENON

Streetism and the risks that cause it are universal. Le Roux (2001:94) warns that the street child phenomenon is a socio-educational problem that is experienced both locally and internationally. Below is a brief discussion on how the problem of streetism is experienced locally and internationally.

2.4.1 South Africa

According to Malindi (2009:75), Vogel (2001:203) and Mahlangu (2002:28), South Africa, like other countries is faced with the increasing number of street children. Le

Roux (2001:94) adds that there was an estimated 12 000 street children in South Africa, but this number does not include children who beg for money and food during the day and return home at night known as the *children on the street*.

Street children that are found in South Africa originate from the African, Indian and coloured communities only, of whom 9 000 are black. There are no white children on South African streets because they were favoured by the system of apartheid (Malindi & Theron, 2010).

2.4.2 Latin American countries

The Latin American countries are also experiencing the problem of streetism (Malindi, 2009:71). There are 170 million people living in extreme poverty in Latin American states. This makes up 40% of the community. Out of this 170 million, there are 75 million children who are between the ages of zero and fifteen (Mahlangu, 2002:27). West (2003) adds that children aged from seven to eight are involved in various streets activities such as selling sweets or newspapers, washing cars, shoe shining, entertaining passers-by, begging, scavenging, and stealing along the streets.

Additionally, Malindi (2009:71) posits that there is a high birth rate as well as a high number of people from rural to urban areas, which have become a major strain on the availability of resources in cities. This situation caused a huge problem, as many children and teenagers have been brought to the cities, and some of them have migrated to the streets for survival. However, Mahlangu (2002:27) adds that the problem of streetism seems to be more critical in Latin American states than in any other developing countries. For example, about 40 million children are living on the streets, and they are experiencing difficulties to survive.

There are more than 20 million children growing up and living on Brazilian streets. An estimated number of 5 000 street children are found in Bogete (Mahlangu, 2002:27). This is as a result of urbanisation, extreme poverty, inhuman living conditions, family disintegration, drugs and alcohol abuse, and domestic violence (Malindi, 2009:72).

2.4.3 African countries

The phenomenon of streetism exists in many places around Africa, but there is no accuracy with regard to statistics. In Africa, rapid urbanisation has brought an increase in the number of street children in cities (Mahlangu, 2002:25). For example, there is an estimated 20 000 children visible on the streets of Khartoum (Plummer *et al.*, 2007:1521) and 5 000 children who are in institutional care in Amba village in Ethiopia.

The studies reveal that street children in African countries are the result of civil war, and they are suffering from the consequences of traumatic experiences. The African street children can also be categorised into groups such as children on the street, children of the street, and children of homeless people who are born and bred on the streets (Mahlangu, 2002:26). These children are coerced to work, beg or steal on the streets as a result of poverty, family overcrowding, family disintegration and alcohol or substance abuse.

In recent years, there have been increasing numbers of street children in Zimbabwe. The dominating numbers of these children are boys. Girls who are visible on the streets are drawn into sex industries and become prostitutes to generate income; therefore, this situation causes them to spend minimal time on the streets (Malindi, 2009:73).

Over and above that, Malindi (2009:73) adds that Kenyans are also experiencing the problem of streetism. For example, in Kenya, children have migrated to the streets due to poverty; because of their friends; the death of parents; family disintegration; displacement by civil war; drought; the state's economy; HIV & AIDS; lack of education; and a need for independence (Plummer *et al.*, 2007:1521).

According to Kaime-Atterhog, Lindmark, Persson & Ahlberg (2007:601), children who are visible on the Kenyan streets are from poor families who engage in unstable income-earning activities such as working as casual workers, sex hawkers, unlicensed hawking, and illegal alcohol selling. The parents take out children from schools due to inability to pay for their education, or they need their assistance at

home. These children ultimately end up on the streets for survival (Kaime-Atterhog *et al.,* 2007:601).

Kenyan organisations working with street children confirm that most children who are seen on the streets are boys aged between five and sixteen years, with a gradually increasing number of girls. These Kenyan street children generate their income through begging, car guarding, shoe shining, scavenging, selling sweets and flowers, robbing shops, engaging in prostitution, and selling drugs (Kaime-Atterhog *et al.,* 2007:601).

In Tanzania, children have been visible on the streets as early as the 1980s and 1990s. The leading contributing factors being poverty, alcohol abuse by parents, and family conflicts (Malindi, 2009:72).

2.5 PROBLEMS THAT ARE FACED BY STREET CHILDREN

According to Oyaya and Esamai (2001:624), street children are mostly vulnerable to a wide variety of problems, as they are living on the streets without supervision, protection and guidance. Van Rooyen and Hartel (2002:188) postulates that there are millions of street children in developing and developed countries who are maltreated, malnourished, assaulted, unscrupulously abused, socially deprived and abandoned and denied affection, education and assistance. These children are physically maltreated by those who are supposed to protect them, such as police, security guards and the community in general.

In some cases, these children (especially girls on the streets) are sometimes engaged in prostitution and are being sexually abused. Children on the streets and children of the streets are addicted to glue inhalation, which results in damage to their respiratory systems. Prolonged use of these drugs and substances has physical and psychological effects such as tiredness, weight loss, distorted vision, lack of concentration, brain damage, a complete degeneration of bone, heart seizure, and lowered level of responsibility (Van Rooyen & Hartell, 2002:190).

Street children become addicted to drugs and substances in order to escape from the cold, loneliness and the hunger they are experiencing on the streets. These

children appear to be relaxed on the streets, but they experience high levels of stress due to the challenging daily lives they find themselves in. This situation results in anger, irritability, aggressiveness, mood swings, restlessness, poor sleeping patterns, lower immunity, poor memory, depression and hyperactivity (Van Rooyen & Hartell, 2002:191).

Furthermore, Oyaya and Esamai (2001:264) add other problems that the street children are experiencing, such as violence, community disapproval, police arrest, and theft of savings.

All the children on the streets are mostly experiencing violence:

- ✓ from their peers or older street children, when they are under the influence of the substances they use,
- ✓ from the surrounding community, sometimes through people on the streets who tend to exploit them, and
- ✓ while working, either through their employers or other peers working on the same place such as when selling items in the area where other street children or people exercise control.

Furthermore, West (2003:16) adds that these children might be bullied by their peers on the street or some adults. For that reason, these children normally end up having bruises, since bullying often entails fighting (Anon, 2003). Street children are totally not accepted and welcome in specific areas in the community, especially based on their general appearance and behaviour. The community tends to drive them away and sometimes have to use violence against them to get them to move to other areas (Oyaya & Esamai, 2001:624).

Anon (2003) indicates that street children have a fear of being arrested by the police and be sent back to their families or to the non-supportive atmosphere they escaped from. This happens without prior effective efforts to change and rectify the negative family situations they came from. In most cases, if these children are forced back to their families, under these circumstances, they end up migrating to the streets again.

Most of the children who migrated to urban streets are unable to save their money while on the street, as they have a fear of being robbed by other street children. This situation pressurises them to immediately spend their daily earnings either on food, pleasure or drugs. These conditions impact negatively on their lives as they become insecure with their savings (Oyaya & Esamai, 2001:625).

2.6 HOW TO PREVENT THE STREET CHILD PHENOMENON

According to Anon (2003:6), street children are socially and economically vulnerable to difficult situations in their families. These situations may compel them to migrate to the streets. The most important strategy that can be applied in order to prevent at-risk children from migrating to the streets is to protect them from the aforementioned difficulties. This strategy can only be functional if the family and community resources are strengthened in order to meet the families' difficult conditions (Ennew, 2003:110).

Some of the strategies that can be applied to prevent the problem of the street child phenomenon are discussed below (Ennew, 2003).

2.6.1 Economic support

Adults and the community should respect the street children's need for income and their economic independence rather than focusing only on rescuing them from street life. Anon (2003:8) summarises that this can be attended to through:

- The availability of programmes that respond to these children's needs, which include formal and informal education, life skills and vocational training.
- Micro-finance and other support to the parents, as this will assist in preventing the migration of children to the streets.

2.6.2 Focus on reintegration

According to Anon (2003:8), children live on the streets due to the instability of the social environment in their families, schools and communities. Therefore, these children should be reunited with their families, with the assumption that they need to

go back to their homes, and these families are willing to accept them back. It is further stated when the strategy of returning these children to their families is not functional, foster families, adoption and community homes can be identified and should be used as alternatives (Schurink, 1993:155). These children should not be immediately reintegrated into the formal education system because they might need or even prefer informal education with a curriculum, such as vocational training linked with literacy, life skills and numeracy that is relevant to their experiences in life and to their work.

Furthermore, Schurink (1993:155) argues that the programmes on the prevention of streetism at community level must focus on the provision of basic services; creation of jobs, education, advocacy, improvement of schools, and strengthening of social capital. Nonetheless, Anon (2003:9) states that members of the community should be made sensitive about streetism through awareness campaigns as this will help them avoid stigmatising ex-street children.

2.6.3 Policymaking and advocacy

Schurink (1993:151) indicates that children should be encouraged to participate in the formulation and decision-making activities, particularly in areas that directly affect their lives. The advocacy based on the perceptions of these children, their families and the community will directly address the causes of the problems that street children experienced. First, there is a further need for integrated policymaking for effective solutions. Secondly, public awareness that focuses on change should be raised through strong NGO networks (West, 2003).

2.6.4 Networking and institutional operations

There is a significant role played by NGOs in programmes of streetism, which is through the supply of services that cannot be afforded by the local and national governments (Anon, 2003:9). With that said, the role of NGOs is not adequate to significantly decrease the high number of children who have migrated to the streets. Networking with local government and other service providers will assist NGOs in combating the street child phenomenon.

In addition, Mosa (1999:7) adds that the affected families should be involved in the development of measures on how to prevent the problem of streetism. Dybics (2005:765) adds that intervention strategies for the prevention of the street child phenomenon can be categorised into three levels, namely primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

The diagram in figure 2.6 illustrates the three levels of the prevention of streetism.

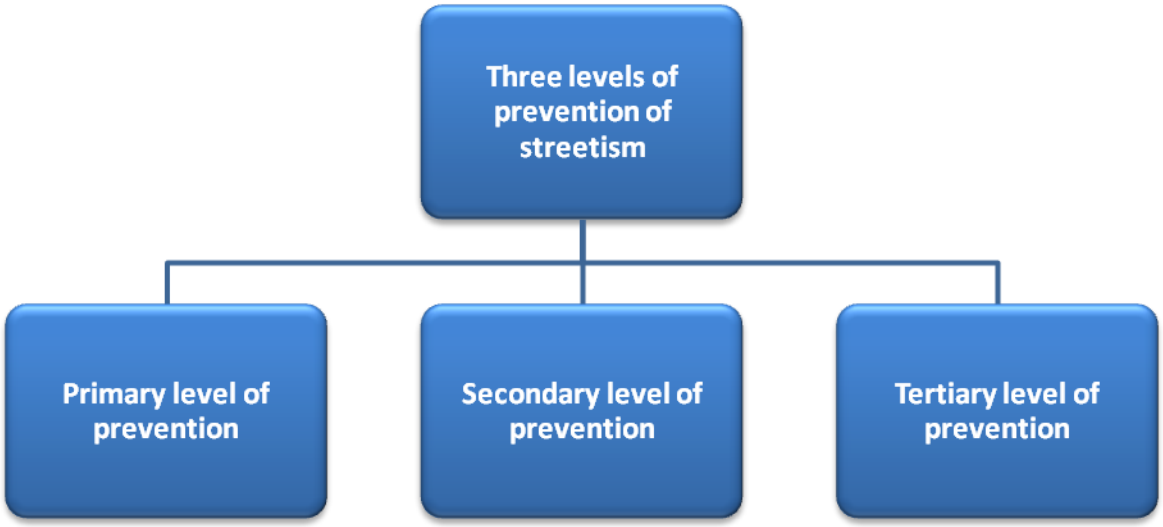

Figure 2.6: The levels of prevention of the street child phenomenon

- **Primary prevention strategy**

The focus of this strategy is on children who live in extreme poverty but have not yet migrated to the streets, with the goal of reducing the influence that will make them migrate to the streets (Dybics, 2005:765).

- **Secondary prevention strategy**

Dybics (2005:765) further argues that the main focus of the secondary strategy is on children who have migrated to the streets to work and get money but who maintain regular contact with their families. The main goal of this level is to turn street life into one of the phases which the children pass through safely into adulthood.

- **Tertiary prevention strategy**

The main aim of the strategy will be on the small number of children – those who have been orphaned, abandoned or ran away from home to come and live on the streets. These children have no family contact (children of the street) (Dybics, 2005:766).

In summary, the above-mentioned ways and strategies on the prevention of the street child phenomenon can be implemented effectively and efficiently; then the problem of streetism will be effectively combated and successfully prevented from escalating.

2.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, streetism as a whole – as to what a street child is and the factors that cause the street child phenomenon – was explored. The researcher has discussed streetism as a universal phenomenon and the problems that street children are experiencing on the streets. Lastly, the views of adults on how to prevent the problem of streetism were discussed.

The chapter that follows will explore the phenomenon of resilience in broader perspective. It will provide a detailed description of resilience, its processes and a brief history of resilience.

CHAPTER 3

RESILIENCE PHENOMENON

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter discussed the street child phenomenon and outlined the risks to it. This chapter will explore the phenomenon of resilience and outline the risks to resilience, which also cause streetism, as well as protective resources. In other words, the discussion will be about what resilience is, the processes of resilience and a brief history thereof.

The layout of Chapter 3 is as follows:

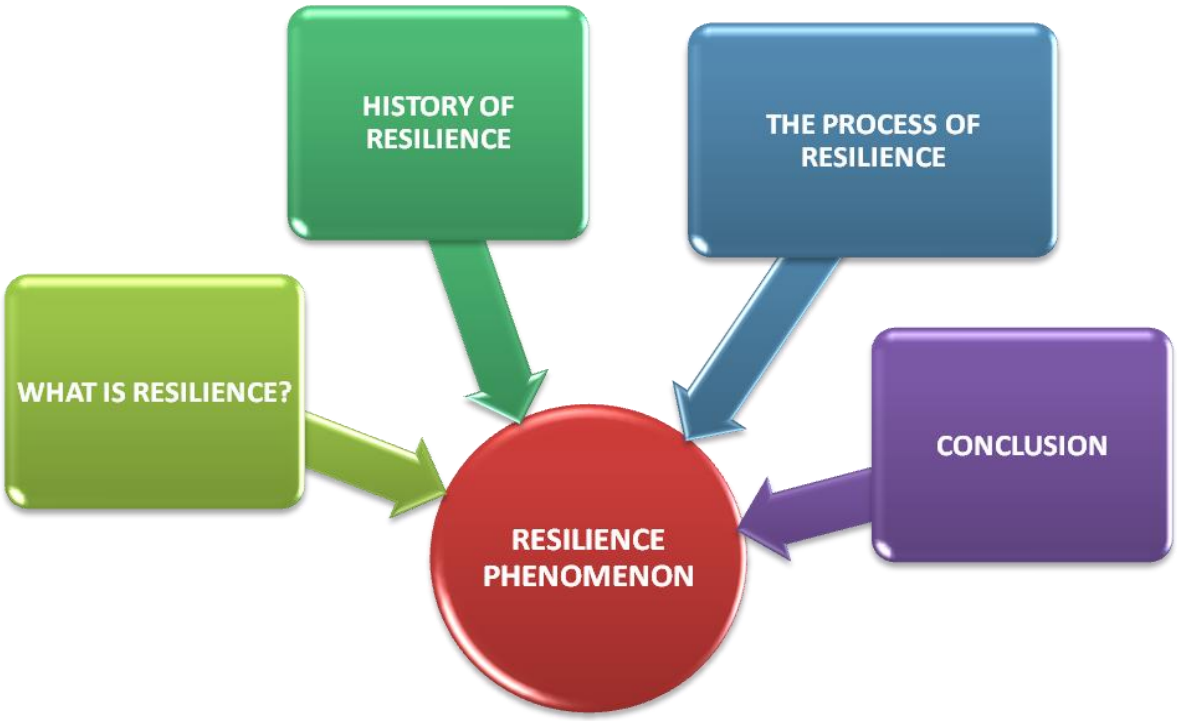

Figure 3.1: Layout of Chapter 3

3.2 WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Several attempts have been made to define the phenomenon of resilience. According to Dass-Brailsford (2005:575), resilience is a subjective and context-specific concept that is not easy to define. Resilience was initially seen as an individual's characteristic that denotes the ability to cope with difficult situations (Donald *et al.*, 2006:8,168; Martin & Marsh, 2006:267). However, Ungar (2006) defines resilience as the child's ability to navigate his or her pathways towards resilience-promoting resources that societies should provide in a culturally meaningful manner. This means that resilience depends on personal assets that combine in complex ways with ecological resources and enable a child to cope resiliently.

Resilience requires exposure to significant risks that may threaten normative development in children. According to Malindi (2009:31), there is no description of the extent to which risk must be endured before children are referred to as resilient or not. However, risk must be significant and overcome by the child for the child to be referred to as a resilient child.

Ungar (2006:53) confirms that resilience is the ability or capacity enabling a person to overcome trauma and cope adaptively with life. It is however crucial to note that context is crucial in enabling the child to resile in the context of risk. Malindi (2009:32) adds that resilience is intensely influenced by the combination of internal strengths and elements that are supportive in the broader environment.

It is further suggested that resilience is an ecological phenomenon that develops through the interactions that take place between individuals and the environments and systems such as families, schools, neighbourhoods, and the broader community (Malindi, 2009:32).

It also involves different ways in which an individual responds to risk. In coping resiliently, one requires protective processes that lower the impact of risk and the attainment of poor developmental outcomes (Tebes, Irish, Vasquez & Perkins, 2004:771).

Theron (2006:199) views resilience as a positive response to risk factors or excellent performance under unfavourable conditions. Howard and Johnson (2000:321) further describe resilience as the child's capacity to successfully adapt in spite of the exposure to stressors that are severe.

Brooks (2006:69) adds that resilience focuses on protective factors that can contribute to positive results in spite of the risk. Those factors involve an easy temperament that elicits positive responses from other people, intelligence, self-esteem, self-efficacy, effective parenting, caring and supportive adults, environmental opportunities, social competence, problem-solving skills, and a sense of purpose and future (Brooks, 2006:69).

Furthermore, Bogar and Hulse-Killacky (2006:319) conceptualise resilience as a combination of inborn personality features and environmental influences that serve to protect a person from harmful psychological effects of trauma, thus enabling him or her to live a satisfying and productive life.

However, Kruger and Prinsloo (2008:242) refer to the concept of resilience as a cumulative matrix of abilities, resources, strengths, knowledge, and adaptive skills that carry on to grow over time. They supply youth with the strength to cope despite vulnerability and adversities, risks, and trauma or stress that are brought by environmental conditions. Bogar and Hulse-Killacky (2006:319), Malindi (2009:31) and Luthar, Cicchetti and Becker (2000:545) view resilience as the ability to cope and bounce back from adversity.

According to Martin and Marsh (2006:267), the concept of resilience is defined in terms of academic context as more intense success in schools and other achievements in life in spite of environmental adversities that are brought into the picture by early traits, conditions and experiences. Martin and Marsh (2006:267) affirm that a child who is academically resilient is one who sustains a heightened level of achievement in his or her performance despite the presence of stressful conditions that put him or her at risk of failing at school or dropping out. These kinds of children also develop socially, emotionally, intellectually, morally, and even spiritually (Bernard, 2006:198).

Kruger and Prinsloo (2008:242) add that resilience surround adolescents' ability and disposition to identify; use; and effectively and efficiently manage emotional, social and cognitive modalities, and constructively respond appropriately by adapting flexibly to life situations that may be noticeable because of adversities, risks, and challenges on personal and environmental levels.

Gilligan (2004:93) and Masten and Obradovic (2008) contend that resilience is a dynamic process surrounding positive adaptation to crucial adversity. Malindi and Machenjedze (2012:73) indicate that according to Masten (2003), resilience is a common phenomenon resulting from the effective operation of basic human adaptational systems.

Masten and Obradovic (2008), Gilligan (2004:93) and Luthar, *et.al*., (2000:545) see the resilience phenomena as the process of:

- attaining better than expected results in at-high-risk people, sometimes referred to as overcoming odds against healthy development;
- sustaining competence and/or maintaining effective functioning under heightened adverse circumstances, sometimes referred to as stress resistance; and
- achieving effective or normal functioning after an exposure to traumatic experiences or circumstances of overwhelming adversity, mostly described in terms of recovery, bouncing back, normalisation, or self-righting.

Table 3.1 gives a summary of how resilience is defined.

DEFINITION OF RESILIENCE	AUTHOR	INDIVIDUAL/ECOLOGICAL
Resilience is the child's ability to navigate one's pathways towards resilience-promoting resources that societies must provide in culturally meaningful ways.	Ungar (2006)	Individual and ecological strengths
The concept of resilience is the individual's ability to cope with a difficult situation.	Donald *et al.* (2006:8, 168); Martin and Marsh (2006:267)	Individual
Resilience is an ecological phenomenon that develops via interactions that take place within the environments and systems such as families, schools, neighbourhoods and the broader community.	Brooks (2006:69)	Individual and ecological strengths
Resilience is the way in which an individual responds to risk.	Tebes, Irish, Vasquez and Perkins (2004:771)	Individual
Resilience is a positive response to risk or excellent performance under unfavourable conditions.	Theron (2006:199)	Individual and ecological strengths
Resilience is a combination of inborn personality features and environmental influences which serve to protect a person from harmful psychological effects of trauma, thus enabling an individual to live a productive life.	Bogar and Hulse-Killacky (2006:319)	Individual and ecological strengths
Resilience is an cumulative matrix of abilities, resources, strengths, knowledge and adaptive skills that carry on growing over time, which supply youth with the strength to cope in spite of vulnerability and adversities.	Kruger and Prinsloo (2008:242)	Individual and ecological strengths
Resilience is the ability to cope and bounce back from adversity.	Bogar and Hulse-Killacky (2006:319); Luthar, *et al,.* (2000:545)	Individual

Resilience is a common phenomenon resulting from the effective operation of basic human adaptation systems	Malindi and Machenjedze (2012:73)	Individual and ecological strengths
The capacity a child possesses to adapt successfully despite exposure to stressors that are severe.	Howard and Johnson (2000:321)	Individual

Table 3.1: Summary of definitions of resilience

3.3 HISTORY OF RESILIENCE RESEARCH

According to Masten and Obradovic (2008), people have shown interest in stories about individuals who have defeated unfavourable and harmful circumstances in order to be successful in their lives. The study of human resilience commenced shortly prior to 1970, and the focus thereof was entirely on children and adolescents (Howard & Johnson, 2000:322). The subjects in these studies were children and adolescents who were categorised as being at risk of psychiatric disorder, delinquency and other negative life outcomes due to a variety of individual, family and environmental factors (Howard & Johnson, 2000:322). These early studies' main focus was on characteristics that enabled individuals to thrive despite adversity (Tusaie & Dyer, 2004:3).

Furthermore, Malindi (2009:36) indicates that research on resilience commenced in the 1980s and developed from an understanding of research as an individual attribute to the present resilience notion, which is a protective, dynamic individual versus ecology interaction. However, Masten and Obradovic (2008) add that human resilience researchers emerged at the time similar to that of ecological resilience theories and researchers. Literature shows that the development of the construct of resilience from physiological and psychological research stretches from the 1800s to the present times (Tusaie & Dyer, 2004:4).

Figure 3.2 illustrates the psychological and physiological evolution of the construct of resilience from early ages (Tusaie & Dyer, 2004:5).

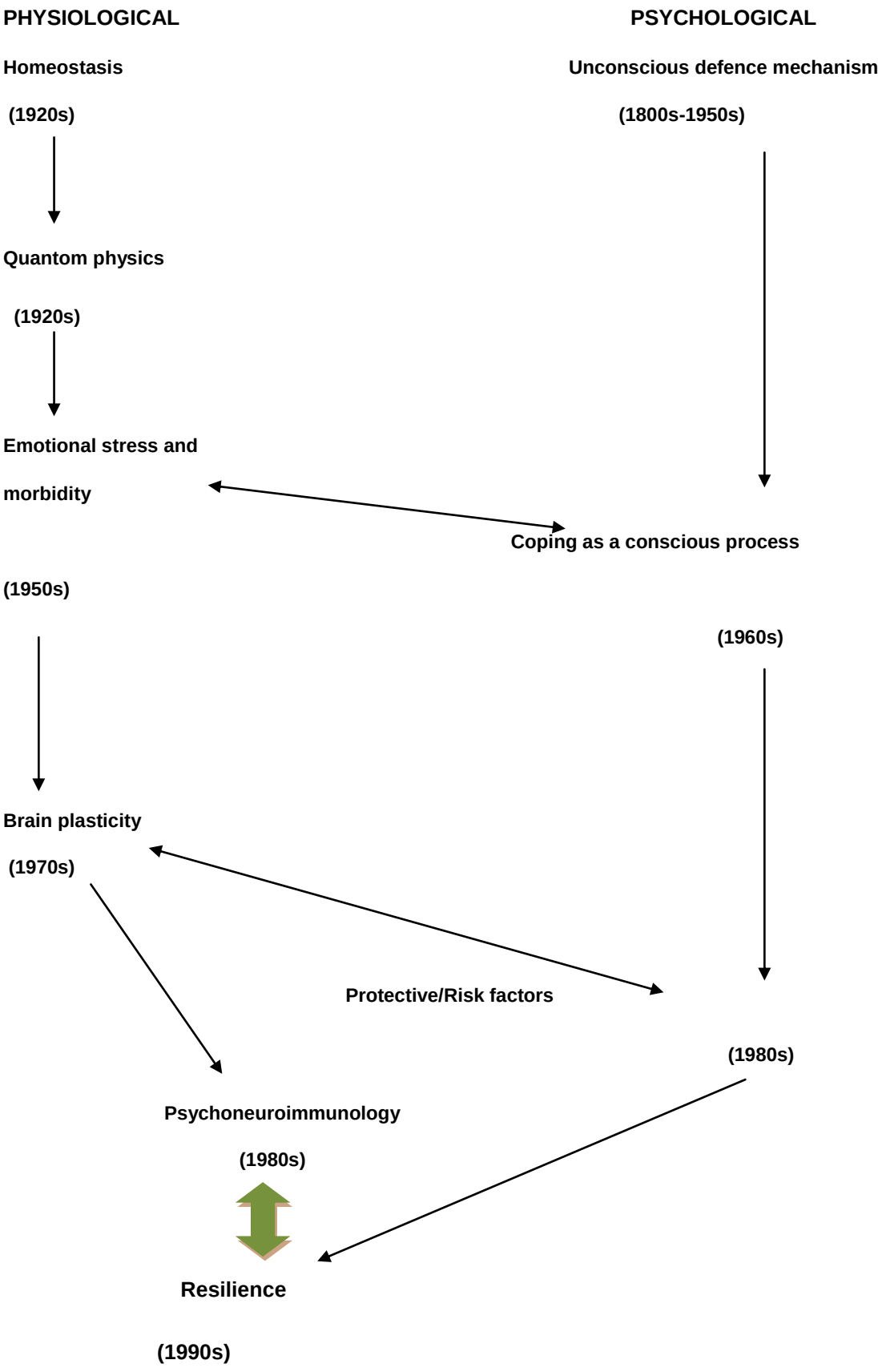

Figure 3.2: Evolution of the construct of resilience

3.4 PROCESSES OF RESILIENCE

Malindi (2009:39) maintains that not all of the people who experience socio-economic adversities fail to attain positive results in their lives. Furthermore, Malindi (2009:39) states that there are examples whereby adversity has promoted resilience in a person or a group of people. Therefore, risk processes exposed a person to situations associated with a higher incidence of positive outcomes.

Risk and protective resources will be discussed in a broader perspective in order to further understand the process of resilience. Figure 3.3 gives a clear summary of the process of resilience.

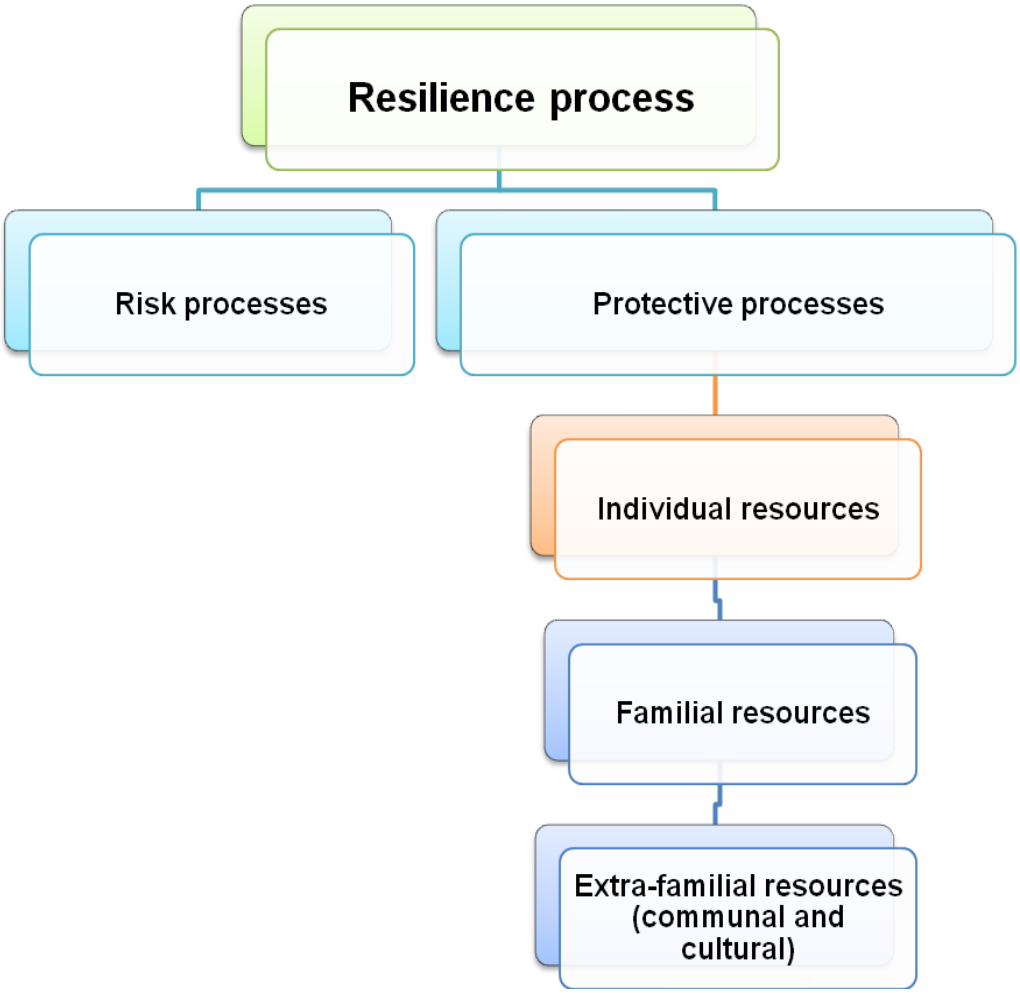

Figure 3.3: Overview of resilience processes

3.4.1 Risk processes

Malindi (2009:27) perceives risk processes as aspects associated with problems that resulted in a person and hinder his or her normal development. Over and above that, Bellin and Kovacs (2006:210) indicate that risks are the variables that interact to increase a person's probability of likely being affected by negative developmental outcomes. However, Armstrong, Birnie-Lefcovitch and Ungar (2005:276) highlight that risk or risk factors are the conditions that increase the probability that an individual will experience negative outcomes and behavioural problems. Moreover, Tusaie and Dyer (2004:4) state that risks may be perceived from an epidemiological perspective, which involves the whole group, such as children in poverty or a person's experience of trauma and an adverse incident.

Tusaie and Dyer (2004:4) add that risk factors originate from multiple or accumulating stresses from numerous individual and environmental factors stressors in life rather than from a singular traumatic incident. This implies that individual and environmental risks can be multi-layered and result in maladjustment. Brooks (2006:69) highlights the fact that children and adults face numerous risks on their way to adulthood, which include poverty; racial discrimination and injustice; unemployment; various kinds of child abuse and neglect; conflicts between parents; poor parenting; and psychopathology. The accumulation of risk is more influential than any singular risk (Brooks, 2006:69).

Furthermore, Tusaie and Dyer (2004:3) indicate that in adolescents and young children, resilience can be measured in terms of heightened attainment than the set standard in the development of a career, happiness, relationship, and physical well-being in spite of the risk factors or processes. On the other hand, Theron (2006:201) adds that whilst the protective factors reduce the probability of the adversity that has resulted in patterns that are dysfunctional, the protective factors increase such probability. Risk factors are also functioning within personal, familial and extra-familial factors, which include genetic disorders, developmental risks, domestic situations, socio-economic circumstances, and experiences in culture (Theron, 2006:201; Armstrong *et al.*, 2005:276; Malindi, 2009:41). Therefore, of the three risk

factors, familial factors have the possibility to heighten the odds for the presence of child psychiatric disorder (Armstrong *et al.*, 2005:276).

Malindi (2009:41) further adds that familial and environmental risk factors involve family psychiatric problems and intense social stressors; low socio-economic status; low parental academic attainment; poor functioning family; parents who are harsh; armed conflicts; environmental degradation; and exploitation. These risks are associated with the state of hopelessness and helplessness (Malindi; 2009:41). Brooks (2006:69) argues that the problematic outcomes that have resulted from the above-stated risk factors involve mental health disorders, school dropouts, teenage pregnancies, substance and alcohol abuse, and juvenile crimes. Theron and Dalzell (2006:398) say that the social development of youths has the potential to exposing them to social risks. Those risks include:

- parent-adolescent conflict
- negative reaction to autocratic and laissez-faire parenting styles
- negative peer pressure
- peer group rejection

Malindi (2009:41) states that a child who is resilient has an easy temperament and protective inborn resources such as curiosity; self-esteem; being able to tolerate frustrations; ability to maintain a relationship; a sense of humour; and a feeling of competence. Insufficient aforementioned risk attributes mostly cause children to become vulnerable to adverse conditions. Additionally, Tusaie and Dyer (2004:3) argue that risk has been studied in relation to developmental transitions, which include school entry; detachment from parents during adolescence; and transition in incidents such as disasters, family disruption, or unemployment. These conditions, like any other forms of stressful conditions, also place a person at risk of psychosocial development (Tusaie & Dyer, 2004:3).

Some risk factors can be biological, such as low birth weight, age and poor memory. These factors are implicated in the poor adjustment development. There are other

inborn variables that can lower resilience within a child, such as limited intelligence, which can impact negatively on the child's capabilities in problem-solving (Malindi, 2009:41).

To further understand the risk factors that impede the resilience and cause streetism among other social problem, a summary of some of them will be presented in figure 3.4 below.

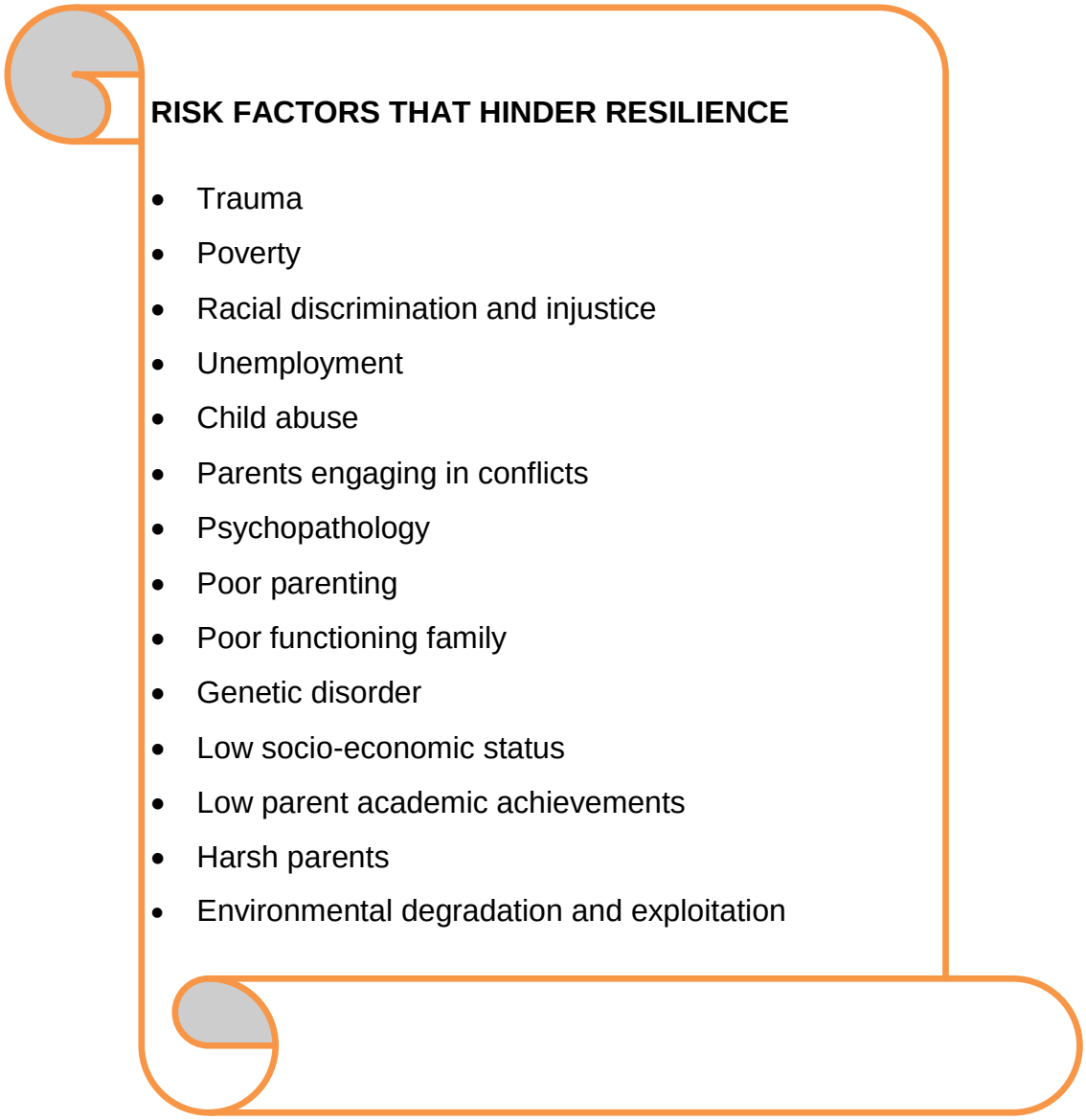

Figure 3.4: Summary of risk factors that impede a person's resiliency

3.4.2 Protective resources

According to Theron (2006:199), an individual who is resilient has inherent strengths which provide him or her with power to cope with adverse situations. Those strengths are usually known as protective factors.

Furthermore, Donald *et al.* (2006:172) state that protective resources or factors are defined as factors that compensate for the protection, support and empowerment of an individual's reaction towards stressful situation. Moreover, Malindi (2009:42) and Bellin and Kovacs (2006:210) perceive protective resources as situations that decreases the effects of risks. These protective resources may reduce the effect of risks and empower the individuals' abilities to cope in life (Malindi, 2009:42).

However, Tusaie and Dyer (2004:4) say that protective resources or factors are the operations that shield those who are at risk from the consequences of the risk factors. Like risk factors, protective factors can operate within an individual or environment (Tusaie and Dyer, 2004:4), the family, and within cultural and institutional levels and structure (Malindi, 2009:42) and contribute towards positive results regardless of the risk factors. Furthermore, protective factors are defined in relation to the family, the school and the community, as the three primary systems in the world of a child (Howard & Johnson, 2000:322). The above description includes children who are categorised as children on the street and children of the street (West, 2003:8; Montane, 2006:8; Raffaelli & Koller, 2005:25).

Howard and Johnson (2000:321) indicate that just as risks have been recognised as cumulative, protective factors are also perceived to have similar cumulative consequences in the lives of people. The more the presence of protective factors within individuals, the more likely they are to be resilient. If the number of stressors or risk factors is greater than that of protective factors, a person who has previously experienced resilience will develop symptoms in one of the realms of physical, psychosocial and behavioural work (Tusaie & Dyer, 2004:4).

Anorowitz (2005:201) and Theron (2006:199) further point out that protective factors emanate from a difficult interaction with, first, personal attributes such as self-belief,

health, development and self-recognition, autonomy, self-help skills and aptitude; secondly, from interaction with family resources such as parental attributes, parental behaviour and connectedness, sound family structures, and a supportive family network; and lastly, from interaction with socio-environmental resources such as a conducive neighbourhood and school environment, positive peer group, supportive community groups and institutions, connectedness with a pro-social adult, and an effective and positive peer relationship. Researches have shown that Bronfenbrenner's model of child development indicates that children develop within nested systems such as the family, peer group, school, communities and societies; these play a pivotal role in the process of resilience (Malindi, 2009:43; Howard & Johnson, 2000:323; Masten, 2003:169).

Protective factors can weaken the effects of risks in three models, namely the compensatory model, the challenge model and the protective factor model (Theron, 2006:200). The three models are briefly defined below.

- **The compensatory model**

This model suggests that a protective factor can compensate for the risks by neutralising its consequences.

- **The challenge model**

This model implies that if the risk factors are moderate, this will empower a person's capability to cope with stress in the future.

- **The protective factor model**

The protective factor model implies that a protective factor assists interactive processes that moderate the consequence of the risks and slightly change the response to risks.

Malindi (2009:40) states that personal and environmental protective resources available to an individual interrupt the risk process when a person is resilient. The protective mechanisms permit an individual to survive in spite of the adverse conditions. A youth who is raised by a poor but loving and caring family will be

differently affected from the one who is raised by a family that is poor and dysfunctional. This simply means that not all the children will be affected by the risks (Malindi, 2009:42). Theron (2006:199) further explains that a youth who experiences difficulties in learning exhibits fewer protective factors and finds it difficult to successfully adapt when faced with difficulties.

Brooks (2006:70) indicates that the most cited protective factors are social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy, sense of purpose and future, caring and supportive environment, high positive expectation, and opportunities to meaningful involvement. These protective factors include, among others, personal protective factors (autonomy, self-help skills and aptitude); familial protective factors (sound family structures and a supportive family network) and extra-familial protective factors (bond with pro-social adults, positive peer relationships and effective teaching and learning) (Theron, 2006:199; Brooks, 2006:70). The adolescents who experience learning difficulties are more vulnerable, and their resilience is frequently lacking (Theron, 2006:199). It is further stated that these children should be assisted to be resilient by ensuring that protective resilient resources are available for them at schools, their communities and at their homes (Malindi, 2009:6). Also, Snider and Dawes (2006:14) argue that resiliency within children (including street youth) should be strengthened to enable them to capitalise on their good interpersonal skills.

Masten and Obradovic (2008) highlight the protective systems that have been implicated in varied studies of resilience and that have decreased the development of risk factors. Those protective systems include attachment, agency, self-efficacy and the mastery motivation system, intelligence, central nervous system for problem-solving and information processing, micro-system such as family, peers and classroom, community level systems and collective efficacy, and macro-system such as culture, media, and national and international organisations (Masten & Obradovic, 2008).

Gilligan (2004:93) states that an individual who displays resilience avoids the total impact of adversity. The protective factors then shield them from the worst consequences of negative experiences. These protective factors are mostly

strengthened in building youth in the context of family, school and other social groups in with which they live, for example (Brooks, 2006:70). Donald *et al.* (2006:176) point out that through building resilience a great deal can be attained in terms of turning cycles that are negative into ones that are most positive. These protective factors relate to the relative strength of individual characteristics, families' environment and social support networks (Donald *et al.,* 2006:176; Malindi, 2009:44). It is very crucial to bear in mind that risks can have negative effects therefore; individual, familial and extra-familial protective resources can be of immense help to resilience (Malindi, 2009:44).

The three key protective resources such as individual, familial and extra-familial will be discussed, respectively below.

3.4.2.1 Individual resources

The development of resilience in a youth is facilitated by the quantity and quality of various temperamental, cognitive and personality traits. Lachman and Problete (2002:604) state that personal attributes such as high self-esteem, good problem-solving skills, having an interest in sports and hobbies, being in control of the past by being able to talk through difficult past experiences without dwelling on memories that are painful, and temperament that elicits responses that are positive from the family and outside environment are the most effective protective factors. These attributes enable a child to cope with adversity, stresses and risks (Donald *et al.,* 2006:172; Howard & Johnson, 2000:322). The characteristics of these protective factors include, first, communication skills that are effective and general problem-solving skills. These enable them to actively face problems in life.

Secondly, a positive self-concept, a feeling of self-worth and strong interpersonal skills are part of the individual protective factors. This enables children to be positively involved with others such as parents or caregivers, peers, and their teachers at school (Donald et al., 2006:172; Howard & Johnson, 2000:322). Thirdly, a sense of autonomy, identity, and purpose are an integral part of individual protective resources. These capacitate children with the ability to direct their actions, build up a sense of who they are and where they are heading to in life. Lastly, a

strong internal locus of control is one of the individual protective factors (Donald *et al.,* 2006:173).

Furthermore, Daniel and Wassell (2002:85) state that there should be individual adaptation in practices that aim at promoting resilience in order to suit each individual young person and his or her unique circumstances. There are five strategies that can be implemented in order to facilitate resilience within an individual child. These strategies comprise a reduction of vulnerability and risk, a reduction of the number of stressors and pile-up, increasing the resources available, mobilising protective processes, and fostering resilience strings.

However, Tebes *et al.* (2004:772) add that there are potential protective processes that can be promotive of resilience within children (including street children), such as a reduction of the influence of risks by changing the meaning of the risk factors; reducing the negative connection reactions following exposure to the risk factor, promoting self-esteem and self-efficacy through successful accomplishment of tasks, and opening up opportunities for these children (Tebes *et al.*, 2004:772). According to Armstrong *et al.* (2005:277), an active approach to problem-solving, ability from infancy to have a positive view of others; incapability of being alert and autonomous, a tendency to search for novel experiences, and an optimistic perception even in the face of adversity and stress.

3.4.2.2 Familial resources

Donald *et al.* (2006:174) point out that a family that is stable is the key protective factor in children's lives (street children included). Brooks (2006:70) alludes to the fact that family is the strongest and most immediate care giving environment that has the greatest impact on the development of resilience in children, including those classified as street children.

Poverty can directly and indirectly have an effect on parenting. Howard and Johnson (2000:323) have identified numerous protective factors that relate to consistency and quality of care and support, and a personal experience during the stages of development such as infancy, childhood and adolescence. Moreover, Donald *et al.* (2006:174) point out that because of these protective factors, the opportunities of a poor child raised up in a family with stability is decreased. Therefore, there are three familial attributes that are protective towards an adverse situation, which will then be individually discussed below.

Researchers have pointed out that protective factors have been recognised as crucial in infancy and childhood in conditions of poverty. In many South African families, the role of caring can be fulfilled positively by grandmothers or any other relative besides biological parents (Donald *et al.*, 2006:174). In this case, they (grandmothers) play a pivotal role in looking after those children who are termed children on the streets, as in most incidences, they are left with them, either because a parent or parents are deceased or any other circumstances (Donald *et al.*, 2006:174).

Additionally, Brooks (2006:71) argues that a caring and supportive relationship by an adult who is trusted is necessary for an individual's development, supplying a crucial form of protection. Those relationships have attributes such as trust, attention, empathy, availability, affirmation, respect, and virtue. Donald *et al.* (2006:174) argue that it is hugely important to stimulate and support the development of competency in school achievements. Developing a sense of competence stimulates a person to develop skills and objectives that connect with his/her social setting. Researchers found that there are sets of values that a family should possess that are linked to

religious beliefs and traditional cultural values. They might be a set of consistent norms and rules about the behaviour of an individual child within the family (Donald *et al.*, 2006:174).

Brooks (2006:70) indicates that family is the most immediate care giving environment, and it has enormous influence on the resilience development within a child (Howard & Johnson, 2000:326). The age of the parent with the opposite sex than the child's, consistent nourishing in the first years of life, alternative caregivers who step in, in the absence biological parents, a multi-age network of relatives, the presence of siblings, and a rule structure in the adolescent stage are the most appropriate protective factors within the family (Armstrong *et al.*, 2005:277).

Lachman and Poblete (2002:604) add other protective factors that can facilitate resilience, such as the ability to use social support surrounding the family, authoritative style of parenting, perceived social support; ability to form a friendship and develop a new relationship, and a person who gives care and support that correlates with the child's needs.

3.4.2.3 Extra-familial resources

According to Donald *et al.* (2006:174), parents or caregivers who are poor with regard to a good support system or network are unable to raise their children effectively. Those supportive networks function as protective factors for the youth. The following networks have effectively performed the protective function for the youth: first, network of peers; secondly, important people who act as positive role models, and lastly, family friends, neighbours and other contacts from the local community (Donald *et al*., 2006:175).

Furthermore, Donald *et al*., (2006:177) point out that there are other forms of networks that can also act as protective factors. Those networks include stimulating peers to accept diversity and social cohesion at school, acting as a role model to the children at school; and stimulating children to form relationships with adults who are supportive and mentors who have potential in their community (Donald *et al.*, 2006:177). However, Lachman and Poblete (2002:604) highlight some of the

protective factors as follows: a concerned parent who is involved in a child's education, parents who provide a child with self-direction and are interested in the child's goals and interests, the presence of positive role models such teachers and church leaders, support from a church group, and societal attitude of positive respect for authority.

The environment cannot contribute only to the individual's risks but can also provide protection, empowering positive outcomes (Brooks, 2006:70). It is further suggested that if the environment contributes to resilience within a person, then the protective factors can be slightly changed to increase protection in a person's life (Brooks, 2006:70). Developing environmental contexts that are positive within schools, families and the broader community can reduce the risks in an individual child's life (Brooks, 2006:70).

The school environment is regarded as one potential in strengthening resilience within the youth who are at risk (Howard & Johnson, 2000:322). The schools can take care of the children by paying attention to them through stimulating participation in class, listening to them, intervening when they are experiencing problems; and allowing them to build relationships (Brooks, 2006:71). Participation in school extra-mural activities and connectedness to the school has been associated with lower rates of early dropout, criminal offences, reduced level of emotional distress, reduced suicidal thoughts, reduced violent behaviour, and reduced use of cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana among youth who are at high risk, including street youth (Brooks, 2006:71).

Howard and Johnson (2000:322) state that children living in a disadvantaged home are more likely to be resilient if they attend a school that has caring, supportive and attentive teachers. It is further pointed out that children living in a disadvantaged community are considered to be more at risk than those living in rich areas. Protective factors in this case are the power of social support provided by kin or other relevant stakeholders in the community (Howard & Johnson, 2000:323).

The protective factors that relate to promoting resilience within an individual, familial and extra-familial resource will then be summarised in the table below.

INDIVIDUAL PROCESSES	◆ High self-esteem ◆ Good problem-solving skills ◆ Having an interest in sports and hobbies ◆ Being in control of the past by not dwelling on painful memories ◆ Temperament ◆ Ability to cope with stress ◆ Positive self-concept ◆ Feeling of self-worth ◆ Strong interpersonal skills ◆ Sense of autonomy ◆ Sense of identity and purpose ◆ Locus of control ◆ Ability from infancy to obtain a positive view of others ◆ Tendency to search for novel experience ◆ Being optimistic
FAMILIAL PROCESSES	◆ Role of caring by parents or caregivers ◆ Trust, attention, and empathy ◆ Availability and affirmation ◆ Respect and virtue ◆ Developing a sense of competence ◆ Age of the opposite sex parent ◆ Consistent nourishing in the first years ◆ Alternative caregivers who step in, in the absence of parents ◆ Multi-age network of relatives ◆ Presence of siblings ◆ Ability to use the social support surrounding the family ◆ Authoritative style of parenting ◆ Perceived social support ◆ Ability to form friendships

EXTRA-FAMILIAL PROCESSES	◆ **Network of peers** ◆ **Positive role models, e.g. teachers, church leaders, and others** ◆ **Family friends and neighbours** ◆ **Stimulating peers to accept adversity** ◆ **Social cohesion at school** ◆ **Stimulating children to form relationships with adults who are supportive** ◆ **Mentors who have potential in the community** ◆ **Concerned parent who is involved in a child's education** ◆ **Parents who provide a child with self-direction** ◆ **Support from the church group** ◆ **Societal attitude of positive respect for authority**

Table 3.2: Summary of protective processes

It is noteworthy that the protective resources mentioned above can be instrumental in preventing streetism.

3.5 CONCLUSION

Chapter 3 explored the resilience phenomenon and defined the concept of resilience. The researcher discussed the history of and the process of resilience.

Chapter 4 will explore research methodology in the study and how empirical research was conducted.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter discussed the resilience phenomenon. The main aim of this exploratory study was to explore the views of street children on how to prevent the problem of streetism in South Africa. The study comprised two phases namely, literature study and empirical research. Chapters, two and three were compiled as part of phase one. Chapter 4 will provide a detailed discussion on how phase two, namely empirical research was carried out. It will provide clarity with regard to the research design, procedures used to collect and analyse the collected data, and the description of the research ethics.

Figure 4.1 illustrates the overview of Chapter 4.

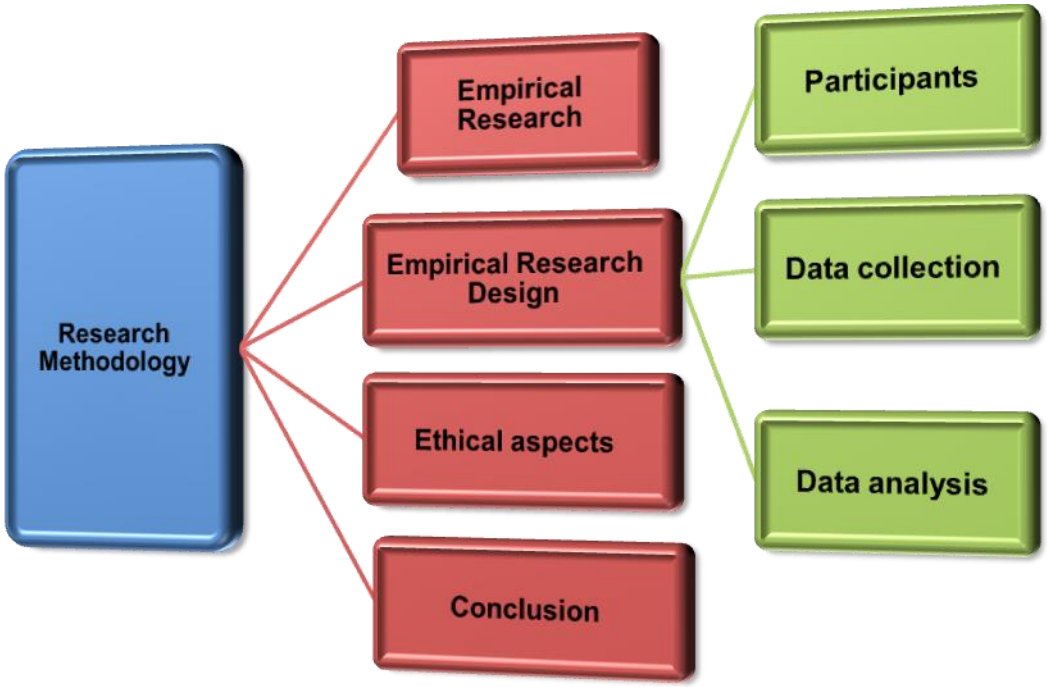

Figure 4.1: Overview of Chapter 4

4.2 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

This study was essentially a phenomenological research study (Leedy & Ormrod 2010:141), that was carried out in order to understand street children's views on how streetism could be prevented. Many studies focussing on the plight of street children tended to focus on how adults felt about the prevention of streetism in communities. Literature is silent on the views of street children themselves on how streetism can be prevented. Preceding research reflects "adultist" views on how streetism can be prevented (Ennew, 2003). Failure to tailor interventions that incorporate the views of street children has led to the failure of many programs and an escalation of the street child numbers (Vogel, 2001:229). Therefore, this study aimed at shedding light on what the street youth think or view as the best strategies to be implemented in order to prevent the street-child problem.

4.3 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH DESIGN

There are various research designs that can be employed in conducting an empirical study, namely qualitative, quantitative and mixed method (Ivonkova, Creswell & Clark, 2007:263). In this study, I chose a qualitative research design since I wished to study the views of street children in their naturalistic contexts. I had no intention to interfere and change the setting or context. In other words, a phenomenological qualitative study was conducted in order to give a clearer picture of how people experience things in the universe (Fouche & Schurink, 2011:316) and how they understand a particular situation or phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:11).

4.3.1 Participants

The population targeted for the phenomenological study was all the street youth on South African streets. Since it was not possible to sample all the street children in the study, the researcher restricted the number to 20 African boys and girls who were between the ages of 10 and 16. These children were categorised as *children on the streets* because they still had ties with their parents or guardians. The participants spent time on the streets to earn some money to contribute their earnings to help their families (Malindi, 2009:63; Grundling *et al.*, 2004:97; Raffaelli &

Koller, 2005:251; Montane, 2006:8; West, 2003:8; Kaime-Atterhog & Ahlberg, 2008:1345; Lefeh, 2008:19).

The participants visited the drop-in centre for meals and life skills programmes. The number was not equally distributed: twelve boys and eight girls. As was earlier stated, the reason why African boys were more than girls is that due to the apartheid policy that sought to disadvantage and impoverish Africans, street children in South Africa are typically African and male (Le Roux, 2001; Malindi & Theron, 2010).

In order to carry out the study, the researcher had to seek written permission from the Non-Governmental Organisation that runs the drop-in-centre where these children went for food and some life skills programmes after school. The NGO and caregivers granted written permission to work with the children. The researcher, in other words, sought the approval of the gatekeepers (Creswell, 2009:178; Creswell, 2012:211) who provided access to the centre to execute the research. The supervisor of the centre assisted the researcher in locating the participants and identifying the place to conduct the study (Creswell, 2012:211).

The researcher employed the non-probability purposive sampling method in order to select ten boys and ten girls. This sampling method was used because I had no intention of generalising the findings and I needed the participation of only those at-risk children who had street life experiences (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:211; Strydom, 2011b:231). In a non-probability sampling method, there are various forms of sampling such as convenience (accidental) sampling; quota sampling; purposive sampling (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:212); snowball sampling (Maree & Pietersen, 2007:177); target sampling; and dimensional sampling (Strydom, 2011b:233). The researcher therefore used purposive sampling to select participants for the execution of the study. The participants had the characteristics of interest to the researcher. The inclusion criteria were that the participants had to be children according to the constitution of South Africa, they had to have street life experiences and attend school. The participants were in grades ranging from 4 to 11. It is important to note that some of the participants were over-age because of having dropped out of school and urbanisation.

Children between the ages of 10 and 16 availed themselves for the successful selection of participants. Twenty of them (twelve boys and eight girls) volunteered to participate in the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:101). The participants were not compelled to participate (Strydom, 2011a:116). They then consented to participate by signing a voluntary informed consent form, after it was read and thoroughly explained to them. All the children participated in focus group interviews. Four focus group interviews involving five participants each were conducted.

The participants were all from a rural Free State Province town in South Africa. They were mostly from poverty-stricken families that were faced with a high rate of unemployment. There are few job opportunities in their town, since agriculture is the main industry in this town. Most of the adults who have little education are domestic workers. It is important to note that most able-bodied people had migrated to the more industrialised cities in search of meaningful employment. Most children in the town were cared for by members of the extended family, namely grandmothers and aunts. Some of the children growing up in the township are in child-headed households. There is a sizeable number of single-parent families wherein single mothers with little education are breadwinners.

The participants had been “working” on the streets for between three months and up to five years. The NGO had discovered them on the streets and at a garbage disposal site where they went in search of edibles. The NGO returned them to schools and encouraged them to come to the drop-in-centre for meals. The participants continued living with their guardians, grandparents, two poor parents, or one single parent, being either a father or a mother. Most of the participants resided in the informal settlement that sprang up due to urbanisation. This means that the participants and their families came from the farms surrounding the township. The researcher used pseudonyms to identify the participants so as to protect their identities and to not infringe their rights to privacy (South Africa, 1996).

4.3.2 Data collection

Focus group interviews were used as data-gathering techniques. In this regard, I met the participants at the drop-in-centre where they congregated after school as pointed

out. Each focus group consisted of five participants. Focus groups are very useful in qualitative research since they enable the researcher to gather rich data (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2007). This happens when participants confirm each other's experiences or even when they refute some of the answers they hear. Interviews are flexibly used since the researcher can probe for a deeper understanding. Probing gave the researcher the chance to obtain additional information from the participants (Creswell, 2012:221). In this way, I gained a deeper understanding of the participant's views and beliefs (Greeff, 2011:351; Malindi, 2009:100) on how the participants thought streetism could be prevented. Probing allowed for the clarification of answers (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a:87).

Interviews allowed the researcher the opportunity of obtaining information through interacting with the street children who had knowledge regarding the phenomenon of the problem of streetism (Greeff, 2011:342). The participants were honest in their answering. It was also clear that they had very strong views about streetism and how it could be prevented. They were aware of the risks that cause streetism and of the risks inherent in street life.

The researcher met with the participants at 15:00 at the drop-in centre, where they received meals prepared by the caregivers, as they were children on the streets who still had some ties with their parents or guardians (Kaime-Atterhog & Ahlberg, 2008:1345; Lefeh, 2008:19).

The researcher spent four afternoons interviewing the participants. Although the researcher was allocated two afternoons, she did not reach data saturation, therefore she had to ask for two more days to conduct the study. She conveyed to the participants the purpose of her study (Ary *et al*., 2006:412), and for how the interviews would probably last (Creswell, 2012:221). The interviews lasted between 55 minutes and one and a half hour on average. Although interview questions were formulated in English, the researcher conducted the interviews in Sesotho because all the participants were Sesotho-speaking, and they were able to express themselves much better in their mother tongue.

The researcher began the conversation with small talks in order to “break the ice” and make the participants feel secure (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:151). She audio-taped the interview with the consent of the participants (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a:89), as this would allow her to get an accurate record of her conversation with the participants (Greeff, 2011:359; Creswell, 2012:221) and transcribed them and then translated them into English. The researcher even took some brief notes and asked some additional questions at the end of the interviews (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a:89). After the researcher had finished with the interviews, she listened to the tape and reflected on the interviews and then made transcripts of what the participants have said (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a:89).

4.3.3 Data analysis

Nieuwenhuis (2007b:101) states that during qualitative research, the researcher collects texts or words through interviewing the participants or through writing field notes during observations. Likewise, in this study, I collected textual data through focus group interviews. As the researcher, I read and reread the interview transcripts very carefully in order to search for data that would respond to her research question (Malindi, 2009:106). In qualitative research, the collected data are content-analysed by identifying and grouping it in terms of themes or categories (Malindi, 2009:106). Researchers develop the inductive codes through the examination of the qualitative data (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b:107).

In this study, the researcher developed inductive codes and did not use a priori codes, meaning the codes that are predetermined (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b:107; Malindi, 2009:106). The researcher started a process of open and axial coding, which is attached as Appendix E. The inductive codes were developed after the researcher had fully examined the data that she had collected through focus group interviews. As soon as she had recognised such data, she coded that part of data. The codes were used to formulate themes, which the example is attached as Appendix F).

The researcher organised and categorised related codes into themes by assigning a label or description to each category and then used her own descriptive words to

establish a group (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b:108). She went through the transcripts to make sure that there is no theme that she had missed (Malindi, 2009:108). The researcher therefore used the themes to establish a total understanding of how streetism can be prevented. She broke the themes that she had identified into sub-themes (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b:108). Content analysis was used to look at the data in various angles in order to understand and interpret the collected data (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b:101) and to identify themes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:145).

4.3.4 Trustworthiness in qualitative research

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007b:113), trustworthiness is tremendously important in qualitative research. Likewise, in this study, steps were taken to ensure trustworthiness in the qualitative data that she collected. Trustworthiness was heightened by taking steps to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The steps that follow were taken to promote trustworthiness.

4.3.4.1 Credibility

Schurink *et al.* (2011:419) describe credibility as the alternate to internal validity. It is related to how believable and convincing data are (Malindi, 2009:110). Credibility in this study was achieved through processes of peer debriefing, referential adequacy (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:277), and by using representative quotations from the text transcribed (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004:110).

- **Peer debriefing**

Peer debriefing involved the reviewing of the researcher's analyses, perceptions and the conclusions that she made. The researcher requested the social workers and the caregivers found at the NGO, who took care of the street children and who took part in the study, to go over and scrutinise her perceptions and conclusions. This was done in order to promote credibility (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:277). Their perceptions and recommendations were included in the researcher's final report.

- **Referential adequacy**

Referential adequacy in this study referred to materials that were used to collect data through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews (Malindi, 2009). The interviews were tape-recorded; therefore, this ensured adequate preservation of data for later reference (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:277). Those who read this work will be able to check the researcher's interpretation, as she appended the audit trial to indicate how she processed the data. Only the data that was relevant was included in the study (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004:110).

4.3.4.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which qualitative research findings can be generalised and transferred to other similar contexts (Ary *et al.*, 2006:507; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004:110). Schurink *et al.* (2011:420) further add that transferability can be described as the alternative to generalisability. The researcher ensured that transferability was achieved in the study by describing the research process and participant sampling. Transferability was facilitated through the provision of a clearer description of culture and context, selection procedure and the participants' features, collection of data and how it will be analysed (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004:110). The setting was described in detail, and the researcher selected her representative quotes carefully (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b:115).

4.3.4.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to how logical, well documented and audited the data collected are (Schurink *et al.*, 2011:420). The process of data collection was described in detail. Dependability was promoted by including interview excerpts and an example of open and axial coding (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:278). A thick description of the data was provided.

- **Thick description of data**

An audio-tape was used to record the data that were collected through focus group interviews and ensured that the recording was exact. The data were transcribed and translated, the inductive codes were also analysed and developed. The research

findings documented and provided supporting excerpts from the interviews (Babbie & Mouton, 2007:277).

4.3.4.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is described as the extent to which the research is free of bias in the procedures and interpretation of the research findings (Ary *et al.,* 2006:507). It refers to the degree to which other independent parties can corroborate the findings of a particular study. Schurink *et al.* (2011:421) describe confirmability as the ultimate procedure in achieving objectivity.

Confirmed data minimises the possibility of being biased in drawing conclusions, interpreting data and making recommendations (Malindi, 2009). In order to ensure confirmability, the researcher ensured that data in the study was interpreted without any bias and that caregivers and social workers from the NGO confirmed the findings. She discussed the findings with the caregivers and some NGO representatives. She also asked for their critical comments on her research findings and interpretations. In a few instances, she returned to the participants (street children) to enable them to query her findings and to clarify her understanding (Malindi, 2009:113).

4.4 ETHICAL ASPECTS

According to Strydom (2011a:113), qualitative research is principally based on cooperation, trust, promises and expectations between the researcher and the participants who are involved in a study. Ethical problems may arise in the research project as humans are used as the objects of the study; therefore, ethical guidelines serve as standards that a researcher must utilise to evaluate his or her conduct of research (Strydom, 2011a:114).

The ethical issues that follow provided guidance for the study and will be individually discussed below.

4.4.1 Informed consent

Strydom (2011a:116) and Leedy and Ormrod (2010:101) state that participation in a study should strictly be voluntary at all times, and no one should be coerced to participate in a study. In this study, the participants volunteered and consented to their participation by signing the consent and assent forms that they were provided with by the researcher (Appendix C). The guardians of 20 participants also signed the consent forms to permit their children to participate in the study. The process was facilitated by the caregivers who approached these children's families on behalf of the researcher in order to obtain parental permission.

The researcher informed the participants about the nature of the study and gave them the choice to participate in the study without being compelled to do so. The potential participants were also afforded the opportunity to withdraw if they so wished, as participation was strictly voluntary (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:101). The researcher did not use deception in order to get participants' consent to participate in the study (Strydom, 2011a:119). Therefore, no form of compensation was used because the use thereof could have compromised the aim of the study (Strydom, 2011a:121).

4.4.2 Protection from harm

According to Strydom (2011a:115), participants in any study can be emotionally and/or physically harmed in some way. It is therefore crucial not to expose them to any unnecessary physical harm (loss of life or limb) or psychological harm (unusual stress, embarrassment or loss of self-esteem) (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:101). The researcher was totally aware that street children had been exposed to many forms of physical and psychological harm (Malindi, 2009:113); therefore, the researcher ensured that she refrained from exposing them to such conditions

The researcher informed the participants that if any form of discomfort occurred, she would avail to them the necessary debriefing and counselling in order to correct the problems generated during the research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:101; Strydom, 2011a:122). This has been included in the consent form appended.

4.4.3 Right to privacy

Leedy and Ormrod (2010:102) state that a study that makes use of people should strictly respect their right to privacy. In terms of Section 2(14) of the Constitution (1996), everyone has the right not to have his or her privacy infringed upon. Focus group interviews were used in this study, therefore the participants were informed of the limitations regarding the right to privacy and the procedure that will be followed to ensure that there is no breach of privacy that will be evident (Strydom, 2011a:119). For example, I explained to that what was discussed had to remain between us. I promised to keep the data away from the public. The identity of the participants was protected (street children in this regard) by using pseudonyms in place of their real names to ensure anonymity. The participants understood that their names would not be revealed to anyone without written permission (Malindi, 2009:115). The researcher ensured that she kept their conversations strictly confidential and had given them pseudonyms for in-depth descriptions of the street children's responses (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:103).

4.4.4 Internal Review Board

Universities have ethics committees, which are normally known as internal review boards. The purpose of these boards is to inspect the research proposals in order to minimise the risks faced by participants in a study (Strydom, 2011a:127). North-West University provided the researcher with the ethical clearance number in order to conduct the study. The ethics number is the following: **FH-SB-2012-0018**

4.4.5 Honesty with professional colleagues

The research findings were reported in a complete and honest manner. The researcher did not misinterpret what the participants have said and did not fabricate any data in order to support a particular conclusion (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:103). She fully acknowledged the ideas, thoughts or words of another person even though she had rephrased them (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:104).

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a detailed summary of research aims, design, empirical research and ethical aspects. The next chapter will provide the analysis and report on the empirical study conducted.

CHAPTER 5

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The foregoing chapter discussed the research methodology adopted in this study. This chapter presents the findings of qualitative research conducted through focus group interviews. Twenty participants voluntarily took part in the study. The participants were street children classified as children on the streets. These are street children who maintain ties with their families. The transcribed data were first open-coded. Open coding was followed by axial coding, after which the codes were categorised and themes derived from them (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b:108). Pseudonyms were used to identify the participants in order to protect their identities. The outline of this chapter is as follows: introduction, demographic information, research findings, and conclusion. Figure 5.1 outlines the structure of this chapter.

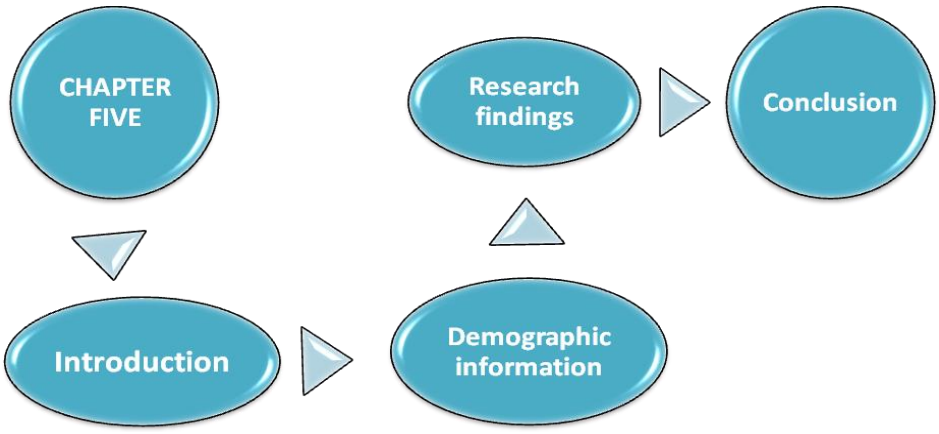

Figure 5.1: Overview of Chapter 5

5.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Table 5.1 shows the demographic information of the participants in the study.

NAME	AGE	SEX	SCHOOL ATTENDANCE	GRADE	LIVING ARRANGEMENT
Lebo	14	F	YES	5	HOME
Keke	13	F	YES	7	HOME
Tiisetso	16	F	YES	10	HOME
Thabang	15	M	YES	9	HOME
Thabiso	12	M	YES	6	HOME
Sello	12	M	YES	6	HOME
Tshepo	10	M	YES	5	HOME
Serame	10	M	YES	4	HOME
Omphile	16	M	YES	9	HOME
Morena	14	M	YES	8	HOME
Tefo	13	M	YES	8	HOME
Kananelo	15	M	YES	10	HOME
Boitumelo	10	F	YES	5	HOME
Nthabiseng	11	F	YES	6	HOME
Dibuseng	11	F	YES	6	HOME
Mamosweu	16	F	YES	11	HOME
Ntebaleng	16	F	YES	10	HOME
Moferefere	13	M	YES	7	HOME
Ntaopane	10	M	YES	4	HOME
Teleko	16	M	YES	11	HOME

Table 5.1: Demographic information

Table 5.1 indicates that eight girls and twelve boys participated in the study. It also indicates that all the participants were children on the streets who still had connections to their families. The participants went back to their homes where they still had ties with their caregivers. They were all school-going children aged between ten and sixteen years. The participants' grades ranged from four to eleven, and it is clear that their ages did not correspond with their grades because of their unstable families and failure at school due to frequent non-attendance of school.

The guideline below shows the number of participants who contributed in the themes.

- One participant
- A few participants (two to five)
- Most participants (six to sixteen)
- All the participants (all seventeen)

5.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS

A close reading of the transcripts and the processes of open and axial coding yielded a number of themes. The following themes emerged:

- Families should be strengthened to prevent streetism.
- Sound peer support can prevent streetism.
- Schools can be used to prevent streetism.
- Access to social services can prevent streetism.
- Churches can prevent streetism.
- A supportive community can prevent streetism.
- Access to government services can prevent streetism.

The themes and sub-themes will be discussed individually. Excerpts will be used to provide evidence of findings made. The excerpts were not language edited in order to let them resemble exactly what the participants said in their languages.

5.3.1 Families should be strengthened to prevent streetism

Research shows that streetism as a phenomenon is fuelled by factors such as poorly functioning families (Le Roux, 2001:107; Malindi, 2009:41). Poorly functioning families do not give due recognition to children, and some of them tend to be abusive. Poorly functioning families do not provide children with a sense of belonging and acceptance. In this regard, one of the participants remarked as follows:

"*Sometimes you find that life is sharp* [good] *in the family, but sometimes there are things that you don't feel ok with. A person you are living with did not like your parent and is always telling you hurting words, but you live sharp* [well]*, hey man, I felt like I could go out here and do things like this and that. She makes you feel out* [left out] *… you feel like … she makes you feel like you are not needed, you are not part of the family"* (Lebo).

The above excerpt shows that the participant was a victim of historical family feuds that resulted in her feeling bad. She pointed out that she felt less needed and not part of the family and this is reminiscent of poorly functioning families. Research shows that lack of a sense of belonging and acceptance can compromise resilience and render young people psychosocially vulnerable (Ahmed, Seedat, Van Niekerk & Bulbulia, 2004:390). In this regard, they led to the participant adopting street life, where the participant adopts a new social identity.

The availability of familial support and parental guidance to the parents or guardians of vulnerable, orphaned children could play a crucial role in the prevention of streetism. High-quality parenting that involves parental love, care and supervision gives children a sense of security (Ungar, 2006). A few participants had a feeling that parents who do not do well in parenting terms expose children to the risk of adopting streetism. For example, one of them pointed out that parents needed to be given opportunities to learn about problems afflicting children. The following excerpt bears evidence of the above assertion:

"*I think they can call our parents and those who don't have parents they can call their guardians and form group, and tell them about the problem the orphans encounter in their lives" (Keke).*

Keke's response suggests that if parents could be approached and guided regarding the experiences and developmental needs of orphans and other vulnerable children, streetism can be prevented. Some research corroborates what *Keke* suggested. For example, Mosa (1999:7) argues that streetism could be prevented if families could be engaged in the development of measures aimed at preventing streetism. Parents are therefore seen as important people who can assist in curbing the migration of children going to the streets.

A few participants argued that there must be someone who can talk to their parents about their situations. For example, Serame said:

"I think someone should speak to our parents … sit down with them and talk about what we like and we don't like. So I think is the thing that can make things change" (Serame).

This suggests that the participants believed that streetism was a result of parents having no information about the needs of children and what they as children want. This view was supported by *Kananelo,* who said:

"I think if the father can get a person from his family and the mother also get a person from the family and sit down to talk so that things are well".

Research suggests that streetism can be prevented by focusing on basic services, job creation, advocacy, and the strengthening of social capital (Schurink, 1993:151). Poverty and employment are implicated in the genesis of streetism. It is essential to note that all the participants in the study believed that unemployment played a role in driving them to the streets. In this regard, Morena indicated that employment could serve to prevent streetism in that there will be food for children. The following excerpt bears evidence of the above assertion:

"*I think this will change if people in our family can find work, our brothers, our mothers get better work so that there is food and never short in the house. Yes, I think that is what can make things change and stop them going to streets" (Morena).*

This means that employment will enable parents and caregivers to meet their children's basic needs such as food. Many poor families are affected by urbanisation and deaths (Le Roux, 2001). In this regard, most of the adults that move to urban areas do not have requisite skills that should render them employable. Most participants felt that social problems affected their parents' and caregivers' abilities to care for the most vulnerable of their members, i.e. children. In connection with this, Keke said:

"I …, think we should not move to towns … when we were still living at home on farm, we were … my mother was able to do everything for us. Our parents were able to do everything we were asking even though they were not working. When we got here in the township, I met problems and asked myself that but I am getting social grant but why are these people not able to satisfy myself the way I want, but my parents were deceased, and they were not working, but they were able to do things that I wanted. If they did, I would not be here and living this way" (Keke).

It is clear that Keke receives a social grant that he says is not used to meet his needs. Keke did not indicate who his caregiver was after he became a double orphan. Most participants in the study felt that it was indispensable that children who have already adopted streetism receive social support from the public. The following excerpt evidences the above statement:

"If they see other children in the streets without clothes and so on, they must help him with other clothes that are not used in the house and some food and take them home. They will not return to the street" (Tshepo).

The excerpt shows that Tshepo felt that streetism could be stopped if street-involved children could be adopted and be given clothes and food by the public. Research shows that street children beg and thus rely on kind members of the public (Altanis & Goddard, 2004:300).

Most of the participants in the study indicated that streetism could be reduced if parents and caregivers treated children in their care well without discriminating against them. For example, Tiisetso said:

"It [street life] *can stop. They big people* [adults] *must stop discriminating against some children, like if they are having many children, they must treat them equally" (Tiisetso).*

It is clear that unequal treatment at home exposes children to streetism by robbing them of a sense of belonging. Therefore, the street children who participated in the study believed that children should be treated equally and that parents and caregivers should not favour some children more than others.

In this regard, Keke said:

"Now, I asked myself that what causes the problem [street life] *is that a parent, meaning our guardians, they have … they favour. If you are children, the three of you, she will favour her child; these other two, she will not favour them because they have no parents. What makes us find ourselves here is because parents favour others more than others. They must stop it."*

This shows that the children who are favoured less, can gravitate towards the streets in order to regain the lost feeling of belonging. Research shows that street children form groups on the streets, and these groups provide a sense of belonging (Vogel, 2001).

It is clear that step-parents are most likely to discriminate against those who are not their biological children. This shows that uncaring step-parents expose children to streetism. For example, Thabang said:

"They must stop having favourites, like if there are three children, the other one is hers and the other two are orphans, should stop favouring her child. Because you can find that sometimes you ask her to buy you something, knowing that you need that, she will buy it for her child who is already having what you are asking for.

Parents must stop having favourites; they must love children equally so that this could go away" (Thabang).

It is clear from the excerpt that such parents do not buy things for those who are not their biological children. This, therefore, exposes them to the risk of streetism. Furthermore, research shows that conflict-beset families (Mahlangu, 2002:22) expose children to streetism. It is clear that conflict and domestic violence affect children negatively and, in this case, fuel streetism.

In this regard, Serame said:

"Parents who are always fighting and children who are answering [backchat] big people like my sister. Having no understanding in the house makes children go to the streets … [hesitates] *… if fighting and swearing can stop, this* [streetism] *will stop."*

This excerpt shows that fights, lack of respect, swearing and constant misunderstandings in families predispose children to streetism. Harmonising family life could go a long way towards reducing streetism.

A few participants believed that gainful employment would go a long way towards preventing streetism. For example, Morena clearly saw the relationship between unemployment and family conflicts. For instance, Morena said:

"I agree with this person when saying it is having no job [being unemployed] *which puts us at risk*. *If there were jobs, people would not be fighting in the house because sometimes you find that they fight because of having no money. So you go away" (Morena).*

It can be concluded that unemployment as a risk factor combines with family disharmony as another risk factor and causes young people to adopt street life.

Kananelo saw the unequal wages that parents receive as a risk factor that fuels migration to the streets, especially if the mother disrespects the father who receives a lower wage. The following excerpt bears evidence of the above assertion:

"So I am staying with my two uncles, a mother and a father, so the mother it seems as if she gets her wage after a father has got it. Now the mother is acting as if she is the boss, she controls. So I think is the work which causes things like this [streetism], *so that has to change or else it* [streetism] *will continue" (Kananelo).*

This risk factor is not documented in previous studies of resilience among street children. Kananelo believes that unequal wages for parents cause wives to domineer.

Ample research demonstrated that social problems combine in complex ways and cause children to migrate to the streets (Donald *et al.*, 2006). The findings of this study confirm this. It is also clear that according to street children themselves, streetism can be prevented through family cohesion.

One of the participants said:

"This thing can help, permanently; it means that we must combine ourselves as a family, and trust God with prayers. So all the problems will end" (Omphile).

The participants believed that trusting the Lord would end the problems that cause them to gravitate towards the streets. This shows that this participant believes in the Lord.

Domestic violence and alcohol abuse combine and lead to the adoption of streetism (Malindi, 2009). Mahlangu (2002:40) adds that parents who are alcoholic have a tendency to shout at and fight each other after drinking. Families rendered unstable by these two contextual problems can make children to feel responsible for what is happening as the following excerpt shows:

"When you arrive at home at night trying to sleep, a drunk adult will get home making noise, trying to beat a person we are living with. Those are the things that cause many problems like this one [street life] *and must be stopped. You feel like you are one causing problems in the house … you end up feeling like leaving and live on the streets" (Ntebaleng).*

The excerpt also shows that the participant (Ntebaleng) arrives home at night and witnesses fights between his parents, for which she feels responsible. She then coped atypically by migrating towards the streets where even more risks abound.

It is clear that most of the participants in the study came from reconstituted families or those in which the adults cohabit. Children then experience insecurity especially because of woman abuse.

For example, Ntebaleng said:

"*A father, when he gets home, he beats a female who is staying with two children. It is where the problems originate because you see as if you are the one causing problems where people are staying. So you leave so that there will be peace. If they stop fighting, we shall not be scared and go away."*

It is clear that streetism is caused by feelings of insecurity in the context of violence. Most of the participants saw domestic violence as a risk factor for migrations to the streets. The participant, Ntebaleng, felt that adopting streetism was for her a way of promoting peace where there was none. Therefore, streetism could be reduced by having more peace in families.

It is noteworthy that Lebo proposed a unique solution to the problem of streetism– the involvement of children. She seems to believe that the youth should assert themselves and demand to be heard.

For instance, Lebo said:

"Family can help prevent streetism, but it cannot do so without you, so you have to include yourself amongst them, because there are things you are unhappy about that you must tell. Let's say they are not treating you sharp (well), but you are still not saying anything. They will only think that whatever they are doing is fine, but there will be someone from the family who will understand you better than anyone. You will then speak among them that this and that I do not like, which means if they do not understand you but then there will be someone who will understand you. This person will be able to tell them that what you were saying he/she understands it, but then

he/she will do this and that so as to help you. But she/he needs you to adapt with him/her so as to avoid such situation" (Lebo).

This suggests that young people should have a sense of agency in wanting to be heard. It is clear that Lebo believes that a young person should find an adult person who can meaningfully mediate between children and adults in the family. She also believes that young people should be adaptable to their social contexts. Assertiveness, being heard, mediation, agency, and adaptability are personal resources that enable young people to cope resiliently (Malindi, 2009).

The street children who participated in the study felt that it was crucial for them to be given guidance when they are still young, as this would assist them to avoid streetism and things that are bad.

In this regard, Thabiso said:

"Guidance should be given to children when they are still young … so that a child should be able to deal with problems and not leave home. In this way, they can help the children to get out of bad things and to avoid this [street] *life" (Thabiso).*

This shows that the participant felt that the guidance provided by parents would eliminate the risk of streetism and the hazards associated with it.

All the participants indicated that support from their families was critical in enabling them to cope with problems. Social support was noted as a powerful resilience resource in earlier studies involving street children (Malindi, 2009; Malindi & Machenjedze, 2012; Malindi & Theron, 2010; Theron & Malindi, 2010; Vogel, 2001). Lack of support appeared to be a risk that led to the participants' adoption of streetism as the following excerpt shows:

"At home, we do not have support when we have problems. We must … if we have problems, we must tell our parents … or the persons we are living with. You must tell him that you have certain problems or go to another person who can be able to help you if they are not interested. If you are a human being and have problems, you

must not just keep quiet, you must go to a person who can help and get what you want. This life [street life] *cannot help you; these people are children too" (Thabang).*

Thabang suggested that the youth must seek out people who can assist them if their caregivers are not in a position to provide social support. It is important to note that the participant believed that streetism could be prevented through meaningful attachment to competent adults even if they were not biological parents.

5.3.2 Sound peer support can prevent streetism

According to Bronfenbrenner's nested systems, children may also experience care and support from their peers (mesosystem). The interaction with their peers can bring about a sense of belonging (Donald *et al.*, 2006:42). All the participants felt that other children (peers) and their teachers could be helpful in providing social support. It is essential to note that peers were seen as people who could communicate the needs of their friends to teachers as the following excerpt shows:

"Another school kid can be able to help. She will be able to tell your class teacher your problems and the class teacher will be able to sit down with you so as to help. Or else you go to the street when you feel alone" (Tiisetso).

The excerpt above shows that both peers and teachers can help prevent streetism, by eliminating lonesomeness among youth at risk.

A few participants pointed out that peer support groups could be formed in schools in order to provide support for youth in distress. In schools in South Africa, many youths receive support from groups such as Soul Buddyz, groups that have programmes enabling young people to meet and discuss common problems. The excerpt below supports the above.

"At school, they must form support groups like Soul Buddyz. There must be a place where … where … after school Soul Buddyz … can come together and talk about their common problems. We will be able to say how we feel so that we can find help and not leave school. At school, they can … we have Soul Buddyz" (Nthabiseng).

Another participant felt that not only Soul Buddyz can help them when they have problems. There are Representative Councils of Learners (RCL) at schools that can provide support to vulnerable children.

In this regard, Mamosweu said:

"Ah, I was adding up where she was saying we should have Soul Buddyz. I was also saying the RCL (Representative Council for Learners). It means that the bodies representing learners in schools can provide support to other children to stop their problems and dropping out of school" (Mamosweu).

It is clear that according to Mamosweu, RCLs can prevent learners from dropping out of school and adopting street life.

Most participants named peer pressure as a risk factor that can fuel streetism as the following excerpt shows:

"You can find that it happens that your friends gives you a peer pressure, like girls they can be easily taken up, which means a person like things that she does not know its consequences, those that she does not know that if I do so what kind of things will happen, things that are done by friends like things in the street. She does look out at her background. If we see others wearing particular clothes, we therefore need them. So it happens that in the street, you do wrong things, but then afterwards you realise that what you did was wrong; just because you were not realizing that I will have that situation if I will achieve this thing first before I can get others" (Lebo).

Lebo felt that their peers can exert pressure on them, and this causes them to do things they would not do as girls; these include leaving school and adopting street life. It is noteworthy that while on the streets, Lebo realised that it was wrong of her to leave school. Another participant, Tshepo, felt that they had to stay away from unwholesome associates.

In this regard, Tshepo said:

"Yes, they should stay away from the wrong friends. They must always be close to their mothers and attend church and schools very well" (Tshepo).

The participant (Tshepo) further highlighted that going to church, being closer to their parents and attending school very well would end the problems that cause them to migrate to the streets.

5.3.3 Schools can be used to prevent streetism

All the participants believed that vulnerable children could benefit from the support that teachers can offer as significant adults in their lives. Meaningful connections to teachers can enable teachers to identify vulnerable children. The following excerpt bears evidence of the above:

"The teachers at school will help by selecting children who are struggling at school in order to help them so that they do not drop out of school" (Thabang).

Previous studies involving street children have shown how teachers can provide social support and mediate support for street children from outside support systems (Malindi & Theron, 2010; Malindi & Machenjedze, 2012).

The protective role of caring teachers was further highlighted by most participants. Teachers can offer a shoulder to cry on by being available when children need someone to talk to. For example, one of the participants said:

"If now I have problems, then I am at school; if a teacher sees me and ask me so that I will be able to tell her [him] what is in my chest. Maybe s[he] can help me and then I won't leave school" (Tefo).

Teachers who are willing to listen when children have problems and when the children need to discuss those problems can lower the risk of streetism, as Tefo said. It is therefore of paramount importance that teachers be empowered to play a social support role for vulnerable children, some of whom may be orphans.

A few participants indicated that their teachers were trustworthy and were willing to offer the advice they needed. For example, Serame said:

“I can trust my class teacher because he is the only one who is giving us advice. Advice that if you are a person, how should you take care of yourself, attend school well and not drop out, and read your books …” (Serame).

In this regard, it is evident that Serame’s teacher was trustworthy and willing to give advice on how children should care for themselves. This is an example of competence as an adult. The teacher in this case encourages children not to neglect their studies or leave school. Such a relationship with a competent adult provides a sense of security and of being valued as a child.

All the participants enjoyed the concern shown by teachers when they, as children, were hurt. Teachers encouraged learners to indicate when they needed help and the following quotation bears evidence of the above assertion:

“Teachers can help because even in the classroom, they can see when we are hungry or hurt and we are unable to answer them in class. They can ask us, and we can explain and will be able to go to our homes feeling better and not go away to the rubbish dump” (Boitumelo).

It is clear that some of these children are psychosocially vulnerable due to poverty and neglect. Added to their socio-economic problems are emotional problems that interfere with their abilities to learn effectively in class. It is further clear that neglected children attend school irregularly since they frequent the rubbish dump for food and sellable items. Caring teachers can prevent children from losing valuable time due to streetism.

All the participants felt that opening up to their teachers will enable their teachers to buy them toiletries (bath soap) to be able to attend school. In connection with the point previously mentioned, Serame said:

“If it is a teacher, if I tell him today as myself, my parents are like this and that and tomorrow I don’t have bath soap to go to school. Maybe s[he] will search him[her]self and say take and do this. Then you do not feel left out and go out of school”.

Caring and supportive teachers can prevent feelings of estrangement among vulnerable and neglected children, thus breaking the flow to the streets.

All the participants felt strongly that the school as a microsystem can be so supportive that it can advance the attainment of their future goals. In this regard, schools can collaborate with families and find ways of supporting learners. The following quotation by one of the learners deserves a look at:

"When the school sees me as a school kid having problems, so as a school they can give me guidance where they can, where they can help my family, they can do so. There are people at school who stand for them. They are the people who can maybe help my family, so that I can live a life which can take me forward; so that I get future for tomorrow and not drop out" (Morena).

Collaborative partnerships between families and schools can prevent school dropout and subsequent streetism. It seems as if schools can mediate the support that individual children need as well as that which families as microsystems need. Most participants felt that individual teachers who are also approachable can help prevent their migration to the streets. One of them said:

"Even at school, like we know, there will be … like it is for the first time you attend the school, there will be someone you feel like you have been meeting and you can easily approach, it is like you know her, you have seen her. You will be able to approach her and speak about your problems. Then she will be able to help and you stay in that school" (Lebo).

It is clear that caring and supportive teachers are also approachable. Supportive teachers are also described as welcoming teachers. In this connection, Nthabiseng said:

"At school, a teacher will ask who you are, where are you from, etc. It might happen that you go to the teacher and tell him/her what is happening at your home. They will be able to help you, like at school there are counselling groups; feeding schemes; they will be able to support you. They will be able to unite themselves as a unit and give you what you need so that you go on with school and not leave" (Nthabiseng).

Furthermore, caring teachers are able to provide counselling to learners who are in distress. Such teachers meet children's basic needs for food and thus prevent dropping out and begging. Most participants felt that counselling and feeding schemes can play a vital role in ensuring that children are fed nutritious food and that they do not go and beg for food and money on the streets.

In this regard, Tefo said: *"We don't beg because at school … as we know that there are feeding schemes, as a school child, maybe your teacher asks like when we start to go to school. A teacher will ask who you are, where are you from? It might happen that you go to the teacher and tell him/her what is happening at your home. They will be able to help you, like at school there are counselling groups; feeding schemes; they will be able to support you and give you some food" (Tefo).*

It is clear that schools can interrupt children's movement towards the streets by meeting the children's basic needs. In a recent study, Malindi and Machenjedze (2012) noted that school engagement offered a constellation of protective resources that can enable street children to resile.

A few participants argued that they, as children, would not drop out of school if they stayed focused, finished school and tertiary education. One of them said:

"We must stay focused, then a child cannot drop out. I see what is left is for us to finish school. After that, we continue with our education, and then come back to help our families" (Kananelo).

Personal resilience resources such as staying focused were noted in studies involving street children (Malindi, 2009) and those involving vulnerable children who were not necessarily on the streets (Ungar, 2006).

Another participant agreed and indicated that they, as orphans, had to be ingenious (*use our minds*), study, not feel pity for themselves and adopt street life. One of them remarked as follows:

"We all do not have parents, what is that we use our minds and study and stop saying we do not have parents and go and beg on the corners" (Dibuseng).

The importance of being ingenious or resourceful was noted as a significant resilience resource among street children in institutional care (Malindi & Theron, 2010).

5.3.4 Having access to social services can prevent streetism

Schurink (1993:257) points out that for the street child phenomenon to be prevented, social workers need to be aware of their social responsibilities towards street children. All the participants in the study felt that social workers were better positioned to respond to the needs of vulnerable children so as to prevent their movement towards the streets. The excerpt below support the above assertion:

"*I think social workers will help prevent street life, but not only social workers. They need people who can help because a social worker can help, but there is somewhere where she won't be able to. You will see that this is for the first time I meet this person, and you will not feel comfortable*" *(Lebo).*

Lebo further argued that social workers could not work alone and that they needed people who could work with them since there are some problems that they might not be able to deal with. Collaboration between different stakeholders finds emphasis in this regard. Another participant believed that social workers were highly influential and that they could get to the bottom of the problems that other people could not. For example, Keke said:

"Social workers have a lot of influence. They can get to the problems that people who are helping could not get them. They can influence families although your parent knows you better than any other member of the community" (Keke).

The above excerpt shows that social workers can work with the parents of the street children as they are the people who know them better. According to all of the participants, other street children can receive help from social workers linked to non-governmental organisations so that they too can live a better life. The excerpt that follows supports this statement.

“According to me, like ntate [name withheld] has helped me, he will also be able to help other children so that they can be like me; be in good ways and not on the streets” (Thabiso).

Adding to this view, Thabang felt that social workers are well placed to help vulnerable children because they do not restrict themselves to those children or people they know. Broadly speaking, they even help those whom they are not so familiar with. In this regard, Thabang said:

“There are people who are social workers … these people are not made to help only those whom they know. They have to help everyone who is struggling” (Thabang).

Kananelo maintained that social workers can talk to their parents about their problems and that social workers can be the mediators when parents cannot understand the needs of children. Kananelo understands the value of family conferences in preventing streetism, since he remarked as follows:

“Social worker can come and we sit down with our parents, we sit together doing something like a group and talk our problems, put them on the table and solve. I am sure these problems can be solved and street life be prevented” (Kananelo).

The participant (Kananelo) strongly believed that the timely intervention of social workers could help solve their problems and prevent them from migrating to the streets.

Domestic fights and alcohol abuse in families combine with other socio-economic factors and encourage the adoption of streetism by vulnerable children (Malindi, 2009). The findings of this study corroborate this and show that some children are often abused by caregivers who abuse alcohol as the following excerpt shows:

“People working as social workers can go to the house where they are fighting. I am speaking on behalf of my family; my grandfather is a person who is drinking. When he arrives at home, he insults us and tells us that I do not have parents; my mother and my father are dead and buried, and they did not leave me a place to call home. That does not make me feel good, and that is why I left home. So I think social

workers should go and speak to him, maybe he will stop what he is doing" (Boitumelo).

The foregoing excerpt shows that social workers can meaningfully intervene and help in those families affected by alcohol abuse and where abuse occurs. NGOs provide valuable social services to vulnerable children. All the participants were benefitting from social services rendered by the local NGO. The participants indicated that it would be wise if vulnerable children sought the support of NGOs. In connection with this, one of the participants said:

"They … children who need help … they can go to support groups like [name withheld] *for help and support. [Name withheld] offers food, clothes; on top of that, there are social workers. If … there are things that have hurt them, they can speak to social workers so that they can get help" (Tiisetso).*

The participant (Tiisetso) believed that NGOs like [name withheld] can offer them food and clothes, and there are social workers whom they can speak to and get help. A few participants felt that at the drop-in centre, they had opportunities to talk about their problems as youth and come up with solutions. This shows that at these centres, the youth can bond and mutually support one another. The following remark provides evidence of the above:

"Here at the centre, we can meet and discuss our problems and advice each other. This uplifts our spirit and gives us hope. We feel better when we discuss because there are people who care … so you won't go away and ask for food and money. People care for you here" (Omphile).

The discussions that occur among the participants enable them to feel better since they regain hope and a renewed spirit. It is clear that the participants are prevented from reverting to streetism by these opportunities to confide in one another.

Tshepo added that at the centre, they are connected to care workers and other children who care. This prevents them from readopting streetism. The following excerpt deserves a look at:

“At the centre, they can also give us leftover food to eat when we get home, and we know that when we need anything, there are big people who care and kids who care” (Tshepo).

Another participant felt that community organisations can approach the community and inform them about the projects they are running for street children. The excerpt below bears such evidence:

“As an organisation, they can even go to the community and tell them that they have a project or something … we are asking for things like clothes. We are asking that sometimes you pay a visit with some food or snacks. Your old things that you are no longer using so that you can give them as donation, so that we can give them to these children for them to be like any other children out there” (Boitumelo).

Furthermore, Boitumelo argued that these organisations can ask for donations of clothes and food to provide street to children. The schools should be visited by community organisations and vulnerable learners; they can be educated about the phenomenon of street children and be made aware of the available facilities if they experience problems (Schurink, 1993:257). The excerpt below supports the assertions above:

“If those children who are living in such a situation can be taken and form groups where they will be taught about this difficult life, and remove them from the streets, things like that” (Thabang).

The excerpt shows that the participant believes that vulnerable children should be removed from the streets and placed in institutions where they can be cared for. This view supports findings of earlier studies (Kudrati, Plummer & Yousif, 2008:440; Mosa, 1999:7).

Lebo felt that as street children who already know about the centres, they could inform other children who are in difficult situations and who cannot be reached about those drop-in centres, so that they can get help and support.

The excerpt below bears the evidence: *“I think to prevent problems, there are centres that are already built; so children can be able to come to them; as we know that there are children who cannot be reached out who are living here in townships, they are living in hunger. So we know that they are offering food here, so as children we know that we are attending here, which means we can inform other people about this centre, so that they can also come or join and not go to the street”, remarked Lebo.*

This shows that this participant believes in the efficacy of the child-driven advocacy campaigns to stop streetism. One of the participants in the study argued that a therapist can help soothe their pains and give advice on how to get out of the problem that has caused them pain.

Tiisetso said: *“Therapists help when you are hurt. She/He speaks to you; thereafter, she can be able to give you a solution on how to get out of such a problem”.*

Moreover, Nthabiseng added that therapists must be available at schools to help abused children who are unable to talk about their problems and who adopt street life. She said:

“Even if there can be therapists at schools like there are children who are … abused at school who are not able to speak and go to streets. They can be able to speak to therapist so that they can help”.

Another participant felt that they should be involved in organised peer counselling sessions in order to assist other children who are in a similar situation. In this way, they can give advice on how to get out of the situations they find themselves in, namely streetism.

For example, Omphile said: *“Even if they can organise something like peer counselling … where we can speak to the children in our situation, so that we can explain how ... to get out of this situation* [street life] *we can do this”.*

According to Mahlangu (2002:22) and Schurink (1993:137), one of the macro factors that cause children to opt for life in the street is the high cost of living. In this regard,

one of the street children felt that their parents and guardians should be advised on how to effectively manage their finances.

For instance, Serame said: *"I was agreeing that there must be that thing of counselling. And to all big people…If they have a problem that they are not able to use money well, meaning they must help how they should use the money … then they will have money to care for us".*

The participant understands that financial management is crucial for family stability.

5.3.5 Churches can prevent streetism

Earlier studies (Malindi & Theron, 2010) showed that street children resiled as a result of pastoral counselling and exposure to organised religious activities. According to most of the street children who participated in this study, pastors in the community can offer support through counselling (pastoral) for vulnerable children.

For instance, Keke said: *"I think the pastors* [reverends] *can help because in the township, there are pastors who have grouped themselves, who offer counselling".*

Other participants felt that the pastors (reverends) can help when they are having problems.

For instance, Thabiso said: *"A pastor can help if you are in such problems. They mobilise support and help for you from other people. This can prevent us from going to the street."*

The excerpt above shows that if the pastors can intervene meaningfully, the problems experienced by vulnerable children can be ameliorated in time. Schurink (1993:257) states that for prevention of the street child phenomenon, church ministries and civic groups should be socially responsible towards the street children and actively participate in the prevention of the street child phenomenon.

The excerpt that follows bears evidence of the assertion above:

"This thing can help stop street movement, permanently, so we must go to people like pastors, reverends", said Omphile.

A few participants argued that when they have problems as children, the pastors can pray for them and reunify their families through prayers.

For instance, Serame said: *"The reverend, if I attend a church, he will pray for me when I have problems and pray for my family to be united again. If I have problems, I will tell him, and he can come and bring the prayers to unite us as a family".*

This shows that Serame felt that prayer can help in the reduction and prevention of streetism.

According to Thabiso, social workers can help children who are vulnerable like themselves so that they can be able to attend churches. The statement is attested by the excerpt below:

"*According to me, like ntate* [careworker] *has helped me, he will also be able to help other children so that they can be like me and go to church …, not to the street … yes, they must be good and attend churches because a church can also help in many ways" (Thabiso).*

Additionally, the above excerpt shows that the street children believed that attending church could help them not to migrate to the streets.

Some participants argued that churches can help provide them with certificates that are necessary when applying for identity documents. Tshepo said: *"The churches can help by … when you need an ID and you do not have a birth certificate, churches can make you church certificate because when you are applying for an ID or birth certificate, they need church certificates. So we can have a grant and not lack food and go to the street. Therefore, church certificate will enable you to apply for it. They can also help with where these children can sleep and offer them blankets and so on" (Tshepo).*

In Tshepo's view, churches can mediate the children's and their parents' acquisition of social grants that will enable the buying of food. This will prevent them from going to the streets. Over and above that, the above excerpt shows that churches can also

help by providing shelters where these street children can sleep and supply them with blankets.

Another participant believed churches can make donations in the form of money to buy clothes for children living on the streets. For example, Thabiso said:

"Even in the churches, because there are many people who attend, they can be able to tell them to help with the money, so that they can help children living on the streets, who have no clothes. There are people who are able [rich] *in church; they can help by giving money to help these children" (Thabiso).*

Boitumelo felt that churches can help by donating money for the families that are struggling, or the money can be donated to orphanages. The excerpt below shows proof of the statement above:

"In a church, we are so many; we must take out … big people [adults], *it means we must take out collection for a certain family who is struggling or take money collected to orphanages … or people who have businesses should do … do … donate, give help to families that are not alright or kids will drop out and leave home" (Boitumelo).*

Boitumelo further argued that businessmen can also help the needy families by donating some money, and this will prevent streetism.

One participant felt that money donated in churches could be used to build shelters where street children could live. For instance, Dibuseng said:

"Like people at the churches, if they have donated monies they have donated, maybe they can build a structure there, and those children are taken to live there. On Sundays, monies be taken out again and people buy food for those children" (Dibuseng).

One participant believed that churches can give advice to their families and ask them not to fight because domestic violence is one of the reasons they (children) have adopted street lives. In this regard, Tefo said:

“You can include the churches can help to advice the families. When they are inside the house, they must talk to them that they must stop fighting because it will cause many problems and children run away to the streets”.

In this respect, churches are seen as organisations that can harmonise families and prevent the children’s movement to the streets.

5.3.6 Supportive community can prevent streetism

Ungar (2011) posits convincingly that for young people to cope resiliently, communities must be able to provide services and resources in culturally meaningful ways. In the study, all the participants believed that communities have a role to play in helping young people cope resiliently and in resisting the adoption of streetism. The following excerpt supports the statement above:

“Communities can prevent street working if they can be able to meet groups of children who have needs and provide what they need like here in this situation. They can talk to them so that they can hear their problems” (Tiisetso).

This sounds like a cry for active supportive communities that can respond to the needs of vulnerable children in order to prevent street living. Another participant added that members of the community must help one another in dealing with risks that fuel streetism. For instance, Tshepo said:

“As people, we must help each other to remove the problems kids have, or they will go away from home. Like myself now … I came here and I have been helped by coming here” (Tshepo).

A few participants in the study argued that neighbours can help if there is evidence of domestic violence in neighbouring homes. One among the participants, Tefo, said:

“If now I have problems, my next door if s[he] hears some noise from fighting, he can come to help, something like that. Many children run away because of fights” (Tefo).

The participant believes that fights that cause children to “escape” and adopt street life should be prevented in order for street living to stop. Serame supported Tefo’s

view and said: "*If it is next door, maybe we are fighting; s[he] can be able to call the policemen to come and help. Kids get hurt and leave" (Serame).*

Dibuseng added another dimension that involves a sense of agency and assertiveness when domestic strife prevails. She said:

"The neighbours can come in between and save us kids. As I am living with my grandmother, the mother from next door sees what is happening. I tell her that my grandmother is doing this and that. Because she is close to my grandmother, she can be able to speak to her and say, 'You should do this and that together with your child so that you can live better'".

Dibuseng believes that neighbours can intervene when children are being abused by giving advice to one another. Schurink (1993:257) states that to prevent the street child phenomenon, community leaders should be made aware of their social responsibilities towards street children. In the study, most of the participants believed that community leaders can assess situations in families that are struggling. The excerpt below supports the assertion above:

"If the leaders can look for information and go house to house and know the situation of each house. They could find people who really don't have anything, meaning those who are struggling and help them. This will help" (Serame).

Serame argues that house-to-house campaigns will help reduce the risk of streetism, especially if at-risk families are identified and support is provided timeously.

Another participant added that community members can help needy people by visiting their homes and making donations of "things" they need. One of them, Thabang, said:

"They can help people who have no one by going to their places where they live, and donate things they need. So children will suffer" (Thabang).

Kananelo argued that when these communities find children who suffer, they must try to adopt them and give them a bright future. This will decrease the risk of streetism. The excerpt that follows supports the preceding statement:

"When they have found them, they must help them by adopting the kids and give them a future, so that children should not go … to the street. They must help them with food, some … clothes, things like that" (Kananelo).

This is reminiscent of Ubuntu, the philosophy that sustained life in African communities for ages. In Mahlangu (2002:22) and Schurink (1993:137), it is stated that streetism is caused by the lack of community involvement in the family and individual's problems. In this instance, one participant felt that old community members can be supported as they raise grandchildren with little resources. For example, Thabang said:

"Old people in a community can be provided with support because they care for young children, and they do not work and they do not have much money" (Thabang).

Some participants hinted that they, as children, are afraid to confide in other people because of lack of confidentiality relating thereto. One of them, Lebo, said the following:

"Ah, in our community, people are able to influence others. Say it happens that maybe a parent you are living with goes to those people who are living outside and discusses things you have told her, and you said she must not tell anyone. Then she takes them outside, so you find that outsiders are saying those things behind your back. They will then discriminate you and make you feel out as if you are not supposed to live there, just because you don't have parents."

The excerpt shows that the participant believes that discrimination can occur based on disclosures that they, as children, make. Feeling left out, they migrate to the streets. According to one of the participants, individuals, namely women, who are supporting street children, can contribute towards reducing streetism. For instance, Lebo said:

"*I think to prevent street problems in townships, there are women in a community who offer help to such children, so these children can go and get help there" (Lebo).*

Lebo suggests that children in need should identify caring women who naturally care for destitute children and seek help from them.

A few street children in the study argued that they were encountering problems as they were not fairly treated by the communities because they were orphans. They were, for example, treated harshest when they were in the wrong compared to other children. For example, Keke said:

"Another problem is that people in the community think that if you are an orphan, without parents, you are not allowed to make mistakes in your life. They treat you worse than other children if you are wrong" (Keke).

Another participant added that members of the community should focus on helping orphans and children who are experiencing problems and direct them towards social competence. Thabiso said:

"When you stay in townships … a person from township is only looking at his or her own life. He or she cannot reprimand an orphan or someone else's child whom he or she does not know where he comes from and where he is going. If you are living in township, you do not have to choose … you must help every child who has problems. If that child is doing the wrong things, do not say he is not your child you cannot reprimand him, help him … help him, show him the right way and tell him that he is doing wrong, and this is the right way" (Thabiso).

Thabiso is suggesting an Africentric and collectivist approach to caring for children in communities.

The community causes some of the problems experienced by families. A few participants felt that their parents should stop bringing what they have heard from the community into their own houses. Omphile argues that her family often argues about peripheral issues that her parents hear from other members of the community. Omphile remarked as follows:

"So I can say it is the community that causes problems. Because my mother and my father are drinking alcohol. When they go to drink alcohol, it is like they are hearing issues from outside in the community and bring them in the house where they fight. We get scared, so community members should be stopped from causing fights in homes" (Omphile).

In other words, street life could be prevented if communities stop gossiping and indirectly destabilising families. One of the participants felt that what causes problems is that children take harmful advice from community members who are not living with them and who do not even know how they live in their homes. The excerpt below bears evidence:

"We like taking advice from the people who are not living with us; we listen to them when they tell us something even though they don't know how we sometimes live in the house. We listen to them like me who is staying with her sister. They like to say my sister this and that, and I take it seriously, and sometimes when she reprimands me, I say this and that. That's what is causing problems" (Nthabiseng).

The participants in the study felt when there is domestic violence, they should seek help from the policemen, who will then be able assist in applying for a court order against the one who is cantankerous. The excerpt below provides evidence of this:

"Like we have said that we will tell our teachers if there are fights in our families, policemen can go there too to reprimand. If a person who is always fighting others in the house, they can be able to cut him so that he cannot enter into that yard. Court order. So that he can no longer come to that yard. There will be peace in that yard" (Nthabiseng).

The services that are provided by the police and the justice system should be accessible to vulnerable families and children in order to minimise streetism. Nthabiseng believed that going to the police would bring peace into their homes.

5.3.7 Access to government services can prevent streetism

According to the participants in the study, streetism can be prevented if the state can provide services to the people, assist in building care centres and employ people who are unemployed in order to decrease the high rate of unemployment in the area. Lebo supported the statement above:

"Government can provide people with services. Because we know that in our families we cannot afford to pay for municipal services. So they can help us to build centres and hire people because here at Sesene there is a high rate of unemployment. If they can build those centres and hire people, unemployment will decrease, and they can get money and help"(Lebo).

Another participant felt that the government should provide childcare centres with food, blankets and clothes to help needy children. For example, Morena said:

"I think our government, like we already know that in our township there are opened centres, can provide things like food; blankets; clothes for those who are needy. Government can give those services to them" (Morena).

Tiisetso argued for streetism to decrease; the government should provide food to the people who cannot afford to buy food, without discrimination. She gives a hint that aid is channelled to those who belong to favored political organisations or parties in communities. She said:

"Now there is some discrimination … they give … you will find that they are giving food to those who are able, those who are needy they are unable to give them food, like … they give only those whom they know in the organisation. If they do not know you, there is no way they can get food. Even if it can give school clothes and winter clothes…" (Tiisetso).

Nepotism and corruption in service provision has been and continues to plague needy communities in South Africa. The participants felt that if the food parcels provided by the state through the Department of Social Development (DSD) could be supplied to all people and not only to those that are known to government employees, destitute families would be relieved. The excerpt below supports the foregoing statement:

"This thing of food parcels … I have seen it, it was going about people who know each other. You find that a person who is working at the offices knows someone that one tells those [s]he only loves. There was no more this thing of a speaker walking outside, announcing the aid to all in the town. You will hear that there are food parcels out somewhere. So we get hungry and go begging" (Kananelo).

It seems clear that aid is announced only to those related to government officials in secret and many destitute families with children at risk are left out. This fuels and will continue to fuel streetism unless it is stopped.

A few participants suggested that when the government had initiated a community project, all people who qualify should be employed regardless of age or political affiliation. In this regard, Omphile said:

"Yes, it must be something like that because my parent went to the project that has opened now. They told her that grandmother you are old, you don't belong to our party so you won't get in that project; it needs young people. So that was it. It has hurt me to see that government is not able to support people who are struggling" (Omphile).

Omphile was hurt by the level of nepotism displayed and the fact that she and her family remained destitute. Another participant (Serame) felt that there should be equal employment for all who qualify, without bribery. The excerpt below bears evidence of the above:

"*I see the problem of the projects. At the projects, they choose people they know and ask for tjotjo* [bribes]*. When the project starts, people who know about the project tell*

only those they love. Then when others see that there is work somewhere, people are full. People are selected" (Serame).

According to one of the participants, the government should ensure that it initiates the removal of children from the streets and "make them beautiful" once more. For instance, Thabiso said:

"Department can be able to do … projects that can help those children … who are needy, the street kids, remove them from the street and make them beautiful [good] people for the future" (Thabiso).

Thabiso encourages social integration for street children as a way of preventing streetism.

Research shows that people's conditions of living can be improved by providing more employment opportunities (Schurink, 1993:257). In this regard, the South African government provides social grants to help needy families; however, children do not always benefit from these grants as the following excerpt shows:

"Let me talk about work and money. So that is what causes that my parents … when my parent is from my social grant … so my father is not working and my mother is not working, when they are from there they want to clash or my mother after finding a piece job; so one of them want one to buy him something; after he has found it and you get nothing. So I want … I do not know how I can solve this so that they get work" (Omphile).

Mahlangu (2002:22) contends that little or no employment opportunities is a factor that causes a high number of children to leave their homes for the street life. With that said, some participants felt that if their family members could be employed, their lives will be balanced until they are old enough to face life. In this regard, Kananelo said:

"At home, if there can be a person who gets permanent work and put money in the house. Like my grandfather now, when he has a piece job it is much better. Now if there was someone with permanent work, it would be much better until we are old".

Morena believed that if there were sufficient jobs and people were employed, there would be no family violence or domestic violence in their homes. For instance, Morena said:

*"I agree with this person when saying it is not having job [being unemployed]. If there were jobs, people would not be fighting in the house because sometimes you find that they fight because of having no money, and you go away as a result" (*Morena*).*

Furthermore, Morena argued that the high rate of unemployment and having no money leads to domestic violence that results in streetism.

Another participant felt that the government should provide jobs for their parents and guardians and stop nepotism. The excerpt below bears evidence:

"Another thing that the government can do is to give them jobs and stop nepotism … like now, ANC, you get work only if you are ANC member and you have ANC card. Like here, something like that is happening, people cannot get job" (Nthabiseng).

Establishment of welfare organisations, safe houses, parenting programmes and community centres (De Moura, 2005: 194) is one of the strategies that can prevent streetism.

Most street children felt that the government had to buy them clothes and school uniform when they re-enrolled into school as street children. In this regard, Dibuseng said:

"The government … it can supply clothes to the children who return to school, who do not have them. Buy them school uniform as they are still at school. It must bring the school uniform so that people can get school uniform and dress like other kids and not be mocked" (Dibuseng).

The participant feels that this will protect them against feeling different.

South Africa is yet to win the war against poverty and underdevelopment. This clearly dehumanises some members of the community, including children. According

to one of the street children, their struggling families must be provided with houses so that they can live in favourable conditions like others. Serame said:

"Maybe when they have found them (struggling families), they must give them houses; they are also human beings. They must work so that they can be able to carry on with their lives; so that they can be able to buy clothes; and give them clothes and food so that they can carry on with their lives" (Serame).

Schurink (1993:151) indicated that living conditions of people should be improved by providing more housing. A few participants who took part in the study believed that the government could help by donating money to the NGOs that were already helping street children and people who were destitute.

Tshepo said:

"It can help by giving money to the organisations like this one, so that they can buy food for us. Government can give money so that people who do not have groceries can buy groceries" (Tshepo).

Thus, Tshepo felt that the money donated could be used to buy groceries for them (street children).

A few participants felt that street children who do not have places to stay and who have no one to turn to should be placed in orphanages. In this regard, Nthabiseng said:

"A child like that can be taken, if there is nowhere she is staying, she can be taken to orphanage home where orphans are staying. She can be taken to stay there if there is no one from her family (relative) who can stay with; she can go and stay there" (Nthabiseng).

Another participant agreed that it is very crucial for these children to be accommodated at an orphanage home or get someone to live with. This excerpt bears evidence: *"I also think it is good if she/he can go to stay at an orphanage or get someone who can live with her because if she stays alone, something can happen to her" (Boitumelo).*

It is clear that participants had a lot of suggestions on how streetism can be prevented. Table 5.2 summarises all the risks and solutions provided by the participants.

RISKS	SOLUTIONS
Poorly functioning families/ family feuds	More peace in the families/ Parents' opportunity to learn about problems afflicting children
Parents having no information about children's needs and wants	Guidance regarding experiences and developmental needs of orphans and other vulnerable children
	Having someone to talk to their parents about their situations
Unemployment and family disharmony	Gainful employment
Social problems affecting parents' and caregivers' ability to provide for their children	Provision of social grants
	Receipt of social support from the public. Provision of street-involved children with clothes and food by the community
Unequal treatment at home, robbing children of a sense of belonging	Sense of belonging through interaction with peers
Uncaring step-parents	Parents and caregivers should treat children equally, without discrimination
Fights, lack of respect, swearing and constant misunderstanding in the families	Family cohesion
Unequal wages that parents or caregivers receive	
Feeling of insecurity in the context of violence	Trust God when having problems
	Adult who can mediate meaningfully between children and their caregivers/parents when having misunderstandings
	Being given guidance by their parents when still young
	Meaningful attachment to competent adult
	Formation of support groups (RCLs or SOUL BUDDYZ) at school to provide support to those in distress
Peer pressure	Staying away from bad friends, attending school, going to church, and being closer to their parents

Experiencing emotional and socioeconomic problem	Pastoral care from the teachers at school/teachers who are willing to listen when children have problems and talk about them
	Timely intervention by social workers
Feeling of enstrangement among vulnerable and neglected learners (children)	Collaborative partnership between families and schools to find ways of supporting the learners
Inability to talk about their problems	Peer counselling sessions
Discrimination by the government in service delivery, especially the supply of food parcels	Government to provide services (food) to people who cannot afford without discrimination
Unfair treatment by the community	Afrocentric and collective approach to caring for children in community

Table 5.2: Summary of participants' solutions

5.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the findings of the semi-structured interviews that were conducted. The researcher identified codes and then derived the themes in which the participants' responses were used to elaborate on each theme. The literature was also used where there is a link between it and the street children's views. The next chapter will be on conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The penultimate chapter gave an analysis of the qualitative data. This chapter summarises the findings on literature study and empirical study. It presents recommendations and clarifies the limitations and contributions of this study. The layout of this chapter is illustrated in figure 6.1.

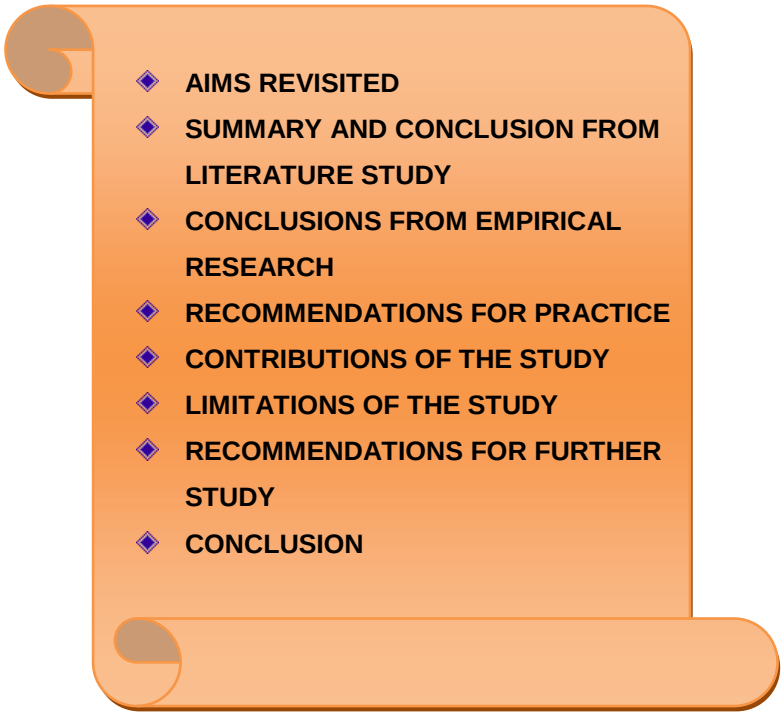

Figure 6.1: Layout of Chapter 6

6.2 AIMS REVISITED

The main aim of this study was to conduct an exploratory, phenomenological qualitative study in order to investigate the views of street youth on how streetism can be prevented. For the attainment of this aim, the researcher pursued the following objectives:

- To conduct a literature study for a better understanding of:
    - streetism
    - causes of streetism in South Africa
    - resilience and its processes
    - risks inherent in streetism
- To conduct a phenomenological study aimed at exploring:
    - how streetism can be prevented, according to street children

Table 6.1 indicates clearly whether the aforementioned aims were achieved or not.

AIMS OF STUDY	HOW THE AIMS ARE PURSUED	ACHIEVED	NOT ACHIEVED
To conduct a literature study for a better understanding of: • streetism • causes of streetism in South Africa • resilience and its processes • risks inherent in streetism	Literature study was conducted through the review of relevant literature that globally and locally explored streetism. The concept of streetism, its causes, resilience, its processes and the risks were explored in detail.	√√	
To conduct a phenomenological qualitative study aimed at exploring how streetism can be prevented, according to street children	Empirical research was conducted using semi-structured focus group interviews in order to collect data from 20 children on the streets. Furthermore, the empirical research brought up the strategies on how the problem of the street child phenomenon can be prevented.	√√	

Table 6.1: Summarised aims of the study

In summary, table 6.1 outlines the aims of the study, whether they are achieved or not, and if achieved, how they were pursued.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS FROM LITERATURE STUDY

Chapters 2 and 3 of the study cover the literature that the researcher reviewed which specifically explores the phenomenon of street children and the phenomenon of resilience respectively.

6.3.1 Summary of findings from literature on streetism

Researchers indicate that streetism is not a new socio-economic problem (Altanis & Goddard, 2004:299). Children have been leaving their families to work and live on the streets for a long time (Mahlangu, 2002:1).

- **Definition of streetism**

Researchers state that the concept of street child has widely been debated and has numerous definitions (Mahlangu, 2002:13; Anon, 2003:3). The following categories of street children were identified:

- children on the street
- children of the street
- runaway children
- dump youth
- abandoned and neglected children
- part-time working children
- slum youth

Research further indicates that street children are a heterogeneous group of children (Panter-Brick, 2002). In the study, the concept of street child was used to refer to the children who are in complex situations, including those who are abandoned;

neglected; children working on the streets; and those who are institutionalised. Furthermore, researchers mentioned that streetism is more likely to emerge because of the risk factors such as poverty and difficult situations at home (contextual factors), a need to be independent (personal factors) and/or a combination of both contextual factors and personal factors (Malindi, 2009:200). These risks are similarly implicated in blighting resilience functioning.

Once these children have migrated to the streets, they survive through begging for food and money; prostitution, being engaged in child labour and domestic work, drug abuse (glue), washing car windows, rubbish picking, shoe shining, and petty crimes (Panter-Brick, 2002:151; West, 2003:2).

6.3.2 Summary of resilience literature review

- **Definition of resilience**

It is very clear from the literature reviewed that the concept of resilience is considered to be a subjective and context-specific content that is not easy to define (Dass-Brailsford, 2005:575). However, there is a consensus that resilience denotes the attainment of positive developmental outcomes in spite of adversity. It is important to note that resilience is noted when a significant threat is experienced and overcome (Malindi, 2009:199).

It is therefore indicated in the research that the concept of resilience was differently conceptualised throughout history (Brendtro & Longhurst, 2005:52). Then later, it was perceived as the person's ability to bounce back and cope with adversity (Luthar *et al.*, 2000:545) and a combination of inbred features that serve as the protection of an individual from the effects of trauma that enable him or her to live a productive life (Bogar & Killacky, 2006:319). Resilience in an individual was considered to be an ecological phenomenon that emerges through interaction within an environment and the system, such as the families, schools, neighbourhoods and the broader community (Brooks, 2006:70).

Recently, the concept of resilience has been perceived as the person's capability to navigate his or her pathways to the resources that support the person's well-being, physical and social capability to provide resilience resources. Lastly, it was considered to be a person's family and the broader communities' ability to negotiate meaningful ways to share available resources (Ungar, 2006:55).

- **The processes of resilience**

Research has noted that risk factors and protective resources are processes of resilience. It further states that risk factors make the development of negative outcomes more likely on the other hand, while protective resources turn it around and motivate at-risk youth (including street children) to survive in spite of the adverse situation (Gilligan, 2004:93; Armstrong *et al*., 2005:270). Risk factors as well as the protective resources originate from the individual, families, environment and the broader society (Malindi, 2009:200).

The following are the risk factors that emanated from the literature study. These factors are said to hinder an individual's resiliency:

- intense social stressors
- low socio-economic status
- low parental academic attainment
- family psychiatric problems
- dysfunctional and harsh family
- environmental degradation and exploitation
- genetic disorder and developmental risks
- socio-economic circumstances

Other contextual factors include poverty; racial discrimination and injustice; unemployment; various kinds of child abuse and neglect; conflicts between parents; poor parenting; and psychopathology (Brooks, 2006:69).

Nevertheless, the literature study conducted revealed a number of protective resources that are crucial in enhancing an individual's resiliency regardless of the harsh situation he/she might be in. Those protective resources include personal attributes, family resources and social environmental resources (Anorowitz, 2005:201; Theron, 2006:199). A breakdown of these resources is highlighted below.

- **Personal attributes**
  - self-belief
  - health
  - development and self-recognition
  - autonomy
  - self-help skills and aptitude
- **Familial resources**
  - parental attributes
  - parental behaviour and connectedness
  - sound family structures
  - supportive family network
- **Socio-environmental resources**
  - conducive neighbourhood and school environment
  - supportive community groups and institutions
  - connection with pro-social adult

- effective and positive peer relationship

6.4 CONCLUSIONS FROM THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The researcher conducted a phenomenological, qualitative study to explore the views of street children on how streetism could be prevented.

When reviewing the findings of the data that was collected, the following themes emerged, namely:

- *Families should be strengthened to prevent streetism.*
- *Sound peer support can prevent streetism.*
- *Schools can be used to prevent streetism.*
- *Access to social services can prevent streetism.*
- *Churches can prevent streetism.*
- *A supportive community can prevent streetism.*
- *Access to government services can prevent streetism.*

The findings highlighted a constellation of resilience risks that street children were exposed to, namely:

- family feud
- lack of sense of belonging and acceptance
- parents who lack information about their children's needs
- unemployment and family conflicts
- social problems
- unequal treatment at home
- step-parents who are not caring
- domestic violence
- lack of respect, fights and constant misunderstandings
- family disharmony
- unequal wages that parents receive
- feeling of insecurity in the context of violence

Moreover, the empirical study showed that street children have knowledge and an understanding of how streetism can be prevented. The following are the novel ideas and findings that were not noted in literature:

- availability of familial support and parental guidance
- opportunities to learn about problems afflicting children
- parental guidance with regard to experiences and developmental needs of orphans and other vulnerable children
- addressing parents about situations of street children
- gainful employment of their parents
- receipt of social grant and social support
- public adoption of a street child
- treating children well without discrimination by parents and caregivers
- trusting the Lord
- peace in the families
- involvement of children in family matters
- having a sense of agency
- being adaptable to social contexts

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

What follows are recommendations for practice that emanated from the researcher's findings.

- **Educating parents and at-risk families about streetism**

The programmes that can be designed used to identify and provide assistance to the families that are at risk should be made available. These programmes should assist in stabilising at-risk families through education, and social and life skills. They (the programmes) must also be used to train the families on job opportunities. Through these programmes, parenting skills must be strengthened so that parents can be able to love, support and guide their children. They must also be taught about street children to enable them to accommodate them in their lives, treat them with respect and not discriminate against them.

- **Educating the community about streetism**

Most of the communities tend to regard street children as criminals. In this instance, they should be educated about social work services available in their vicinity because most children come from and form part of at-risk families. NGOs, with the help of local government, should organise in-service training, short courses, workshops as well as seminars where community members can gain insight of who the street children are and how they behave. These educational programs should not be a once-off activity, but they should be continual as children are migrating to the streets almost daily.

- **Training teachers about streetism**

Teachers should be well informed and trained about streetism. This can be done through workshops, courses, seminars, and other ways that are organised mainly by the NGOs as they are the organisations that directly deal with and care for the street children. The Department of Basic Education must form a partnership with these NGOs in training teachers about street children and streetism. Enough time should be allocated for training.

- **Inclusion of street children in schools**

The focus here is only on child-headed families and children with behavioural problems through a School-Based Support Team (SBST). There is less or no focus on children known as street children. These kinds of children are mostly neglected and not catered for. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the schools should review their policies in order to accommodate these children and to promote wellness among at-risk learners. Street children can be exposed to healthy and supportive social as well as academic environments to enable them to be resilient and stay at school (Malindi & Machenjedze, 2012:73). Feeding schemes should be available in all primary and secondary schools in order to accommodate these street and vulnerable children.

6.6 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

This study made the following contributions:

- The strategies that can prevent streetism were identified by street children themselves. This provides knowledge to other people on how they can prevent the problem of the street child phenomenon.

- The study has suggested new approaches in preventing streetism that were not even noted in previous research. For example,

  - strengthening families as sources of social support;
  - sound peer support systems;
  - having access to social services and church services;
  - access to government services;
  - church services; and
  - a supportive community.
  - the use of schools
  - availability of familial support and parental guidance
  - opportunities to learn about problems afflicting children
  - parental guidance with regard to experiences and developmental needs of orphans and other vulnerable children
  - addressing parents about situations of street children
  - gainful employment of their parents
  - receipt of social grant and social support
  - public adoption of a street child
  - treating children well without discrimination by parents and caregivers
  - trusting the Lord
  - peace in the families
  - involvement of children in family matters
  - having a sense of agency
  - being adaptable to social contexts

- The research findings can be utilised by other researchers, teachers at schools, social workers and NGOs to further understand and accommodate street children in their lives.

6.7 LIMITATIONS

The limitation of the research was that it focused only on 20 black street youth who still have ties with their parents or guardians (children on the streets). Children from other racial groups were not included since they were not in proximity. Another limitation was that the study also focused only on Sesotho-speaking children on the streets from only one province.

6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

- It would have been much interesting to find out what street children from other races say about preventing streetism. It is recommended that these children be included in future studies.
- It would have been interesting to find out from children on the streets, how they would prefer to be integrated into societies and what supports they need from schools.

6.9 CONCLUSION

The focus of this chapter was on summaries and conclusions from literature and the empirical study. Recommendations for further study and practical implications were suggested. Limitations and contributions of the study were even highlighted.

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APPENDIX A

A PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH-

BOPHELO CHILD CARE CENTRE

BOPHELO
MULTI PURPOSE COMMUNITY
BASED CENTRE

(Joint project by Engo Family Care - Senekal & Engo Aged Care - Senekal)

10 April 2013

Dear Student (Molahlehi L.A)

North West University

(Vaal Triangle Campus)

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH

We the above mentioned organisation, received your request to conduct your research at our Drop in centre, which will be from 24 to 25 April 2013.

We are hereby granting you a permission to do your research at our Drop in centre by interviewing children (beneficiaries) as you have requested.

Hope to see you then

With thanks

Makhongoana J.M

Project Manager

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS/CARE-GIVERS

16 Kritzinger street
Sasolburg
1947
Cell no. 073 733 8188187

Dear Parent/Guardian/Care-Giver

REQUEST TO DO RESEARCH AT THE SHELTER

I, Ms. L.A. Molahlehi, am a registered Masters of Education student at the North-West University (Vaal Triangle Campus). I am busy compiling my Dissertation as a requirement for the aforementioned degree. The title of my dissertation is: **The views of street children on how streetism can be prevented.** My supervisor is Dr. M.J. Malindi (016-910 3094)

I kindly request permission to invite children at the shelter to take part in my study. They will be asked to participate in interviews that will probably last between 30 and 45 minutes. The interviews will be held at the shelter. The findings will help us in our schools to support children so that they do not leave their families and school. If you agree to let your child volunteer, please co-sign the enclosed form in the space provided for the parent/guardian. I can be contacted if more information is needed. Contact details appear on this letter.

I wish to thank you in advance.

Regards,

_____

Ms. LA Molahlehi

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM- CHILDREN ON THE STREET

VOLUNTARY INFORMED CONSENT FORM: CHILDREN ON THE STREET

Title: The prevention of streetism: street youth's views.

If you agree, please place an "X" in the 'yes' boxes to show that you understand and agree with each statement:

1. I understand the information about the study in the Information Letter. Any questions I had were answered.	**Yes, I understand**
2. I realize that participation is completely voluntary and that I can stop the study at any time. If I am uncomfortable answering any question, I may choose not to answer.	**Yes, I understand**
3. I will be asked to make drawings and explain them in writing. My participation will be confidential. I understand that my full name will not be used, nor will specific details of where I live be shared, when information from the interviews is used by the researcher.	**Yes, I understand**
4. I understand that what I say may be quoted at great length in publications, presentations and the final report. If I become concerned with anything I said, I can ask for parts, or all, of what I said not to be quoted. I may also have deleted any parts of the interview I want deleted.	**Yes, I understand**
5. I understand that even if my parent or guardian consents to my taking part in the study, it is my decision whether I want to participate. If I do not wish to participate, or want to withdraw from the study at any time, my wishes will be respected without penalty. My parent's or guardian's consent does not make me have to participate.	**Yes, I understand**
6. I understand that if something troubles me while participating, the researcher will provide me with information about community resources (e.g. a local psychologist) that might help me. I understand that I will be responsible for the payment of such a professional in the event that I should follow-up the referral.	**Yes, I understand**

I agree to take part in this study.

_____ _____

(Research Participant's Signature) *(Date)*

I agree to allow my child to participate

_____ _____

(Parent's/Guardian's/Care-Giver's Signature) *(Date)*

The study has been explained to the young person and this form signed voluntarily

_____ _____

(Researcher's Signature) (Date)

The study has been explained to the children and this form signed voluntarily

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. According to you, how can we prevent young people from being involved in street life?
2. What personal challenges cause young people to adopt street life?
3. Which family and community challenges cause young people to adopt street life?
4. How can these challenges be dealt with?
5. Who can be involved in efforts to prevent young people from being involved in street life? Why do you mention the people you mentioned?
6. What could be the roles of such people?
7. What could be the role of families in efforts to prevent children from leaving their homes?
8. What could be the role of schools in efforts to prevent children from leaving their homes?
9. What could be the role of government in efforts to prevent children from leaving their homes?
10. What could be the role of community organisations in efforts to prevent children from leaving their homes?

APPENDIX E

AUDIT TRAIL AND OPEN CODING

APPENDIX E: AUDIT TRAIL

Researcher: Eh……..i would like to know, like you have spoken about your problems or difficulties that you have met in your lives, according to you what do you think should be done……..what can be done to prevent young children to live in situations you spoke about. What can prevent such situation?

Lebo: I think to prevent problems, there are centers that are already built; so children can be able to come to them; as we know that there are children who cannot be reached out who are living here in townships, they living in hunger. So we know that they are offering food here, so as children we know that we are attending here, which means we can inform other people about this centre, so that they can also come or join….Even in townships there are women in a community who offer help to such children, so these children can go and get help there.

Comment [MM1]: BUILDING CENTERS FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Comment [MM2]: PROVIDING FOOD FOR HUNGRY CHILDREN

Comment [MM3]: VOLUNTEERING MEMBERS OF COMMUNITY

Researcher: Can you please speak, feel free. I have said; according to you what can be done to prevent young children from finding themselves in difficult situations you have mentioned?

Tiisetso: They…they can go to support groups like Bophelo so. Bophelo offers food, clothes; on top of that there are social workers. If…..there are things that have hurt them, they can speak to social workers so that they can get help.

Comment [MM4]: APPROACHING SUPPORT GROUPS

Researcher: What else can be done to prevent……..Thank you. Which personal problems can cause children to live in such difficult problems?

Lebo : You can find that it happens that your friends gives you a peer pressure, like girls they can be easily taken up, which means a person like things that she does not know its consequences, those that she does not know that if I do so what kind of things will happen, things that are done by friends. She does look out at her background. If we see others wearing particular clothes we therefore need them. So it happens that you do wrong things, but then afterwards you realize that what you did was wrong; just because you were not realizing that I will have that situation if I will achieve this thing first before I can get others.

Comment [MM5]: REDUCING PEER PRESSURE

Researcher: I am asking you to speak. Don't be scared……I have explained to you the personal problems I have experienced, I grew up at home……..when we arrive at township there was no one employed. When you get home you find that there is nothing to eat, sometimes you find that there are no toiletry and others. That means those are the personal

problems I have met, that causes that you end up thinking I must go there and seek help so that I can survive……Now my question says, which personal problems cause children to live in difficult situations that you have mentioned?

Lebo: Sometimes you find that life is sharp in the family, but sometimes there are things that you don't feel ok with. A person you are living with did not like your parent and is always telling you hurting words, but you live sharp, hey man, I felt like I could go out here and do things like this and that. She makes you feel out……you feel like……she makes you feel like you are not needed, you are not part of the family.

Comment [MM6]: NORMALISING FAMILY LIFE

Keke: I, when we were still living at home, we were……..my mother was able to do everything for us. Our parents were able do to everything we were asking even though they were not working. When we get there, I met problems and asked myself that but I am getting social grant but why are these people not able to satisfy myself the way I want, but my parents were deceased and they were not working but they were able to do things that I wanted. Now, I asked myself that what causes problem is that a parent, meaning our guardians they have….thy favour. If you are children the three of you, she will favour her child, these other two she will not favour them because they have no parents. What makes us find ourselves here is because parents favour.

Comment [MM7]: MEETING THE BASIC NEEDS OF CHILDREN

Comment [MM8]: REDUCING FAVOURITISM

Researcher: Is there anyone who want to say something?.....Thank you. Eh….now I coming with the next question. Which family or community problems that cause children to end up living in a situation similar to what you find yourselves in? Now I have heard you mentioning a lot about the families, I would like you to talk more about the community. What are the things, from the community; those cause you to live in a situation you have mentioned?

Lebo: Ah, in our community people are able to influence. Now it happens that maybe a parent you are living with goes to those people who are living outside and discusses things she has told you that you must not tell anyone. Then she takes them outside, so you find that outsiders are saying those things behind your back. They will then discriminate you and make you feel out as if you are not suppose to live there, just because you don't have parents.

Comment [MM9]: REDUCING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHILDREN

Tiisetso: Sometimes people do not like you, up-on that they do not like you……..if you do unpleasant things they do not advice you instead they talk bad things about you…….like……if you are walking with boys they make conclusions that you and those boys are in love. When you get home you find bad things.

Comment [MM10]: REDUCING DISLIKE FOR CHILDREN AND BAD-MOUTHING

Keke: Another problem is that people in the community think that if you are an orphan, without parents, you are not allowed to make mistakes in your life. Once you make mistakes they will go to your guardian and tell her that your child was doing this and that. After school I saw her walking with boys. The people in the community will never come to you and ask what is happening between you and certain boys, maybe they are your classmates or church mates. They do not know, because you are an orphan and because you are walking with boys; it is going to be a problem.

Researcher: Thank you…..with all the things you have mentioned, who will help……who will assist to ensure that the children are living in better conditions?……According to you who will assist to prevent the children from living in such difficult situations? Who will help in difficult situations you have mentioned?

Lebo: I think social workers will help, but not only social workers. They need people who can help because social worker can help but there is somewhere where she won't be able to. You will see that this is for the first time I meet this person and you will not feel comfortable. So I think that your parent, your guardian or someone from the community can help. They can mention that there these kinds of children in the township. Therefore we volunteer that we will bring such children to you so that you can help them in any way.

Tiisetso: And the therapist……can be able to help too.

Keke: I think that pastors (reverends) at the churches……can be able to help too.

Researcher: Why did you choose those people you have mentioned?

Lebo: Social workers have a lot of influence. They can get to the problems that people who we helping could not get them. And your parent knows you better that any other member of the community.

Tiisetso: Therapist helps when you are hurt. She/he speaks to you thereafter she can be able to give you solution on how to get out of such problem.

Keke: I think the pastors (reverends) because in the township there are pastors who have grouped themselves, who offer counseling.

Researcher: Thank you once more. What can your families do to prevent children from living in difficult situations you have spoken about?

Tiisetso: They must stop discriminating, like if they are having many children they should treat them equally.

Lebo: Family can help but it cannot do so without you, so you have to include yourself amongst them, because there are things you are unhappy about; that you must tell. Let say they are not treating you sharp but you are still

Comment [MM11]: TREATING ORPHANS EQUALLY

Comment [LA12]: SOCIAL WORKERS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE

Comment [LA13]: FAMILIES SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR SUPPORT

Comment [MM14]: SOCIAL SERVICES SHOULD BE AVAILABLE

Comment [MM15]: THERAPISTS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE

Comment [MM16]: PASTORS SHOULD OFFER COUNSELLING

Comment [MM17]: DISCRIMINATION MUST BE PREVENTED

not saying anything. They will only think that whatever they are doing is fine, but there will be someone from the family who will understand you better than anyone. You will then speak among them that this and that I do not like, which means if they do not understand you but then there will be someone who will understand you. This person will be able to tell them that what you were saying he/she understands it, but then he/she will do this and that so as to help you. But she/he needs you to adapt with him/her so as to avoid such situation.

Comment [MM18]: CHILDREN MUST BE HEARD

Researcher: In other words you mean that families should listen to you……..in every difficult situations that you have. People in your families must listen to you so that this problem can be able to go away.

Lebo: Yes, they must give us a hearing.

Keke: They must stop having favourites, like if there are three children, the other one is hers and the other two are orphans, should stop favouring her child. Because you can find that sometimes you ask her to buy you something, knowing that you need that, she will buy it for her child who is already having what you are asking. Parents must stop having favourites; they must love children equally so that this could go away.

Comment [MM19]: FAVOURITISM MUST BE PREVENTED

Researcher: Thank you. Let's go to the schools. Are we all attending school?

Participants: Yes.

Researcher: What can the school do, in situations you have spoken about, to prevent children from living in a situation that you have told me about? What can they do to prevent those problems, such difficult situation you have explained?

Lebo: at school as we know that there are feeding schemes, as a school child, maybe your teacher asks like when we start to go to school. A teacher will ask who you are, where are you from; etc. It might happen that you go to the teacher and tell him/her what is happening at your home. They will be able to help you, like at school there are counseling groups; feeding schemes; they will be able to support you and give you some food. They will be able to unite themselves as a unit and give you what you need.

Comment [MM20]: COUNSELLING SERVICES SHOULD BE AVAILABLE AT SCHOOLS

Comment [MM21]: FEEDING SCHEMES SHOULD BE AVAILABLE AT SCHOOLS

Keke: During parents meetings they should include in their programs how should a child be treated according to their ages.

Tiisetso: Even if there can be therapist at school like there are children who are……..abused at school who are not able to speak. They can be able to speak to therapist so that they can help.

Comment [MM22]: THERAPISTS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR ABUSED CHILDREN

Researcher: Feel free to talk to me.

Lebo: Even at school like we know there will be……like it is for the first time you attend the school, there will be someone you feel like you have been meeting, it is like you know her you have seen her. You will be able to approach her and speak about your problems. Then she will be able to help.

Comment [MM23]: THERE SHOULD BE PEOPLE CHILDREN CAN SPEAK TO AT SCHOOL

Researcher: Someone like whom, another school kid, a teacher or the principal?

Lebo: A teacher or the principal.

Tiisetso: Another school kid can be able to help. She will be able to tell your class-teacher your problems and the class-teacher will be able to sit down with you so as to help.

Comment [MM24]: PEER SUPPORT GROUPS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE

Researcher: How are you going to tell another school kid? Will you tell her because you are scared to talk or what?

Tiisetso: If you are scared to speak. You can find that you are abused at home; you will then be scared to speak. You will then tell your friend that this and that has happened. She will be able to seek help for you.

Comment [MM25]: PEER SUPPORT GROUPS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE

Researcher: Thank you. What can be done by our government to prevent the problem you are talking about? In order to prevent difficult situation you find yourselves in, what can the government do?

Lebo: Government can provide people with services. Because we know that in our families we cannot afford to pay for municipal services. So they can help us to build centers and hire people because here at Sesene there is high rate of unemployment. If they can build those centers and hire people, unemployment will decrease and they can get help.

Comment [MM26]: GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE SERVICES

Researcher: What else can anyone say? What can be done by our government to prevent these?

Lebo: I think our government, like we already know that in our township there are opened centers, can provide things like food; blankets; clothes for those who are needy. Government can give those services to them.

Comment [MM27]: GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE SERVICES

PRELIMINARY CODING

- Building centres for vulnerable children
- Providing food for hungry children
- Volunteering members of community can help
- Approaching support groups for help

- Reducing peer pressure
- Normalising family life
- Meeting the basic needs of the children
- Reducing favouritism in families
- Reducing discrimination against children
- Reducing dislike for children and bad-mouthing
- Treating orphans equally
- Social services should be available
- Families should be available for support
- Therapist should be available
- Discrimination must be prevented
- Children must be heard
- Counselling services should be available at school
- Feeding scheme should be available at school
- There should be people children can speak to at school
- Peer support groups should be available
- Government should provide services

APPENDIX F

THE THEMES DEDVELOPED FROM THE CODES

THE THEMES DEVELOPED FROM THE CODES

The following are the themes developed from the codes:

- Families should be strengthened to prevent streetism.
- Sound peer support can prevent streetism.
- Schools can be used to prevent streetism.
- Access to social services can prevent streetism.
- Churches can prevent streetism.
- A supportive community can prevent streetism.
- Access to government services can prevent streetism.