

Learners' perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community

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SUMMARY

From a positive psychology perspective, the last few decades have seen continuous growth in research emphasising well-being in school communities. Schools should be viewed as spaces that enable life success, as opposed to mere learning environments aimed at academic success. Well-being is often associated with relational well-being and building, enhancing and maintaining positive relationships at schools. Along with academic performance, relational well-being is vital to learners' current and future development. Such social well-being may, in turn, affect psychological well-being positively, as these two influence each other greatly. In this context, positive educator-learner relationships must be based on mutual respect, as it may provide a vast array of benefits to secondary learners' well-being and academic performance. Moreover, positive interpersonal connections between educators and learners based on mutual respect are valuable tools for managing effective discipline in classrooms, which means that educators also benefit from protecting and promoting good relationships with their learners. Positive educator-learner relationships are highly relevant for secondary school learners living in high-risk communities, where support and resources for enhancing and developing their psychosocial well-being are limited. For such learners school is often the only safe and supportive environment they have. It is therefore imperative to bring the personal into the educational environment by building, enhancing and maintaining respectful educator-learner relationships based on mutual respect. However, educator-learner relationships have specifically been neglected in regard to learners' perceptions of respect as experienced from and given to educators. Due to the identified gap in the literature, the main aim of this study was to qualitatively explore and describe, through qualitative, phenomenological research design, learners' perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community within a high-risk environment in the South African context.

The participants for this study were fifteen secondary school Grade 12 learners. The data were gathered in two phases, namely written assignments, and, the World Café technique was applied. Thematic analysis was used to identify relevant themes. The findings revealed three main themes, and each theme includes several subthemes. Firstly, respect is well-intended behaviour, with the subthemes being listening and paying attention; good communication; obeying educators and school rules; good manners such as being helpful, polite and kind, and greeting others; saying thank you and please; academic responsibility; and receiving support and praise from educators. Secondly, respect is positive relationships, with the subthemes being building a relationship; parent-child relationship; as well as trust and confidentiality. Thirdly, respect is consistent, fair and mutual, with the subthemes being respect as a two-way street; respect as something to be earned; respect as something that is consistent over time; and respect that means treating everyone equally, fairly and with acceptance. It can be summarised that all participants' responses illustrated a collective yet subjective learners' perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community within a high risk community in South Africa. For further research it was recommended to gain better understanding how learners in secondary school communities perceive respect in educator-learner relationships in regard to various cultures.

Keywords: educators, learners, perception, positive psychology, respect, high-risk community

OPSOMMING

Binne die perspektief van die positiewe sielkunde was daar voortdurende groei die afgelope dekades in navorsing wat welstand in skoolgemeenskappe beklemtoon. Skole behoort gesien te word as ruimtes wat leefsukses bevorder, teenoor blote leer-omgewings wat gerig is op akademiese sukses. Welstand word dikwels geassosieer met verhoudingswelstand en die bou, bemoediging en instandhouding van positiewe verhoudings by skole. Beide akademiese prestasie en verhoudingswelstand is van sleutelbelang vir leerders se huidige en toekomstige ontwikkeling. Sulke sosiale welstand kan, op sy beurt, psigologiese welstand affekteer, aangesien hierdie twee faktore mekaar grootliks beïnvloed. In hierdie konteks moet positiewe opvoeder-leerder verhoudings op wedersydse respek gebaseer wees, aangesien dit vele voordele kan inhou vir sekondêre leerders se welstand en skoolsukses. Verder, positiewe interpersoonlike verbintenisse tussen opvoeders en leerders gebaseer op wedersydse respek is waardevolle toerusting vir effektiewe dissipline in die klaskamers, wat beteken dat opvoeders ook daarby baat wanneer hulle goeie verhoudings met hul leerders beskerm en bevorder. Positiewe opvoeder-leerder verhoudings is uiters relevant vir sekondêre skoolleerders wat in hoë-risiko gemeenskappe leef, waar ondersteuning en hulpbronne vir die uitbouing en ontwikkeling van hul psigososiale welstand beperk is. Vir sulke leerders is skool dikwels die enigste veilige en ondersteunende omgewing. Om die rede is dit noodsaaklik om die persoonlike by die opvoedkundige omgewing in te sluit, deur die uitbouing en beskerming van respekvolle opvoeder-leerder verhoudings gebaseer op wedersydse respek. Aan die anderkant is dit so dat opvoeder-leerder verhoudings verwaarloos is ten opsigte van leerders se persepsies van respek soos hulle dit ervaar van, en getoon aan opvoeders. Gegewe die leemte wat in die literatuur ge-identifiseer is, was die doel van hierdie studie om deur middel van 'n kwalitatiewe fenomenologiese navorsingsontwerp leerders se persepsies van respek in

opvoeder-leerder verhoudings in a sekondêre skoolgemeenskap in 'n hoë-risiko omgewing in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks, te verken en te beskryf.

Die deelnemers aan hierdie studie was vyftien sekondêre skool graad 12-leerders. Die data is versamel in twee fases, naamlik geskrewe werk-opdragte, en, die Wêreld Kafee-tegniek is gebruik. Tematiewe analise is gebruik om relevante tema's te identifiseer. Die bevindings het drie hooftema's getoon, en elke tema het verskeie subtema's ingesluit. Eerstens, respek is goedbedoelde gedrag, met die subtema's van luistervaardighede en aandaggee; goeie kommunikasie; die gehoorsaam van opvoeders en skoolreëls; goeie maniere soos hulpvaardigheid, bedagsaamheid en deernis, en om ander te groet; die sê van "dankie" en "asseblief"; akademiese verantwoordelikheid; en, die beleving van ondersteuning en lof van opvoeders. Tweedens, respek is positiewe verhoudings, met die bou van 'n verhouding; ouer-kind verhouding; asook vertrouwe en vertroulikheid as subtema's. Derdens, respek is konstant, regverdig en wedersyds, met die subtema's dat respek 'n twee-rigtingstraat is; respek is iets wat verdien word; respek is iets wat konstant is met verloop van tyd, en, respek beteken dat almal op gelyke vlak hanteer word, regverdig en aanvaarding geniet. Dit kan opgesom word dat alle deelnemers se response 'n kollektiewe, tog subjektiewe persepsie van respek in die opvoeder-leerder verhoudings in 'n sekondêre skoolgemeenskap binne 'n hoë-risiko gemeenskap in Suid-Afrika illustreer. Verdere navorsing word aanbeveel om 'n beter begrip te verkry hoe leerders in sekondêre skoolgemeenskappe respek waarneem in opvoeder-leerder verhoudings met verwysing na verskeie kulture.

Sleutelwoorde: opvoeders, leerders, perspesie, positiewe sielkunde, respek, hoë-risiko gemeenskap

PREFACE

This thesis is presented in article format as indicated in the North-West University Potchefstroom Campus Yearbook. The article comprising this thesis is intended for submission to *Journal of Psychology in Africa*.

The dissertation consists of:

Section A: Background to the study

- Part 1: Background and orientation to the research (APA referencing method)
- Part 2: Integrated literature study (APA referencing method)

Section B: The article (Journal of Psychology in Africa, APA referencing method, co-author: Dr Izanette Van Schalkwyk)

Section C: Summary, conclusions, recommendations, limitations and critical reflection (APA referencing method)

Section D: Complete references

Section E: Addenda

DECLARATION BY STUDENT

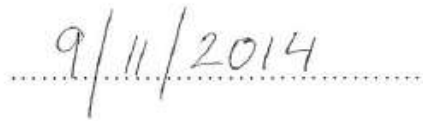
I, Lucie Grimova, the undersigned, hereby declare that the manuscript with the title, *“Learners’ perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community”* is my own work and that I have not previously in its entity or in part submitted at any other university in order to obtain a degree. All the references that were used or quoted were indicated and recognized.



Signature

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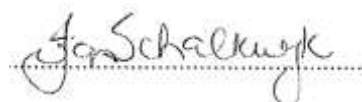


Date

DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR

The candidate opted to write this dissertation in article format with my support as her supervisor, and I confirm that it meets all academic criteria for the process of awarding the academic degree.

I, the supervisor declare that the input and effort of Lucie Grimova in writing this article reflect research done by her. I hereby grant permission that she may submit this article for examination purposes in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree *Magister Artium in Psychology*.



Signature

Dr I van Schalkwyk

06 November 2014

Date

DECLARATION BY LANGUAGE EDITOR

Hereby, I declare that I have language edited and proof read the thesis "*Learners' perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community*" by Lucie Grimova for the degree. I am a freelance language practitioner.

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SECTION A

PART I

BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

PART II

INTEGRATED LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Introduction and problem statement

The focus of this research is learners' perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships in a South African secondary school community. Seligman (2011) indicates that positive relationships are fundamental to personal well-being. The importance of relational living is part of human existence, and all humans are finely tuned for loving, befriending, helping, sharing and intertwining our lives with those of others (Haidt, 2003). Nonetheless, Prilleltensky (2012) states that limitations or problems relating to interconnectedness could present serious implications for individuals' psychosocial well-being, with grave implications for communities. Then again, the experiences of positive interacting enrich and fortify human health and positive functioning (Keyes, 2006a). Respect is viewed as one of the vital mechanisms of human interaction with relation to personal as well as communal well-being (Prilleltensky, 2012). De Cremer and Mulder (2007) provide a working definition of respect, which entails the act of communicating to other people that they are accepted and that they belong. In addition, Giesinger (2012) mentions that the encouragement of adolescents' autonomy is associated with self-respect and dignity. Furthermore, while some researchers emphasise respect as the manifestation of relational living (Sonn, 2005), others view respect as the birth right of all human beings (Petersen & Seligman, 2004).

Since the notion of respect (as relational apparatus) is linked to individual as well as collective well-being, it is fitting to be investigated within the context of schools. Schools can be conceived as positive institutions for developing humans, for example adolescents, and their social development (Ruini et al., 2009). In addition, schools as learning environments are often associated with the promoting of learners' well-being, and, in this sense these institutions can facilitate healthy social functioning (Bird & Markle, 2012; Goodman, 2009;

Hammett & Staeheli, 2011; LeeFon, Jacobs, Le Roux, & De Wet, 2012). In other words, when learners are exposed to positive relating and respectful engagement with their educators, academic development can take place alongside the enhancement of psychological, social and emotional well-being (Morrison, Brown, D'incau, O'Farrell, & Furlong, 2006). It seems that the core essence of good quality ties in a school community, which is embedded in mutual respect towards each other if practised effectively in educator-learner relationships, could be linked to healthy functioning individuals in our society. However, De Klerk and Rens (2003) argue that in South African education there is a moral crisis due to factors such as poor respect of learners towards one other, educators and school property. Moreover, as educator-learner connections are the most important relations within school-communities, impaired relations and disrespectful engagement could imply severe short- and long-term complications (Prilleltensky, 2012). Alternatively, relational resources are viewed as significant for meaningful lives and healthy functioning (Ungar, 2008).

In the following section, firstly, a broad definition of well-being will be provided, followed by a definition of relational well-being. Relational well-being is going to be positioned into a school context, since relationships are of key importance at schools. Most narrowly, the educator-learner relationship, which should be practised on the basis of mutual respect in order to be successful, will be defined. Secondly, the adolescent developmental period will be described; as such developmental period often affects the dynamics of relationships in the secondary schools' classrooms. Thirdly, the researcher elaborated on current education, placing the emphasis on the academic versus the personal. Fourthly, the emphasis on the personal will be explained in more detail, as it manifests in the form of relationships, which, if built on mutual respect, is a necessary aspect of successful education. Lastly, a summary will be presented with concluding thoughts stressing the importance of

building educator-learner relationships based on mutual respect in secondary school communities.

1.2 Theoretical framework

1.2.1 Positive psychology and well-being

Positive psychology studies positive human health, with the emphasis on protecting and strengthening individuals' abilities and competencies aimed at positive outcomes (Shogren, Lopez, & Wehmeyer, 2006). While this approach to psychology covers a comprehensive range of human experience, this study focused on relational well-being, since the participants of this investigation were ordinary adolescents, living in high-risk communities, but who do not suffer from disorders or disease.

1.2.2 Well-being

Research and public interest in well-being is growing rapidly, and represents a paradigm shift towards a holistic, person-centred and dynamic understanding of people's lives (Camfield, 2006; McGregor, & Woodcock, 2007; White, 2008). The Wellbeing Institute of University of Cambridge (2014) defines well-being as referring to positive and sustainable characteristics, which enable individuals, families, organisations, communities and societies to thrive and flourish. Keyes (2007) distinguishes between hedonic well-being, namely positive emotions towards one's life, and eudaimonic well-being as positive psychological and social functioning in life. Due to the growing challenges that learners in secondary schools have to face, especially in impoverished areas, studies about how schools

as enabling environments could promote positive behaviour, as well as the academic progress of their learners, have been developing rapidly (Kitching, 2010; Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2013). Well-being is often associated with relational well-being and therefore building, enhancing and maintaining positive relationships at schools is vital to learners' positive development.

1.2.3 Relational well-being

White (2008) emphasizes that well-being often directs itself towards the centrality of relatedness to others; in other words, well-being is embedded in social and cultural location. Witmer (2005) argues that life's deepest purpose can be found in relationships, which provide us with meaning and genuine learning. Prilleltensky (2005) states that personal and collective well-being is highly dependent on relational well-being. In other words, personal growth depends on relations with other people – which often entail interacting with people from different cultural communities – and the sense of oneself and of one's worth is gained through interaction with others (Pring, 2012). Ryff and Singer (2008) indicate that positive relationships are one of six facets that lead to positive self-realisation and positive human health. Furthermore, having good and meaningful relationships with others in the community can reflect on positive personal well-being (Evans & Prilleltensky, 2007; Pring, 2012; Ryff and Singer, 2000). This means that relational well-being is an essential indicator of personal and collective well-being, and limitations or problems with respect to interconnectedness could have serious implications for individuals, as well as communities. Then again, the experience of positive interactions could encourage and fortify complete human health, specifically social functioning, towards higher levels of well-being, indicated as flourishing (Keyes, 2006a).

1.2.4 Relational well-being based on respect

Extensive philosophical literature and many field studies demonstrate that positive relationships entail many benefits; therefore it is important that our society investigate, protect and promote tools that will sustain and value such relationships. Not only interpersonal but also personal, organisational and communal well-being is shaped by practising respect towards others (Prilleltensky, 2012). According to Dillon (2007), the respect people receive from others and themselves influences whether individuals flourish or flounder, and whether interpersonal relationships are harmonious or disharmonious. In the literature there are two opposing themes with regard to respect. The first is that all persons are worthy of respect regardless of their social position or individual qualities; in other words, all people are equally worthy of respect, whether they deserve it or not. A second theme posits that respect must be earned as the acknowledgement of the good values in others (Dillon, 2007). De Cremer and Mulder (2007) provide a working definition of respect, which entails the act of communicating full recognition to other people, which gives people the sense of being accepted, and this sense of belonging then positively effects dimensions of self-concept, self-respect and self-esteem. There are different interpretations of defining, understanding and demonstrating respect. What one person or culture finds respectful, others may not. In summary, the above mentioned views on respect indicate that an inconsistent meaning of respect may produce conflict among individuals and confusion in the literature; therefore it is important to understand and define respectful behaviour towards others with regard to culture, age and context (Goodman, 2009; Jones 2002; Sung, 2004; Ungar 2008).

1.2.5 Relational well-being at schools

Schools are considered to be important contexts for the promotion of young people's well-being (Keyes 1998; McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010). The experience of positive interactions and support given to learners at schools could have a positive impact on young adults' present and future well-being (Evans & Prilleltensky, 2007; Kitching 2010; McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010; Pring, 2012; Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2013). Kitching (2010) emphasises the need to understand people's experiences of social interaction in schools as enabling contexts for the enhancement of well-being.

According to Witmer (2005) the educator-learner relationships in the classroom have an important impact on a learner's achievement. Witmer (2005) proposes that the developing and fostering of educator-learner relationships should be considered as an integral part of daily lesson planning. In other words, apart from the focus on merely meeting the demands of educational curricula, the vital importance of relational dynamics of interconnectedness should be taken into account. Mitra (2009) states that youth-adult partnerships could improve educational outcomes. Tian, Han, & Huebner (2014) conducted a study with adolescents in China, and the findings indicated that when learners were positively encouraged by their educators in regard to their academic competence, it had a positive impact on learners' overall school performance. Respectful behaviour towards learners is viewed as the case where an educator listens to students' views and opinions and shows them that their views are valued and taken into consideration, (Giesinger, 2012). Apart from the association between healthy educator-and-learner relationships and improved academic results and enhanced self-respect, positive interpersonal connections are also a valuable tool to manage discipline effectively in classrooms (Oosthuizen & Van Der Walt, 2008).

Sonn (2005) investigated discipline at schools in the South African context. He argued that problems regarding discipline at schools occur mainly when learners are exposed to high-risk communities. The enduring exposure to these “toxic” communities is associated with various traumatic experiences, such as family conflict, violence in the neighbourhood, fear for personal safety, being rejected for being different (based on culture, religion, accent, etc.), and death or divorce in the family to name but a few. It is noteworthy that Sonn (2005) emphasises that discipline is not simply a way of controlling unwanted behaviour. Rather, he argues that taking a holistic view on discipline involves treating learners as young people worthy of respect and dignity. However, secondary school learners’ experience and perceptions of respect in regard to educator-learner relationships will be influenced by the challenges and emotional changes inherent to being an adolescent.

1.2.6 Adolescence

Adolescence, developmentally, is a challenging yet exciting transformative period. It is a time when youngsters are concerned with increasing their autonomy and with shifting the balance in their relationships with peers and adults (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010; Petersen, Swartz, Bhana, & Flisher, 2010). This life phase is also a period in which individuals strive towards positive recognition and the development of positive self-identity, which is often influenced by both inner predispositions and the environment (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

Adolescence is often associated with risky behaviour, for example substance abuse, violence, academic failure, juvenile crimes, mental health problems, and risky sexual behaviour (Greenberg et al., 2003; Hemmings, 2003; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008; Morojele et al., 2013; Swart & Reddy, 1999; Theron, 2007; Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010; Zeldin, Wilson &

Collura, 2011). These problematic behaviours are just some of the challenges young people could face during adolescence – all of which could have short- and long-term adverse consequences. Such behaviour is prevalent within conflicted communities with low-income families, due to the everyday exposure to such negative behaviour (Petersen et al., 2010; Zeldin et al., 2011).

Due to the negative behaviour of young adults in conflicted communities, they are often seen as problems rather than assets to their communities, which could result in these young people not feeling accepted by their communities (Zeldin et al., 2011). In the first phase of his ecological theory, Bronfenbrenner (1979) emphasises the importance of human development and the child's interaction with the environment, by highlighting the importance of context (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). This means that the setting in which a developing individual spends time, and the individual's relationship with other individuals in the same setting (e.g. friends, parents, educators, and school staff, and other community members such as gangsters or church-members), are of vital importance (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). In other words, youngsters, including adolescents living in high-risk communities, are affected by the environment they live in; therefore it is impossible for them to leave their problems at home when going to school. Franklin, Streeter, Kim & Tripodi (2007) indicate that in first-world countries these children have access to the services of social workers, counsellors and mental health professionals who work in public schools. However, these resources are scarce in underprivileged communities in South Africa, and therefore the role of educators is expanding beyond delivering academic results (Greenberg et al., 2003; Hirst & Vadeboncouer, 2006; Morojele et al., 2013).

In summary, in order to see young adults as important assets in society it is necessary to develop supportive environments that will enable them to become successful learners, as well as good citizens in their adult lives (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak & Hawkins, 2004; Zeldin et al., 2011). It is evident that schools, as important influential environments in young adults' lives, must concentrate not only on the academic outcomes, but also on the personal development of its learners (Pring, 2012). Bailey (2012) echoes this argument when he states the importance of gaining an understanding of the contextual difficulties students have to face in their daily lives, and giving them continual psychosocial support to deal with such difficulties, instead of reducing learning to mere academic performance and good marks.

1.2.7 Emphasis on the academic

However, nowadays schools are concentrating more on academic achievement than on personal and interpersonal development. This is not only prevalent in the South African context. Pring (2012) critically examined the educational practice at schools in the United Kingdom. He argues that academic target-setting in First World culture leads to a depersonalisation of education, which means that young learners are not treated with the appropriate amount of respect. He further argues that academic performance at schools may bear little relation to learners' understanding of the world and how to function optimally within it (Pring, 2012). In addition, the teaching profession makes continual demands on the educators, which makes it challenging to concentrate on building and maintaining relationships with their learners and managing classrooms full of adolescents who are continually testing boundaries in order to develop their personalities (Western Cape Education Department, 2007).

1.2.8 Bringing the personal into education

These factors are stressful on both educators and learners and therefore it is important to intentionally bring the personal domain of well-being into the education setup. If educators understand and consider the living conditions of their learners, then there is a bigger possibility that learners will experience their educators' sincerity and care (Pring, 2012). In addition, Van Schalkwyk & Wissing (2013) indicate the importance of deliberately developing positive relations, as successful relational living holds the key to personal and collective well-being (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Learners' respectful interacting and appreciative communication with their educators can then lead to building and maintaining good relationships with their educators, which could enable the entire school community to flourish.

1.2.9 The personal is practising respect in educator-learner relationships

According to Mitra (2009), the common thread to successful youth-adult relationships is mutual or reciprocal respect. Furthermore, Giesinger (2012) argues that respect should be a general educational principle, which must be consistent over time. In short: it seems that when the fourth R, namely relations (the first three being R1: arithmetic; R2: reading; and R3: writing) is taught and implemented, learners will feel valued and motivated to study, which could empower them to reach higher levels of well-being (Seligman, 2011). Hemmings (2003) posits that respect is a nurturing aspect of relationships, which encompasses mutual processes of giving and receiving. Kitching, Roos, & Ferreira (2012) emphasise the need for respectful interacting in nurturing school communities.

Dillon (2007) argues that, while respect was only due to a single authority figure in the past, all persons are equally worthy of respect in the modern education system. For some educators this is difficult to accept, as they see themselves as authoritative figures who should be respected, no matter what. Alternatively, there are arguments that learners should not be seen as equals to educators, since educators should remain the authoritative figures at schools (Mitra, 2009). While Mitra (2009) proposes that educators as the authoritative figure in education should build positive relationships with their students, Sonn (2005) argues that educators can no longer expect respect because of the “teacher-role” and must earn respect through what they do. This statement correlates with the philosophical notion that respect must be earned, in opposition to the notion that certain people deserve respect regardless of how they behave themselves. Van der Merwe (2004) emphasises that a person who wants to be respected needs to show respect, but argues that in relationships with learners the responsibility to initiate and maintain respect rests with the educators.

In addition to the limited research identifying respect-in-education and the benefits of respectful interaction for all stakeholders in the school community, there is a scarcity of research regarding learners’ perceptions of respect in the educator-learner relationship. The current research stresses the importance of looking into what learners perceive as standards of respect as a bottom-up approach in order to improve and build positive social functioning in secondary school communities. Goodman (2009) argues that understanding the meaning of respect from a practical point of view, and understanding how to guide young individuals throughout their educational years, is more important than limiting ourselves to just theoretical views on respect in education.

1.2.10 Summary of rationale

Schools are seen as institutions, which prepare young citizens to play a significant role in society (Sonn, 2005). However, it can be argued that learners' academic success in itself has little relation to how they function both as adolescents and as adults (Pring, 2012). In the school context, it is important for the educators to not only deliver good academic results, but also to concentrate on building good relationships with their learners, which entails treating learners with respect and dignity (Camfield, 2006; Giesinger, 2012; Goodman, 2009; Jones, 2002; Sonn, 2005). Good educator-learner relationships can result in better academic performance (Mitra, 2009; Witmer, 2005), which can contribute to improved discipline in the classroom (Oosthuizen & Van der Walt, 2008). Furthermore, better-quality discipline adds to learners' self-respect (Pring, 2012; Sonn, 2005) as well as the enhancing of their psychological well-being, such as self-regulation and effective coping (Keyes 1998; Kitching, 2010; McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010; Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2013). Hence the experience of mutual respect is a dynamic and consistently practised mechanism of healthy relating and interacting (Hemmings, 2003; Mitra, 2009; Pring, 2012; Sonn, 2005; Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010; White, 2010).

Despite the significance and the positives consequences of mutual respect in relationships, insufficient emphasis are placed on building and maintaining respect in educational settings. Giesinger (2012) argues that the issue of respect is often talked about, but it is repeatedly neglected and therefore rarely applied in educational settings. Mitra (2009) argues that research on youth-adult partnerships at schools remains an under-theorised field. According to McLaughlin and Clarke (2010) the educator-learner relationship has specifically been neglected in regard to learners' perceptions of respect received from and

given to educators. In the light of the above-mentioned, the following research question emerged: How do learners perceive respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community in South Africa?

1.3 Research aim and objectives

1.3.1 Research aim

The main aim of the study was to explore and describe – through qualitative, phenomenological research design – learners’ perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community within a high-risk environment in the South African context.

1.3.2 Research objectives

The objective of this research was to gain a deeper understanding of respect within the context of a high-risk community, by studying the unique, lived experiences of learners in their social encounters with their educators, in order to contribute to the development of sustainable intervention processes that will promote relational well-being within South African school communities.

The objective of this research was to uncover the particular relational challenges present at a secondary school within a high-risk community. These insights could be valuable to future policy makers and enable them to build a National Curricula and a learning environment that will enhance the well-being of the whole school community.

1.4 Central theoretical statement

Viewed in terms of the framework of positive psychology, learners' perceptions of respect are linked to their subjective experiences in both the social and physical context. Community psychologists stress that the development of children and adolescents cannot be considered without taking into account their natural environment, as well as their social and cultural contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Prillentsky, 2005; Rosa & Tudge, 2013). This ecological perspective is essential in understanding the interaction between youngsters' capacity to grow towards fully functioning individuals and the accessibility of ecological resources for their developmental tasks (Ungar, 2011). A complex interactive dynamics systems perspective on human behaviour emphasises that behavioural patterns emerge in non-linear self-organising ways from the everyday ways of relating and interacting between members within the school community (Jörg, 2009; Stacey, 2007). To understand learners' perceptions regarding respect, the researcher considered the attitudes, behaviour and deeds (actions) in educator-learner relationships as suggested by Sung (2004) who did extensive work on respect.

By exploring and describing learners' perceptions of the educator-learner relationship in a secondary school within the context of a high-risk community, first-hand information from the adolescents themselves was obtained in order to gain an understanding of the phenomenon. This information can be used in future to provide guidelines for school communities towards improved school and life success. Furthermore, the research provides essential information that could help uncover the particular relational challenges of a

secondary school within a high-risk community. These insights could be valuable for future policy and the planning regarding South Africa's most important asset, namely its people.

1.5 Concept definitions

The following concepts will be discussed shortly in this section in the subsequent order, since they represent the building-blocks of the research. Firstly, the theoretical framework, namely positive psychology, of the study will be provided. Secondly, the role of educators will be explained. Thirdly, the definition and roles of learners in secondary school communities will be provided. Fourthly, the definition of perception will be applied to the current research followed by a concise definition of respect, and, lastly, identification of the role of secondary schools in the context of high risk communities will be presented.

1.5.1 Positive psychology: the selected perspective

The achievement of the good life has increasingly become the investigation of many researchers from various disciplines all over the worlds (Delle Fave, Brdar, Freire, Vella-Brodrick, & Wissing, 2010). Positive psychology was established as a new approach particularly addressing the study of well-being, quality of life, strengths and resources (Seligman, 2011). Within this framework, constructs and interventions have been developed, such as strategies aimed at the protection and promotion of flourishing South African youth (Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2013). These interventions are necessary to enhance the functioning and mental health of non-clinical people, seeing that symptom-free conditions do not automatically guarantee high levels of wellness.

Positive psychology as an over-arching approach was used for this research, since positive relations – an indicator of positive human health – were explored in this study. Relational well-being is an inherent part of the domain of positive psychology, as indicated by numerous studies (Keyes, 2005; Keyes et al., 2008; Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010). According to the World Health Organization (2001), health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. Keyes' research (2005, 2006a, 2007) in the United States on the distribution and prevalence of strengths and characteristics of psychosocial well-being in communities is important in approaching the ideal of complete mental health that comprises more than the absence of symptoms. According to Keyes (2005), the upper end of the mental health continuum, namely flourishing, refers to high levels of well-being, which could be described as the experience of positive relationships, positive emotions, optimal functioning, superior health and high levels of resilience. Also, several researchers (Haidt, 2003; Lent, 2004; Smith, 2006) stress the significance of pro-social wellness and the important function of culture and values, including respect.

While it is acknowledged that the “psychologisation of well-being” must be avoided (Ng & Fisher, 2013), and that the impact of context must always be taken into account, the positive paradigm of psychology presents a good fit for this research, allowing those social ecologies (Ungar, 2008) and interactions among environmental factors, as well as personal resources, although complex, to be explored. This point of departure embraces the strengths-based approach, while the full spectrum of human experience is recognised, from the negative to the positive. Consequently it must be stated that, although the strengths perspective embraces two dimensions, namely, well-being and pathology, the well-being dimension has been chosen.

1.5.2 Educators

Educators are effective agents of positive social change, and they occupy a powerful position when it comes to changing mind-sets and challenging norms in a school environment (Wood & Webb, 2008). Educators' role is to provide an enabling environment which would allow learners to achieve their psychosocial well-being alongside academic success (Pring, 2012). Thus, educators have a responsibility towards society to produce citizens with certain moral values, who respect themselves and others and who can take responsibility for their own behaviour (Sonn, 2005). Effective educators are those who recognise and respond to learners' need for ongoing support in their development (Gomez & Ang, 2007). Therefore, alongside the academic, educators must provide environments that enable learners to achieve and maintain positive social, emotional and psychological well-being.

1.5.3 Learners in secondary schools

Broadly, the main reason why learners enter the education system is to gain education. Therefore, the main aim of education is to concentrate on academic performance. However, alongside the academic, learners at schools strive for positive recognition, autonomy, emotional and social support, and understanding. If they do not receive it, they are more likely to withdraw from the learning process and educator-learner relationships, which is viewed by adults as a rebellious behaviour (Jones, 2002). This is mainly relevant to learners living in high-risk communities. High school learners in poor communities often come from broken families, and therefore family support is limited. Their immediate environments are also frequently plagued by high crime rates and gangsterism (Johnson & Lazarus, 2008;

Petersen et al., 2010). For learners from such environments, their school is often the only place where they feel safe, and the only place where they can gain the skills and knowledge necessary for optimal functioning in the world.

Learners living in poor communities often exhibit negative behaviour at schools, such as stealing from each other or educators, interrupting lessons, reacting rudely when being reprimanded, showing little or no interest in their school work, telling lies, and arriving at school late and unprepared (LeeFon et al., 2012). Due to their negative behaviour, learners are perceived as rebellious and disruptive, which results in educators taking on an authoritarian role in order to gain order. Then again, if learners receive all the support they need towards school success, it could lead to positive mental health, self-actualisation, better academic performance and optimal functioning in life (Bird & Markle, 1012).

1.5.4 Perception

It is noteworthy that a person's perceptions signify those representations that s/he has of the world, filtered by her/his senses by means of which s/he understands the world. A learner's perceptions regarding respect in the educator-learner relationship must be viewed as her/his subjective representations that s/he has of the world, filtered by his/her senses, since human beings gain information via the perceptual process about properties and elements of the environment. Perception is about our sensory experience of the world around us, and involves both the recognition of environmental stimuli and actions in response to these stimuli. These sensory experiences greatly influence the way in which we experience the world (Schoeman, 2009). Perception not only creates our experience of the world around us, but it also allows us to act within our environment (Cherry, 2014). It is noteworthy that a

person is not merely a fixed thing in a fixed world, but s/he is a human being who constantly interacts with her/his environment (Philippson, 2009). In other words, perceptions are likely to change and develop through experiences and interactions with others. There is a constant dynamic process between the organism and the environment, and the two constantly influence each other greatly. The one cannot exist without the other.

This means that human beings' perceptions of their lived experiences are based on their subjective interpretations of these perceptions. According to social constructivism, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live, which is gained by developing subjective meaning of their unique lived experiences (Creswell, 2007). Such meaning is formed through interactions with others and through historical and cultural norms which operate in individuals' lives, and hence are unique and different to each individual. Such a constructivist worldview manifests in phenomenological studies, in which individuals describe their own experiences (Creswell, 2007). These personal experiences or perceptions as the subjective understanding of daily interpersonal experiences are about those dynamics ("forces-at-work"), such as respect, that qualify relational living.

1.5.5 Respect

There are many theoretical explanations of what respect is. According to Dillon (2007) respect is, most generally, a form of regard – a mode of attention to and perception and acknowledgement of an object as having a certain importance, worth, authority, status, or power. It is essential to show respect towards learners, educators, other school community members such as parents, administrative personnel, as well as towards the environment and facilities within educational settings (The Western Cape Education Department, 2007).

Furthermore, what is considered as respectful by one person or culture may not be considered as respectful by others; therefore it is important to emphasise that respect is culturally defined and constructed (Dillon, 2007; Giesinger, 2012; Jones, 2002; Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2013; Wissing & Temane, 2008). In the current research, respect will be regarded as a mutual entity and an attitude based on emotional response, which is explicitly demonstrated by certain behaviours.

1.5.6 Secondary school communities

Secondary schools, also called high schools in South Africa, are preceded by primary or middle schools and followed by tertiary or vocational education. The precise stage of schooling by a secondary school/high school differs from country to country. In South Africa, high school begins at Grade 8, learners study for five years and finish by writing a Matriculation examination. Within the school community, one could distinguish between the school culture and the school climate. School culture is seen as influencing, among other things, how educators and learners perceive the school, how they interact with one another and how educators feel about their work and fellow colleagues (Deal & Peterson, 2009). School climate refers to the immediate tone or feeling of the school on a day-to-day basis; it is a subset of school culture and in fact informs school culture. Unlike school culture, school climate is malleable and as such can be immediately impacted and subjected to change (Eller, 2009). Schools in impoverished areas have greater challenges, as some of their learners are engaging in risky behaviours. Due to such conditions, schools must transform into supportive and nurturing environments promoting health and well-being (Johnson & Lazarus, 2008).

To summarise, this section presented the introduction and the problem statement, followed by the research aim, objectives and research question, together with an explanation of the central theoretical statement, framework and concept definitions. It is important to highlight that the research was conducted at a secondary school situated in a high-risk community, just outside Cape Town in the Western Cape. In the following section, the research methodology is comprehensively described. The research design, the participants, sampling techniques, demographic information about the school community, data collection methods, the procedure used, the apparatus and measuring instruments, the applicable ethical aspects, as well as the steps according to which the data were analysed will be discussed.

1.6 Research methodology

1.6.1 Research design

A qualitative, phenomenological research design was used in this study. Phenomenological research aims to understand and describe human beings' lived experiences in context under which certain phenomena, issues or concepts are investigated (Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Groenewald, 2004; Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). The chosen research design allowed the researcher to explore and describe learners' perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community within a high-risk environment in the South African context, which was the main aim of the study.

1.6.2 Participants

1.6.2.1 Setting: Research context and demographics of the community

The research was conducted at a secondary school in a suburban area where resources are scarce, despite the affluence experienced in the wider Cape Town environment. Most of the educators of the particular secondary school do not live in the mentioned community, but in nearby towns and suburbs. The implication is that, with a few exceptions, the educators are not part of the community within which the school is situated. The following information provides some background as to the mentioned context.

The Delft community was established in 1989 and developed through different phases until 2004. This community (previously known as a South African township) is situated approximately 34 km north-east of Cape Town, and approximately 7,5 km from Bellville. Delft is situated close to the N2 to the south, the R300 to the east, Stellenbosch arterial road to the north, and Cape Town International Airport to the west. Delft was originally established as an integrated service land project, to be one of Cape Town's first mixed-race settlements that included coloured and black residents (terms used by the Apartheid government to classify people into racial groups). Human settlement in Delft is made up of informal housing and that of government's "formal" housing. It is a rapidly expanding community that is subdivided into nine sections. Afrikaans and Xhosa are primarily spoken, while English is spoken as a second language (Urban Policy Unit, 1996)

In 2000 it was estimated that Delft had a population of between 25 000 and 92 000 inhabitants (people were settling and moving in on a continuous basis, therefore the wide-ranging estimate) and the inhabitants have rapidly increased over the last 13 years to more than 1 million, taking into account the backyard dwellers and the fact that up to three families occupy one house. The high illiteracy rate was evident during the 2011 Census, with only

22.7% of the Delft population indicated as having completed Grade 12. Only 51% indicated that they had some secondary education, 7.4% specified that they completed primary school, while 12.3% indicated that they had some form of primary education. A mere 3.2% specified that they had some form of higher education (Strategic Development Information & Geographic Information System, 2013). At the time of the 2011 Census, unemployment figures for the Delft area were recorded at 39.45% of the population, with 34.4% economically inactive (Strategic Development Information & Geographic Information System, 2013). Delft is known for its high crime rate, poverty, high levels of unemployment, large number of school drop-outs, widespread domestic violence, gender violence, violence in schools, gangsterism, substance abuse and drug trafficking. This is evident in the recent official statistics (South African Police Service, 2013).

Within the Delft community the challenge of underperforming schools and the learners dropping out of school is a dilemma which is often explained by referring to unmotivated learners, uncommitted educators and apathetic parents (Louw, Bayat, & Eigelaar-Meets, 2011). Although these factors do play a role, it is necessary to understand this behaviour within the broader context of how the youth live and experience challenges and extreme difficulties. Community psychologists stress that the development of children and adolescents cannot be considered without taking into account their natural environment, as well as their social and cultural contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979a; Prillentsky, 2005). This ecological perspective is essential to understand the interaction between youngsters' capacity to grow towards fully functioning individuals, and the accessibility of ecological resources for their developmental tasks (Ungar, 2011). Challenges such as coping with unsupportive parents, dysfunctional families, hunger, substance abuse and the continuing problems of extreme

poverty are mentioned implicitly, and only becomes more explicit during conversations with the learners

1.6.2.2 Participants/Sampling

Purposeful sampling (Struwig & Stead, 2001) was initially used to select the participants according to specific criteria. This method of sampling was specifically applied to this research, as the inclusion criteria ensured that richly detailed information regarding the educator-learner relationship was gathered. The following criteria were applied to the selection of the participants:

- Language: Afrikaans- and English-speaking, as well as second language English-speaking isiXhosa learners
- Adolescent life phase: Learners in the adolescent developmental phase (between the ages of 17 and 21 years)
- School grade: Grade 12 learners (having been part of this particular school community for at least 3 years) were selected for the study
- High-risk community: Learners residing in the Delft community, Western Cape, South Africa
- Gender: Boys and girls were selected as participants.

Fifteen participants were selected from the school community in a high-risk community. The secondary school has three Grade 12 classes, and five participants were chosen at random from each Grade 12 class. Altogether fifteen participants were selected, of which there four were girls and eleven were boys. The average age of participants was 18.8 years of age. There were eight Xhosa-, four Afrikaans- and three English-speaking

participants. All, except one participant, lived with at least one of their biological parents and the average number of siblings per participant was 3.4. Not all of the participants lived with all of their siblings and not all of the participants lived with both of their parents. Some of the households also consisted of nephews, aunts, uncles and grandparents. It is common among poor communities for households to consist of a generational mix (Sharkey, 2008). To the question, ‘Who are the caregivers in your family?’, nine participants responded ‘my mother’, two participants responded ‘my parents’, one participant responded ‘my mother and grandmother’, another participant responded ‘my uncle and aunt’, yet another participant responded ‘my parents and big sister’, and the remaining participant responded ‘my parents and siblings’.

The researcher found it interesting that, despite the fact that there were only five participants who lived only with their mothers, nine of the fifteen participants mentioned that the caregiver in the family was their mother only. Furthermore, to the question, ‘Who in your family do you respect the most?’, eight participants responded ‘my mother’, and four participants responded ‘my parents’, despite the fact that that eight of the participants lived with both of their parents. One participant mentioned ‘myself’, another participant mentioned ‘my uncle’, and yet another mentioned ‘my grandmother’. The finding is consistent with Theron’s (2007) study where mostly mothers were reported by the participants as the caregivers in the families. In impoverished areas, it is common that fathers are absent (deceased, unknown, or working and residing elsewhere) or less involved in children’s upbringing than their mothers (Theron, 2007).

1.6.2.3 School community information

The secondary school where the data were gathered is situated in Western Cape, and it is in the category of lower income communities (City of Cape Town, 2011). The population is predominantly persons of Coloured (52%) and Black African persons (46%) (Strategic Development Information & Geographic Information System, 2013). In terms of social problems, the school's surrounding area is known as a high-risk community due to the prevalence of poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, high levels of crime such as robberies and violent crime, domestic violence, and other negative factors (City of Cape Town, 2011). Exposure to such antisocial behaviours has a negative impact on young adults living in the community and influences them greatly. Such an environment often leads to poor parenting supervision which results in young adults themselves becoming involved in antisocial behaviours such as substance abuse, crime and gangsterism – factors that are often associated with teenage pregnancies, poor academic performance, high school dropouts and general apathy towards succeeding in life (Patel, Flisher, & Nikapota, 2007; Petersen et al., 2010).

The secondary school itself accommodates more than 1 200 learners, and the school facilities include twenty-seven classrooms, three specialist rooms, five laboratories, a library and two computer rooms. A school hall, sports facilities, storerooms and offices are also included. Young people have limited access to internet and recreational activities after school hours (I. Van Schalkwyk, personal communication, February 23, 2014). Access to recreational activities in poor and high-risk communities is often restrained due to social problems such as robberies, poverty and drug abuse, particularly in terms of safety and ability to afford programmes or rental fees (City of Cape Town, 2011; Morojele et al., 2013).

1.6.3 Data gathering

The data were gathered in two phases. In the first phase of the study, availability sampling was used, and five learners per Grade 12 class were involved in the data gathering. In the second phase of the research, participants were selected by using purposive sampling, described by Ritchie, Lewis & Elam (2003) as choosing participants who provided in-depth information about the phenomena studied. The purposive selection in this study was done based on the learners' capability to reflect in depth on their experiences of respect in educator-learner relationships. This was done after the evaluation of the written assignments which learners completed in the first phase. After the data were evaluated, it was decided that all participants could participate in the second phase, as they demonstrated sufficient understanding of the phenomena. The researcher met the participants on three occasions. During the first meeting, the participants were given a form to complete in order to obtain demographic information (Addendum A). During the second meeting, the first phase of the data gathering, each participant was asked to complete a written assignment that included the following open-ended questions:

1. What is your understanding of respect? What words would you use to explain the idea of respect?
2. What is respect for you in the school context? Give me some examples of respectful behaviour in teacher-learner relationships.
3. Provide examples: When do you experience that you are respected by your teachers?
4. Provide examples: When and how do you respect your teachers?
5. Give some examples of disrespectful behaviour you have experienced from your teachers.

6. Give some examples of disrespectful behaviour of students towards the teachers.
7. How, according to you, can respect be improved in teacher-learner relationships at schools?

The researcher used the term ‘teachers’ in the open-ended questions instead of ‘educators’.

The reason for this was that the learners were familiar with the term teacher, rather than educator, in their everyday language. The written assignments were analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify themes relating to learners’ perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships. During the third meeting, the second phase of the data gathering, the World Café technique (Schieffer, Isaacs & Gyllenpalm 2004) was applied in order to explore the collective wisdom of the participants within a group situation to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena investigated, and to follow up on the themes that were identified in the first phase of data collection regarding respect in educator-learner relationships. Open-ended questions, similar to those used in the first phase, were used in order to gain validity and clarity on some of the themes that participants mentioned during the first phase of the data gathering. The three questions were as follows:

1. What, according to you, is respect in teacher-learner relationships at schools?
Describe, name, give examples.
2. How, according to you, should teachers show/give respect to learners? Describe,
name, give examples.
3. How, according to you, should learners show/give respect to teachers? Describe,
name, give examples.

With the participants’ permission, all data collected in the second phase were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for the purpose of data analysis.

As mentioned earlier, the World Café technique was applied to gather data. The World Café technique allows groups and communities to share their knowledge and insights, and provides opportunities for people sitting in groups around tables to have meaningful conversations. In the World Café technique, the participants travel around the tables, sharing their ideas regarding the topic under discussion with others. There is cross-pollination of ideas across groups, which combines diverse perspectives into collective insights, and allows communities to construct meanings and knowledge (Brown & Isaacs, 2005; Schieffer et al., 2004). As Oelofse (2009) states, it provides the entire group with an opportunity to notice the underlying themes and discoveries that have presented themselves during the process. All of this takes place in a friendly environment, where all participants feel free to contribute their thoughts and feelings relevant to the topic under investigation. What is powerful about the technique is the conversation, based on multiple viewpoints, from which unique and innovative solutions reveal themselves in order to further develop persons, groups and communities (Schieffer et al., 2004).

There are numbers of different ways to run a successful World Café. However, Schieffer et al. (2004) wrote about seven principles that have proven valuable. These principles are: clarify the context, create a hospitable environment, explore questions that matter, encourage everyone's contribution, cross-pollinate and connect diverse perspectives, listen together for pattern, insights and deeper questions, and harvest and share collective discoveries. All seven of these principles encourage people to open up and share their view with others in meaningful dialogues.

1.6.4 Procedure

Permission was obtained from the Ethical Committee of the University of North West (Addendum B), as well as from the Western Cape Education Department (Addendum C), to undertake the study. The necessary authorisation was also granted by the headmaster of the particular secondary school (Addendum D) in order to proceed with the data collection. The researcher met the participants on three occasions, in the afternoons after the school hours in one of their classrooms. During the first meeting, there were fifteen participants present. Firstly, the researcher introduced herself and the study phenomena were explained to the participants in friendly language in order for all the participants to understand as clearly as possible what the research was about and what would be expected of them. The participants were given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the study. After that, the participants were asked to fill in a demographic questionnaire.

During the second meeting, the first phase of the data gathering, each participant was asked to complete a written assignment, which included the following open-ended questions:

1. What is your understanding of respect? What words would you use to explain the idea of respect?
2. What is respect for you in the school context? Give me some examples of respectful behaviour in teacher-learner relationships.
3. Provide examples: When do you experience that you are respected by your teachers?
4. Provide examples: When and how do you respect your teachers?
5. Give some examples of disrespectful behaviour you have experienced from your teachers.
6. Give some examples of disrespectful behaviour of students towards the teachers.

7. How, according to you, can respect be improved in teacher-learner relationships at schools?

The written assignments were analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify themes relating to learners' perceptions of respect in the educator-learner relationships.

During the third meeting, the second phase of the research, the World Café technique (Schieffer et al., 2004) was applied in order to gain deeper understanding of the themes that were identified in the first phase of data collection, regarding respect in educator-learner relationships. All data collected in this phase were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for the purpose of data analysis. The World Café technique entailed the following: Participants were brought together as a group. There were thirteen participants present instead of fifteen, as two of the participants were sick and therefore did not attend school on the day that the World Café data collection was conducted. Initially, the purpose of the World Café technique and how it would be applied in the real setting, was explained to the participants. Participants were allowed to ask any questions they had. After that, roles were allocated to each participant. There were two roles being allocated: the 'table hosts' and the 'travellers'. The researcher had a written note from the first-phase data analysis, in order to establish who was a good candidate for the role of the table host. The possible candidates for being hosts were participants who responded to all of the questions from the first phase in good English, using good logical flow. The roles of each participant were explained. Altogether there were three table hosts and ten travellers.

The duties of the host of each table were to stay at that same table at all times in order to welcome new travellers, to share the key ideas and insights that surfaced from the previous dialogue with the travellers, to host the evolving conversations at their table, and to write

down key ideas and insights that emerged from the dialogues between the participants. The host, a fellow-student, was encouraged to create an environment where everyone had an equal opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions in a non-threatening environment. It was emphasised that the table host was also not a traditional facilitator, but an equal member of the conversation (Schieffer et al., 2004) and therefore the table hosts were also encouraged to contribute to the discussions. The travellers' role was to discuss the questions on the table and to raise their opinions or views regarding each question. Participants were requested to discuss a specific question for about fifteen to twenty minutes. They were informed that there would be three rounds of conversation. All participants were informed that everyone's opinion is valued and that there was no such thing as a wrong answer. Following the debriefing, participants were given the opportunity to ask any questions they had regarding the procedure, and after that the hosts and travellers were appointed to each table. There were three tables in the classroom with five chairs allocated to each table. The researcher tried to provide a hospitable space, where all participants would feel free to contribute their thoughts and feelings. On each table was a tablecloth, a cup of coloured markers, sheets of paper and refreshments. Once participants were seated, a sheet of paper with a question for that particular group was put on the table with a tape recorder in order to audio-record the discussions. The discussions were later transcribed verbatim for data analysis.

After the first round of conversation (fifteen minutes), travellers were invited to change tables. The table hosts were reminded to stay at their tables in order to welcome new travellers, read them the question and share the key ideas and insights that surfaced from the previous dialogue with the travellers. The process was repeated for three rounds altogether, and was followed by a feedback session to which all participants contributed. For reflective purposes and to see whether the hosts understood the travellers' responses correctly, a

summary in the form of a visual graph, 'The Illustration Wall' (Schieffer et al., 2004) was presented to the whole group by the table hosts, who read all the comments on the poster. While the host was talking, the researcher was noting down all the possible themes that were emerging on a big poster. After the host had finished talking, participants were allowed to ask questions or add any comments they had. It was an opportunity for the entire group to engage in a conversation, in order to harvest and share collective insights (Schieffer et al., 2004). It was interesting to hear some of the comments raised by the participants; however the purpose of the discussion was to clarify all points on which some of the participants needed clarification or did not agree with. After each host had read and given clarification regarding the points written on his/her poster, the researcher summarised the themes and asked the participants for any possible clarifications or corrections they had in mind. It gave the participants the opportunity to notice the underlying themes and discoveries that have presented themselves during the process (Oelofse, 2008). This clarification process between the researcher and participants ensured trustworthiness through crystallisation, as proposed by Tracy (2010).

1.6.5 Ethics

1.6.5.1 Ethical clearance and permission to conduct the research

Initially, ethical clearance was obtained from North-West University and Western Cape Education Department. Afterwards, the researcher gained permission from the principal of the school to conduct the study at that particular school. All relevant parties were informed that this study was conducted under the umbrella of a North-West University project. The aim of the project was to investigate current perceptions, experiences and practices regarding

relational well-being, in order to contribute to the development of sustainable intervention processes that could promote relational well-being in South African school communities. The ethical clearance number for this project was: NWU-00060-12-A1.

1.6.5.2 Informed consent/assent forms

Informed consent was obtained from parents of two participants, and assent was obtained from the two participants. Most participants (thirteen of the fifteen participants) were above the age of eighteen years of age, and the assent and informed consent were obtained from the participants themselves. The language used in the informed consent (Addendum E) and assent (Addendum F) forms was clear and understandable, yet detailed enough to explain what would actually happen during the research process (Chambliss & Schutt, 2010). The learners had adequate time and opportunities to ask questions before the study commenced, as well as during the data collection process (Strydom, 2011). It was emphasised that every opinion counts and that there is no such a thing as a wrong answer. This study was a voluntary study and participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were also informed and gave their permission that the discussions could be audio-recorded for analysis purposes.

1.6.5.3 Debriefing

Participants were informed whom to contact if they needed debriefing after they had participated in this study.

1.6.5.4 Confidentiality

The participants were informed that the data would be treated confidentially and that only relevant people would have access to the data. Privacy and confidentiality would be maintained at all times. Records would be locked at all times, unless the researcher and her/his supervisor were working with these records, and special identifying codes would be created in order to respect peoples' privacy. The identities of the respondents would remain anonymous at all times. Participants were informed that the researcher's aim was to publish the study in the form of an article in a South African Journal, and that the information gathered would be presented to the public in the form of an article and a thesis protocol which may remain in a university library.

1.6.5.5 Trustworthiness

The researcher ensured trustworthiness within the study by applying principles of crystallisation (Ellingson, 2009). According to Ellingson (2009), crystallisation is based on ontological assumptions and is an effective way to gain a deepened, multifaceted and thoroughly partial understanding of a person's lived experience. The researcher applied the following steps as proposed by Tracy (2010) to ensure trustworthiness through crystallisation: a) the selection of a worthy and relevant topic in the field of study; b) crystallisation of the findings through different methods; c) deep, rich description of the data obtained; d) member-checking by presenting the findings to a small group of participants for clarification purposes; e) other professionals reviewing the research process to ensure that the researcher conducted the study in an appropriate and systematic manner, as suggested by Pitney and Parker (2009).

1.6.5.6 Ethical implications for participants and communities/organisations

When considering ethical conducts for the study, human rights as set out in the Constitution of South Africa were reviewed. The researcher further reviewed the code of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (2008), Strydom (2011), ethical principles of the American Psychological Association (2010) and the ethical guidelines of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (2008).

1.6.5.7 Maintaining Honesty and Openness

The researcher is aware of the communities the research may have an impact on and therefore the researcher will “be open in disclosing the methods and will be honest in presenting the findings” (Chambliss & Schutt, 2010).

1.6.5.8 Language and cultural differences

The study was conducted in English, and the language and cultural values of the participants were taken into consideration at all times (Welman et al., 2005). Once the study has been marked and returned from the North-West University research committee to the researcher, feedback will be given to the participants and the schools authorities. Research records (i.e. forms, data analysis and any other important documents) will be stored for at least five years. The researcher will ensure that the collected data is stored securely, that access is strictly controlled, and that anonymity and encryption are used appropriately to protect personal data.

1.7 Data analysis

The collected data were transcribed into written form in order to conduct a thematic analysis using an interpretative qualitative methodology. This is an important phase of data analysis, because it gives the researcher the opportunity to get familiar with the data by reading it many times. Thematic analysis was applied in this study in order to analyse collected data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. Analysing data involves a constant moving back and forward between the entire data set (i.e. the coded extracts of data that one is analysing). However six phases can be distinguished: the researcher familiarising himself with collected data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, producing the report.

In the first phase, the researcher got familiar with the data collected. Firstly, the researcher read the entire data set in order to identify ideas and possible patterns. After that, the researcher re-read the data on numerous occasions in order to mark ideas for coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the second phase, the researcher started generating initial codes by writing codes for as many potential themes/patterns as possible. All actual data extracts were coded in order to find as many potential themes/patterns as possible. The coding was done manually and therefore highlighters were used to indicate potential patterns. The third phase involved sorting the different codes into potential themes, appropriate visual representation. At this stage, the researcher started thinking about the relationship between codes, between themes and between different levels of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the fourth stage, the researcher started reviewing themes and locating only the relevant themes and most frequent themes. At the end of this phase, the researcher had a fairly good idea of

what the different themes were, how they fitted together and the overall story the themes told about the data. In the fifth phase, the researcher clearly defined what the themes were and what they were not. In the final stage, written thematic analysis was produced for this dissertation assignment (please see the Results and discussion section in the section B: Article format). Verbatim statements from the respondents were used, where appropriate, to illustrate and explicate the main themes. Another two professionals were invited to look at the emerged themes and to review the research process to ensure that the researcher conducted the study in an appropriate and systematic manner as suggested by Pitney and Parker (2009).

1.8 Literature study

The researcher's review of the literature was developed and written on an on-going basis. The aim of the literature review was to provide a comprehensive understanding of the nature of the phenomena studied and to identify the gap withing the literature, which could be filled by conducting the current research and hence add scientific value. Resources that were utilised within the literature review consisted of text books, journal articles, goverment publications and electronic search engines. The search engines utilised were those available through the NWU library services: EBSCO Host, A to Z Journal List, Sage Publications and Google Scholar) relevent to the field of study. The subsequent aspects were included in the literature review: educators, learners, perception, positive psychology, respect, high-risk community.

1.9 Summary

In the first part of section A, the researcher gave an overview of the problem statement, a discussion of the rationale of the study, and formulated the research question and aim of the study. An introductory literature review of the main concepts was presented. Also, the research methodology and ethical concerns were discussed. Understanding how learners perceive their interaction with educators is important, because these perceptions influence educator-learner relations. Furthermore, there is a gap in South African literature that focuses on learners' perceptions of the educator-learner relationships in secondary schools in high-risk communities. Such information could be utilised for the implementation of National Curricula and learning environment that will enhance the well-being of the whole school community.

Section A, Part II will provide information on theories and models underpinning the study of learners' experiences of respect in the educator-learner relationship.

INTEGRATED LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section aims to give an overview of the theoretical framework and existing literature regarding learners' perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships at a secondary school community. Different national and international theories applicable to this topic will be presented through discussion of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model, relational well-being, education, respect and adolescence. These theories are defined, explained and contextualised within the parameters of this study in the sub-sections below.

2.2 Theoretical frameworks and definitions

2.2.1 Positive psychology and well-being

Positive psychology concentrates on building positive qualities and strengths that allow individuals, communities and societies to thrive and flourish (Lerner, Brentano & Anderson, 2002; Seligman, Ernts, Gillham, Reivich & Linkins, 2009). The approach pays attention to human capabilities and adaptive systems that promote healthy development and optimal functioning, as opposed to the conventional psychology perspective which often focuses on risks, problems, pathology and treatments (Masten, 2001). Enhancement and paying attention to optimal functioning empower people to deal with everyday stressors in the most effective way and lead to sustainable well-being (Seligman et al., 2009). It is mainly important in the adolescent phase, as children in secondary schools, living in high-risk communities, face a variety of stressors on a daily basis.

Adolescents are our future and their well-being or ill-being could determine greatly whether our society will flourish or flounder. Therefore the perspective, as presented by positive psychology, that views adolescents as resources to be developed instead of problems to be managed, is important (Lerner et al., 2002). Such a view leads to widening the vocabulary of positive youth development in the sense that every young person has the potential for successful and healthy development. This viewpoint concentrates on building competence, confidence, caring for self and others, autonomy, strengths, civic engagement, moral values, love and positive character (Lerner et al., 2002).

Seligman et al., (2009) associate positive psychology with positive education, and classroom interventions with positive interventions which can improve learners' achievements and behaviour, as well as improving their engagement in learning. The study further argues that schools can provide a safe environment in which learners can acquire skills and knowledge that will not only allow them to gain successful and fulfilling employment, but to gain general well-being and positively impact their communities as well. In addition, enhancing well-being in learners alongside the academic can help promote resilience, which is of key importance in the South African context (Johnson & Lazarus, 2008; Theron & Theron, 2010). Resilience is an individual's capacity for adapting to change and to stressful events in healthy and flexible ways, which offers the opportunity to experience feelings of well-being and therefore contributes to positive development (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2008; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008; Theron & Theron, 2010). Positive development, experienced via resilience, is associated, amongst other phenomena, with staying in school instead of dropping out, less participation in delinquent behaviour, as well as reducing and preventing symptoms of depression and anxiety (Seligman et al., 2009; Ungar, 2008). Enhancing resilience is a dynamic developmental process, which examines interplay between risk and protective factors and the role of the family, school, community and peers, all of which influence well-being (Gomez & Ang, 2007; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008; Theron 2007; Theron & Theron, 2010). One can distinguish between personal and social well-being. The personal is associated with psychological qualities and is greatly influenced by the quality of collective well-being (Evans & Prilleltensky, 2007; Prilleltensky, 2005).

2.2.2 Positive psychology and relational well-being in secondary school communities

Since well-being often directs itself towards the centrality of relatedness to others (Seligman, 2011), it is important to take a collectivist and cultural perspective into account (White, 2008). Considering the key importance of social functioning in the positive approach to psychology, individuals can move towards becoming better citizens by concentrating on creating social connections which will also encourage personal growth. Healthy social connections can enhance psychological well-being (Seligman et al., 2009), and these daily social encounters should be based on responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, tolerance, morality, caring, inspiration, gratitude and respect towards others (Prilleltensky, 2012; Seligman, 2002; Wissing & Temane, 2014). Social well-being can be identified as the appraisal of one's circumstances and functioning in society (Keyes, 1998). This means that well-being comprises psychological, emotional and social dimensions (Keyes, 1998). Living positive social encounters on a daily basis will contribute to building confidence and competence, which fortify adolescents towards higher levels of well-being (Lerner et al., 2002; Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2013).

To summarise, gaining an understanding of how to deal with negative stressors in our community in the most effective way, can increase psychological and social well-being. However, the psychological well-being can improve and sustain itself only when it is associated with positive relational well-being with others in our community. Therefore, the positive psychology paradigm adds great value to research which concentrates on how to increase psychological and social well-being and gain strengths when it comes to dealing with everyday stressors.

Such a perspective is of great importance in the adolescent phase, as nowadays many adolescents have to face various challenges associated with negative living conditions in

high-risk communities. How one deals with such stressors will determine whether individuals, communities and societies will flourish or flounder. High- or secondary schools are considered as environments which can support, educate and empower learners (adolescents) to deal with the problems stemming from negative living conditions. Building strengths and competence to deal effectively with life challenges is associated with building resilience, which delivers the opportunity to experience feelings of well-being and contributes to positive development. In order for adolescents to be fully functional members of their communities, they must be provided with external environments that will offer the resources they need to flourish on a personal and social level, with each of these levels influencing the other (Seligman et al., 2009; Wissing & Temane, 2014). In other words, social and personal growth greatly influences each other, and the one cannot optimally develop without the other. In the following section, respect as a main mechanism of relational well-being will be discussed.

2.2.3 Healthy relations based on respect

Seeing that adolescents' complete mental health is positively correlated to interconnectedness (Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010), it is important to look at those mechanisms which are operational in relational living. According to White (2008), positive relational well-being must be based on mutual respect (White, 2010). Being 'respectful' or 'disrespectful' can shape the quality of personal, interpersonal, organisational and communal well-being (Prilleltensky, 2012). Within the literature, there are different interpretations of defining, understanding and demonstrating respect, yet it is generally accepted that respect has a positive, and when absent, a negative influence on individuals' well-being. In literature

like that of Petersen and Seligman (2004) on character strengths and virtues, there is a view that every human being deserves unconditional respect.

Goodman (2009) distinguishes between respect-due, which is premised on human dignity and granted unconditionally, and respect-earned, which is contingent upon qualities that one possesses or acquires over time. Sung (2001 – 2004), who did extensive work on respect in Asia, is of the opinion that respect can only be understood by means of behaviour, attitudes and deeds. Respect means treating a person in a certain manner, which is often culture specific, and that respect must be deserved or earned (Sung, 2004). Sung (2004) identified thirteen forms of respect, including using respectful language and being obedient to elders. Respect is a concept that has the potential to (a) fulfil the needs of the person in his or her social life, such as belongingness and reputation (i.e. respect as a means to an end), and (b) affirm the moral values that we wish to live by and which make up our moral community (i.e. respect as an end in itself) (De Cremer & Mulder, 2007). This means that having a valued status in a relationship firstly satisfies the need to belong, and secondly, the need to have a positive social reputation in the eyes of others. The giving and receiving of respect specifically fulfils these needs. However, social interaction based on respect can result in even more qualities. Human interactions based on respectful social encounters and the receiving and giving of respect allow individuals to feel good about themselves and to build a positive self-concept (De Cremer & Mulder, 2007). Self-concept, or self-acceptance, is especially important for adolescents, as this developmental stage is associated with building their identity on the way to adulthood. For educators it is important to be aware of learners' developmental needs and to understand how one can provide a supportive environment that will allow all learners to flourish.

2.2.4 Understanding learners' development

Adolescence is a life phase which, apart from great physical and psychological changes, brings along changes in social interactions and relationships. It is a developmental period during which a sense of identity is gained through socialising with others (World Health Organization, 2010). The term “identity” includes terms such as self-knowledge, self-belief, self-evaluation, self-image, social identity, self-respect, self-worth and self-esteem (Polster, 2005). Landreth (2002) states that in personality development it is important how a child feels about her-/himself. Such a sense of self and personal growth depends on living through relationships with other people (Pring, 2012). Landreth (2002) states that life is a constant process of personal dynamic experiences, and adolescents are constantly experiencing an internal reorganisation of their thoughts, feelings and attitudes towards themselves and others through interaction with others. Due to this constant development, the “self” is seen as a process, constantly changing according to needs and environmental stimuli (Kirchner, 2005). To support such a statement, humanistic psychology views the process of becoming “self” as a constantly developing process, which never ends. Carl Rogers (1902 – 1987) views identity formation as a self-actualisation process, in other words actualisation of potential. This means that every human being has the capacity to meet their full potential. The term “actualisation” refers to the development of a person’s physical, psychological, cognitive and emotional capabilities. However, it is more possible for developing humans to reach their full potential if they are more frequently exposed to nurturing environments. Some individuals live in an environment that is very demanding for the growth and development of the fully functioning person, and sometimes this growth is impaired by means of the interaction with others.

Problems regarding interaction with others, such as adolescents who are exposed to abusive relationships within the context of school, are not the only factor that can impair psychological well-being. Being exposed to negative environmental stimuli can lead to negative organism-environment functioning too. For example, according to the Gestalt perspective, it can lead to interruptions of contact (Blom, 2004; Kepner, 1987). In order to encourage positive developmental changes, adolescents must be provided with an environment that will allow them to thrive and flourish, and to become citizens who will be able to contribute positively to self, family and community in their present as well as adult life (Lerner et al., 2002).

In summary, external environmental stimuli, such as the immediate settings of developing human beings, must be reckoned with when we study adolescents' perceptions of direct relationships. Such notions are supported by Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory which is introduced and explained in the subsequent section.

2.2.5 Bio-ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner) and the importance of settings in regard to respectful social interaction

Bronfenbrenner's (1993 – 2006) bio-ecological theory supports the perspective that developing individuals are constantly viewed as influencing and being influenced by the environment. The bio-ecological theory – third phase – stresses the importance of settings in which a developing individual spends time, as well as the individual's relations with others in the same settings. Such settings are influenced by continuous development over time and the mechanisms that drive such development, including proximal processes (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Positive developmental outcomes are more evident in stable and advantageous

environments, as opposed to poor and disadvantaged environments, which hinder developmental outcomes (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Therefore, it is of crucial importance to take an individual's environment into account. In this sense, interpersonal protective resources are embedded in families, communities and cultures along with interpersonal strengths (Ungar, 2011). Then again, risks regarding interpersonal connecting are also embedded in families, communities and cultures.

The abovementioned is supported by the field theory. When looking at learners' developmental needs it is important to recognise the importance of his/her context or field, such as school, peer, family, social, and other environmental factors (Yontef, 1993). The field can be described as the three areas of the phenomenological method, namely, "the internal world of the person, the external world or environment, and the ever changing relationships between them" (Joyce & Sills, 2001). Such a statement indicates that not only environmental factors, but also inner predispositions, play an important part in an individual's development. If one wants to understand the learners' context, it is important to look at the complexities and interplay between a student's individual characteristics and the broader ecological system, including family, neighbourhood and community conditions (Morrison, Brown, O'Farrell, & Furlong, 2006). This view is supported by Prilleltensky (2005) who argues that the well-being of any person is highly dependent on the well-being of his/her relations and the wellness of the community in which a person resides. As stated, people do not live in isolation, they constantly interact with one other and they are a part of an organism-environment field around them, such as family, social, economic, and political systems, which influence them greatly (Yontef, 1993). Such a field is always seen as moving and becoming; nothing is static. It is essential for educators to see each learner as a unique individual, who is influenced by her/his own unique family and wider community

environment. This is supported by the literature that stresses the uniqueness of each individual, yet knowing that such uniqueness is embedded in an influential environmental context based on race, gender, sexuality, ability and national origin, all of which influence individuals' self-realisation process and meaningful engagement with others (Goodman, 2009). Pring (2012) stresses the importance of showing explicitly to the learners that the educator respects the individuality of each learner and understands the meaning of his/her personal growth embedded in his/her unique environmental context.

The importance of the strength perspective as presented within the framework of positive psychology pertaining to concentrating on well-being in school communities, as well as the importance of relational well-being based on respect, was highlighted. Learners attending secondary school communities are going through the adolescent life stage of which the major developmental task is to develop an own identity and self-worth (Schoeman, 2009). Such development is often associated with a social and environmental context, which is important to take into consideration. Furthermore, it was stressed that positive development cannot be achieved without understanding the individual and environmental conditions of the learner, which influence each other and cannot exist without each other. To support this, Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory, as well as field theory, was explained. Both theories emphasise the importance of family, community and cultural factors, all of which greatly influences personal development.

The next section explores how South African living conditions in high-risk communities can impact adolescents who are attending secondary schools. It will also explore the responsibility of secondary schools to deliver more than academic results, as academic results alone are not good indicators of how well learners will function in their

adult lives. The next section will also argue that in order for positive change to take place, development of educator-learner relationships based on mutual respect must be enhanced. Examples of respectful behaviour and attitudes in educator-learner relationships will be given.

2.2.6 High-risk community and poverty influencing learners in secondary schools

Adolescents attending secondary schools do not live in isolation, and therefore one must pay attention to the importance of social and environmental factors that influence the realisation of their life-potential (Catalano et al., 2008). Despite the establishment of democracy in 1994, South Africa's wealth is not evenly distributed, which has a negative impact on the whole community (Hammett & Staeheli, 2011; Petersen et al., 2010; Swart & Reddy, 1999; Theron, 2007). Many adolescents who are exposed to abuse, become victims of exploitation and violence and they themselves become increasingly involved in violent and criminal behaviour (Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010). Young adults living in impoverished areas often take part in risk behaviours, such as smoking, alcohol use, drug use, gangsterism and violence. Other results of living in such conditions include mental health problems, aggression and early sexual risk-taking which often lead to unplanned pregnancies, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (Catalano et al., 2008; Swart and Reddy, 1999; Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010). Moreover, the HIV/AIDS pandemic causes additional disruptions in family life, bringing about immense financial, physical and emotional stress (Makiwane & Kwizera, 2008; Petersen et al., 2010).

The risk behaviours mentioned above negatively affect the well-being of young people, and without intervention strategies such behaviour is more likely to increase with age and

persist into adulthood (Gershenson, Lyon & Budd, 2010; Greenberg et al., 2003; Patel et al., 2007; Theron, 2007). Moreover, risk behaviours and living in impoverished areas negatively influence adolescents' future life course, which implies greater probability of developing mental health disorders (Petersen et al., 2010). International and national research found an association between negative behaviour among young adults attending secondary schools and living in lower income environments (Theron, 2007; Zeldin, Wilson, & Collura, 2011). Such negative behaviour among young adults in conflicted societies leads to lower school achievements, greater risks of poor mental health and self-harm (Zeldin et al., 2011). Theron (2007), who also found the correlation between low income families and negative social behaviour among young adults, states that such negative behaviour occurs due to limited after-school resources such as libraries, internet, sports clubs and recreational facilities. In other words, when adolescents are constantly exposed to the abovementioned social pathologies and limitations, these social problems could manifest in negative social functioning. Furthermore, living under such negative or "toxic" conditions results in many youngsters not completing their education (Makiwane & Kwizera, 2009; Morojele et al., 2013; Petersen et al., 2010). Statistics South Africa (2012) reveals that educational attendance decreases rapidly beyond the age of sixteen years.

Taking into account the conditions faced by young people living in high-risk South African communities, it is essential to produce experiences of healthy and respectful interacting in order to promote successful developmental growth. Camfield (2006), who studied well-being in developing countries such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Peru and Thailand, emphasises the great need of people living in poverty to be respected, to have meaningful choices and to be able to preserve their dignity. It is clear that respectful interacting is just as important to people as material well-being. These findings are important to note for this

study, as many similar studies regarding well-being come from well-developed, First World countries.

Given the context of adolescents' challenges, schools (alongside families) are highly influential in forming adolescents' behaviour and ensuring their future success. Therefore it is important to implement effective educational approaches that will not only promote academic success, but will enhance health and positive social functioning, too (Greenberg et al., 2003). Schooling is seen as a key mediator of resilience in youth, as schools have immense impact on youth living in impoverished areas. Positive schooling experiences and opportunities contribute to adolescents' positive development and well-being (Johnson & Lazarus, 2008; Theron & Theron, 2010). In the following section, the role of secondary school communities will be addressed.

2.2.7 Secondary school-community settings

There is no dispute that education is one of the most important aspects in young people's lives, as it influences them greatly, not only academically but socially as well (Petersen et al., 2010; Sonn, 2005; Wood & Webb, 2008). Van Schalkwyk and Wissing (2010) show that purposeful living and the attainment of education are important indicators of adolescents' psychosocial well-being. Furthermore, schools as institutions prepare young citizens to play a significant role in their society. Schools also have a great influence on young people's psychological, emotional and social well-being (Keyes, 1998; McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010; Sonn, 2005). Adolescents spend much of their waking hours in their school environments, which influence multiple areas of adolescents' functioning, including identity formation, peer relations, as well as cognitive, social, and vocational development (Gomez &

Ang, 2007). It is evident that positive experiences at schools can contribute to positive youth development. This is supported by the positive psychology perspective that sees adolescence as a special life-phase during which children should be given the support they need to learn and develop skills that will help them sustain themselves in the present and the future (Catalano et al., 2004). It is therefore clear that schools' roles go beyond simply delivering result-driven teaching (Pring, 2012).

2.2.8 Corporal punishment/discipline

The abovementioned is easier said than done. After abolishing corporal punishment in schools, management of classroom behaviour came into question (Giesinger, 2012). Sonn (2005) investigated discipline at schools in the South African context and he argues that problems of losing discipline at schools occur mainly when learners are exposed to high-risk communities and problematic factors such as family conflict, violence in the neighbourhood, fear for personal safety, inability to cope with the physical and emotional changes of being an adolescent, being different (in terms of culture, religion, accent, etc.), and death or divorce in the family. Due to these stressors, the learners are more likely to display disruptive behaviour, have little or no motivation, low self-esteem, may lack concentration or become apathetic (Sonn, 2005). This viewpoint is supported by Bailey (2012), who designed a study in an American school context where the researcher explored the teaching experience of Jamaican educators in elementary and high schools in a low-income area in New York. The four prominent themes that emerged from data collected through in-depth interviews were: (1) lack of respect for educators and other adults; (2) disregard for educator authority; (3) lack of learner appreciation for the teacher's work; and (4) learners' apathy towards education. All four themes manifested themselves in the form of disruptive behaviour, which

the educators found difficult to manage. These findings further illustrate how such negative behaviour influences educators' attitudes towards learners, and hence, influences the learner-teacher relationship. Educators often put so much energy into managing behaviour and educating, that there is little energy left for enhancing social interaction. It is noteworthy that Sonn (2005) emphasises that discipline is not a way of simply controlling unwanted behaviour. He argues that taking a holistic view of discipline involves treating learners as young people worthy of respect and dignity. If an educator will do so, then classrooms will become naturally more manageable and more time will be left for good-quality teaching.

Increasingly, research shows that schools must become more humane spaces and operate as centres of social and psychological well-being (Hirst & Vadeboncouer, 2006). It is important to associate academic learning with social and emotional learning, seeing as socio-emotional well-being influences academic growth and progress (Morrison, Brown, D'incay, O'Farrell, & Furlong, 2010). Schools need to recognise, engage, and sustain existing and potential resources within their environment and surrounding communities in order to develop adolescents' competence, confidence, connections, character, caring, and the ability to contribute to society (Gomez & Ang, 2007). Furthermore, plans for educational growth should include social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy and a sense of purpose (Morrison et al., 2006). Yet there is some debate over how one can achieve and maintain good educational standards that adequately prepare young people for adolescence, as well as for their adult life (Greenberg et al., 2003).

Besides the academic, high-quality education needs to teach adolescents how to interact in socially skilled and respectful ways (Greenberg et al., 2003). According to McLaughlin and Clarke (2010), if positive relationships based on respect for other human

beings are practised at school, then connectedness at school among learners can be developed. Learners' sense of connectedness at schools can be developed by educators' supportiveness, caring attitude, fair and effective discipline and the enhancement of students' academic progress (Johnson & Lazarus, 2008). This connectedness could lower the likelihood of health-risk behaviour and enhance positive educational outcomes and learners' self-esteem, which in turn will enhance learning and positive well-being (McLaughlin & Clarke 2010). In other words, the comprehensive mission of schools also entails positive interacting which will manifest as respectful interacting.

2.2.9 Educator-learner relationships

School communities must create supportive and nurturing environments where relationships among educators and students are encouraged (Johnson & Lazarus, 2008). This can be achieved by providing learning opportunities which consist of constructive social interactions in the classroom, which lays the groundwork for co-operative enterprise between learners and educators, which in turn leads to positive educator-learner relationships (Oosthuizen & Van der Walt, 2008). These statements, although very generally put, are important, seeing as constructive social interactions in the classroom could happen, irrespective of the material resources of schools.

McLaughlin and Clarke (2010) identify characteristics of positive relationships among educators and learners, including caring, receiving support, fairness, respect, trust, being listened to and engagement in decision-making. Johnson and Lazarus (2008) identify positive relationships between educators and learners as displaying patience, fairness and being able to laugh with the students. Also, research indicates that when learners perceive the teaching

as relevant, and feel that the educator will enable them towards academic achievement, they are more likely to engage in the learning process and a positive relationship with the educator (Witmer, 2005). If an educator shows that a student's input, no matter how miniscule, is valued, it enhances the learner's positive development of self-conception (Giesinger, 2012). A positive learner-educator (youth-adult) partnership has many benefits, including the improvement of educational outcomes (Mitra, 2009). In China, adolescents' belief in their own competence was associated with positive recognition from their educators, which impacted learners' school performance in a positive way (Tian, 2014). If learners have the opportunity to live through their first-hand experience of positive relationships with their educators, then they are also given the opportunity to positively develop their interpersonal skills for their future life (Catalano et al., 2004). Educator-learner relationships can enhance their positive sense of self, self-confidence, positive self-esteem, self-respect, discipline, and participation in classrooms (Giesinger, 2012; Pring, 2012; Sonn, 2005).

2.2.10 Educator-learner relationships based on respect

All of the above foster healthy educator-learner relationships, and Pring (2012) argues that mutual respect and learning from each other should be central to an educational vision. Respect and educator-learner relations involve the following: Mitra (2009) argues that the educator must remain the authoritative figure in the classroom; however the role of the educator is to build positive relationships with her/his learners based on mutual respect and understanding. Giesinger (2012) states that respect in educational thought has two aspects; firstly, the learner as a child should be respected in his/her present individuality; and secondly, the learner as child should be respected as a future adult. O'Grady, Hinchion and McNamara (2011) state that, within the educational context, "respect" must be understood as

part of interacting grounded in the quality of learner's relationships with their educators. According to Van Schalkwyk and Wissing (2010), who explored the psychosocial well-being of a group of South African adolescents (between the ages of 15 and 17 years), positive relationships with educators based on mutual respect and healthy interconnectedness contribute to positive personal well-being. Contrary to this, absence of well-being is linked to experiencing negative attitudes towards educators (Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010). The next question explores the exact nature of respect in education.

2.2.11 Respect in education

Two opposing discourses regarding respect in educational contexts are evident in the research. The first is that of 'institutional and unilateral respect', where respect is perceived in terms of the enhancement of obedience and the display of moral behaviour (De Klerk & Rens, 2003; Oosthuizen & Van der Walt, 2008). Many educators see mutual respect as a threat that deprives them of their authority and undermines their status and power (Dillon, 2007; Hammett & Staeheli, 2011). Dillon (2007) defines this as 'institutional respect', which calls for educators to be respected due to their social position (that of an authority figure), without thinking whether he/she is a good educator or not. Such respect is achieved through the fear of rejection (Wood & Webb, 2008). Goodman (2009) calls this 'unilateral respect', which takes a 'educators know best and are therefore there to instruct' attitude. In this instance, submission to authority is expected. Educators, who are trying to dominate and control students on the basis of power, hinder the intrinsic motivation to learn (Witmer, 2005). Jones (2002) explored respect in the United Kingdom's educational environment and found that such authoritative respect brings conflict between authority figures and young

people; therefore he argue that “genuine” respect cannot be achieved merely through the exercise of power and authority.

The second discourse is that of ‘mutual process of respect’, where respect is perceived as a nurturing aspect of relationships which encompasses mutual processes of giving and receiving, resulting in positive changes at schools (Hemmings, 2003; Jones, 2002; Kitching, Roos, & Ferreira, 2012; Sonn, 2005). By practising this kind of mutual respect, one can reduce the asymmetry, based on power and status distinctions, between youth and adults in the school environment (Mitra, 2009). Such mutual respect will allow learners to feel valued and motivated to learn and become better individuals, and educators to experience more job satisfaction due to learners who are manageable and motivated (Sonn, 2005). The Western Cape Education Department (2007) states that educators, as well as their learners, are entitled respect, bearing in mind that respect from learners cannot be enforced by the educator, but earned through personal conduct. Finally, as mentioned earlier, respect is culture-, context- and age-specific. Therefore what learners perceive as respectful behaviour may not necessarily be considered respectful by their educators. Therefore, one must be explicit about what respect means and how it should be practised in a particular school environment.

2.3 Themes present in literature

2.3.1 Respect is discursive autonomy: expressing claims, views and opinions freely

Giesinger (2012) looked at respect from a more philosophical perspective and indicated that respect in education means that students are allowed to express themselves as moral equals to their educators. He referred to this as ‘discursive autonomy’. De Klerk & Rens

(2003) emphasise the importance of guiding learners towards thinking and judging for themselves. By doing so, learners will gain a sense of self-respect, which Giesinger (2012) associates with gaining dignity and a sense of autonomy. Pring (2012) argues that failing to enable a young person to achieve a sense of personal dignity, means failing to respect them and undermining his/her personal well-being. Moreover, by listening to children's claims, the educator demonstrates respect for the process of thinking and reasoning of each individual, and is showing the learners that each of us reason in different yet equally valid ways (Pring, 2012). Mitra (2009) agrees that learners should be listened to and their claims valued by their educators, since learners' voices may bring insights which adults are unlikely to see. By listening to learners' views, the educators demonstrate to learners that they value their process of thinking and reasoning and that their opinions count, which will make learners feel valued, which in turn will enhance their positive sense of self, self-confidence, positive self-esteem and self-respect (Giesinger, 2012; Pring, 2012; Sonn, 2005).

2.3.2 Respect is experiencing criticism and disagreement expressed in an appropriate manner

Macleod (2010) states that children in secondary schools are prone to express their attitude towards an unfamiliar view in hurtful and insensitive ways; in other words, they express themselves boldly and bluntly. However, he further argues that adolescents are fragile and vulnerable to criticism, and are easily shaken and undermined. Gorard (2012) argues that disagreement is an important part of learning, and stresses the importance of letting learners express their opinions and values. But how must educators respond in situations where students' claims are incorrect or hurtful to others? In Gorard's field study (2012), secondary school learners expressed the wish to be corrected in a respectful manner

without being humiliated in front of their classmates. According to O’Grady et al. (2011), an educator’s tone of voice and body language may also influence students’ sense of self and attitude towards the educator. If such requirements are met, according to Gorard (2012), a sense of personal autonomy and self-worth is encouraged.

Differences in opinions may occur due to cultural or personal factors. If educators imaginatively and positively entertain those differences, they can create an awareness of diversity among learners (Western Cape Education Department, 2007). This will give learners the opportunity to encounter new ideas and diverse perspectives via official elements of the curriculum, and to witness and interact with children whose backgrounds and perspectives are different from their own. Such an awareness of diversity will lead to independent judgment, tolerance towards other opinions and an emerging sense of positive identity. Therefore, allowing learners to express their differences has great value.

Allowing learners to gain a sense of autonomy has many advantages for young people on their way to adulthood. Individuals who are fully autonomous possess an internal locus of evaluation, in which they assess themselves by their own personal standards rather than looking to others for approval (Bird & Markle, 2012; Mearns & Thorne, 1999). Positive self-concept and self-esteem allow learners to trust themselves and to feel confident to express their opinions without feeling threatened by others’ opinions of them. Such confidence in turn leads to positive self-esteem and environmental mastery – making successful progress in the world throughout the life span and thriving on your life’s achievements (Bird & Markle, 2012; Giesinger, 2012). Alternatively, if autonomy is restricted, in the sense that learners’ opinions are ignored or ridiculed, the learner may feel that his views are not valued (Giesinger, 2012). Consequently, the learner may decide not to raise his opinion again and

withdraw from the educator-learner interaction in the classroom. This will hinder the educator-learner relationship, learning process, personal growth and the development of an emerging self-identity (Macleod, 2010).

2.3.3 Respect is taking part in decision-making processes

Adolescents have a growing need for autonomy, which means that secondary school learners desire to govern their actions and to be part of decision-making processes (Goodman, 2009; Gorard, 2012; Mitra, 2009). If learners are allowed such autonomy, and educators allow and value learners' contributions towards decision-making processes, positive change can take place in educator-learner relationships (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010). Witmer (2005) studied the importance of relationships in secondary school communities and argues that having students participate in decision-making processes supports the notion that students have a responsibility and say in their own learning. In light of this, supplying learners with opportunities to make choices is another way to build inner strength (Oaklander, 1997). Learners' independence and autonomy may be enhanced through providing them with choice in daily learning activities, and in return it encourages trust and mutual respect in educator-learner interactions (Witmer, 2005).

However, Goodman (2009) argues that for some educators it is difficult and almost unacceptable to view learners as moral equals and allow them to take part in decision-making processes. Firstly, it is due to the fact that learners are often seen as irrational and dependent, and their views as less formed than those of adults (Goodman, 2009; Macleod, 2010). Often educators view their learners as emotionally immature, impulsive, and dependent on their own judgement which often fails them (Western Cape Educational Department, 2007).

Secondly, educators are afraid of losing their authority. They see themselves as superior adults who know best, and therefore their roles are to instruct and to govern (Goodman, 2009). Educators may use such authoritarian power to tease learners in front of the class, excluding them from involvement, shouting and swearing at them, or gossiping about them. Such behaviour provokes feelings of rejection, sadness and humiliation, and creates distance within educator-learner relationships (Kitching, Roos, & Ferreira, 2011). Other restraining patterns based on power practised by educators may include restraining assertiveness in learners, not listening to learners' explanations of why their work is not done; or displaying threats towards learners which is associated with learners' resistance (Kitching et al., 2011). Thirdly, autonomy is often seen as a desired outcome of education instead of a present process of the educational experience (Goodman, 2009). All of the above could lead to negative relationships in the classroom and could hinder learners' personal growth. Therefore adults need to learn how to step out of their authoritarian roles (Mitra, 2009).

2.3.4 Respect is listening

Another aspect of respect is listening to students (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010); however, claims regarding this are often ambiguous in the literature, as listening to students can have different meanings in real school settings. The first meaning is listening to learners' opinions, which is associated with autonomy, as explained above. Pring (2012) argues that listening to different opinions with respect will show learners that each of us reason in different yet equally valid ways. The second meaning is to listen to students when they are talking or presenting their work with genuine interest and without interrupting or ridiculing them. As such, listening is seen as an important skill, which leads to effective communication and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2013).

2.3.5 Respect is fairness and equality

A third meaning of respect as listening pertains to managing conflict among learners (Gomez & Ang, 2007). The Western Cape Educational Department (2007) suggests that conflict in the classroom must be dealt with appropriately, by bearing in mind that learners' values and perspectives differ and that each individual deserves the chance to present his/her side of the story. It is important for the educator to get to the root of the conflict by listening to both sides of the story (Sonn, 2005). By doing so, the educator demonstrates that all parties involved in the conflict will be treated fairly, equally, without judgement, and without favouritism. Treating all learners equally has a very powerful effect on learners as individuals, the group the learners belong to, and their community as a whole. It can set educator-learner relationships on a new path and influence learners' attitudes towards the school. If students have the opportunity to experience and practise fairness and equality at schools, which influences their personal growth in a positive way, the school will succeed in creating citizens with good moral values, which if practised in their adulthood, may contribute to their personal well-being, as well as that of the whole community (Pring, 2012).

South Africa is often associated with past discriminatory practises based on race, class and culture, which were formally abolished in 1994. Since then, South African school communities have become multicultural; therefore treating learners fairly and equally is especially important in a South African context. Treating learners in multicultural classrooms equally, enables the educator to be a role model for the learners, and to teach them that every individual, regardless of gender, sex, race, culture, religion or class, should be treated with

respect. Alternatively, prejudice, the belief that one group of people is superior to another, could diminish respect, self-worth and self-image (Sonn, 2005).

Gorard (2012) points out the importance of justice in classrooms, because unfairly treated pupils are likely to react in a way that will impair their learning process, which will have a negative impact on their academic results, harm their personal development, and lower their self-esteem. Gorard (2012) further stresses that adequate application of principles of fairness in schools may have an especially positive impact on poorly-achieving learners and those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, as these learners may experience injustice more intensely than others. It is worth mentioning Gorard's study (2012) which surveyed responses from approximately 13 000 Grade 9 learners in France, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Italy and England in order to examine their experiences of fairness at schools and their views on the meaning of fairness. Overall, 90% of the participants expressed the need to be treated with respect; however, according to the participants, it was not always the case in real life. Most learners expressed that they experienced various forms of unfairness in classrooms; including reward and punishment not being fairly and consistently distributed; certain groups of learners treated less fairly than others; some learners punished more severely than others for the same offence; and teachers' favouritism towards higher-achieving students.

2.3.6 Respect is being polite

Jones (2002) argues that people show respect to others by being polite and treating others with courtesy. According to Mehta (1997), the meaning of respect is shifting from obedience and subservience to courtesy and kindness.

2.3.7 Respect is tolerance

Goodman (2009) sees respect as tolerance of people's individuality, including the individual's race, gender, sexuality, ability, and national origin. Macleod (2010) views tolerance as grounded in principles of mutual respect, where persons acknowledge each other as equals, even if they fundamentally disagree. According to Macleod (2010) tolerance is manifested as respect for autonomy.

2.3.8 Respect is acceptance

De Cremer and Mulder (2007) provide a working definition of respect which entails the act of communicating full recognition to other people on the dimensions of belongingness and acceptance. In this sense, respect signals a full recognition of someone as a person, which gives an individual the sense of being accepted. Respectful engagement in a secondary school context is associated with unconditional acceptance of people as equal despite their dispositions, as well as consideration or acknowledgement of their individual needs (Kitching et al., 2012; Nelson-Jones, 2006). In this case, Kitching et al. (2012) argue that we must accept the person as a holistic being without reducing such acceptance to only a certain aspect of a learner's life; for example, "I will accept you only as long as you perform academically."

2.3.9 Respect is trust

Trust is another important aspect of positive educator-learner relationships based on respect. A climate of trust and understanding of each other is essential as a basis for the

building of relationships, and must be implemented by the whole school and class. In Johnson and Lazarus' South African study (2008) Grade 9 participants found it hard to trust their educators, and many students felt strongly about not going to teachers for help, which hindered the educator-learner relationship. Students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds have little opportunities to open up and trust others (Mitra, 2009). Therefore it is important that educators are approachable and that learners feel safe to disclose their life's challenges and worries to them. When such a climate of trust is established, mutual respect and individuals' willingness to take responsibility for their own actions and deeds can be achieved more easily (Western Cape Education Department, 2007).

2.3.10 Respect and making teaching interesting

Another way to encourage learners to respect their educators is by making the classes interesting (Western Cape Educational Department, 2007). Educators need to find ways to keep learners amused and entertained, as young people possess an entertainment-seeking attitude (Oosthuizen & Van der Walt, 2008).

2.4 Summary

What follows is a summary of all the points that were presented in this section. Firstly, the importance of positive psychological perspective was emphasised, arguing that it is important to concentrate on well-being in school communities, which is embedded in social connections that can only be beneficial to positive development when based on respect. This was followed by explanations of learners' developmental process, which is highly influenced by environmental factors, as demonstrated by bio-ecological and field theories. The main

argument of these theories was that individuals and their environment are greatly influenced by each other and that one cannot exist without the other. Next, the influence of South African high-risk communities on adolescents attending high schools was presented, as this research is embedded in that particular context. Subsequent to that, the roles of secondary school communities and the importance of educator-learner relationships were stressed. It was argued that positive educator-learner relationships must be based on mutual respect; however different definitions of respect are presented throughout the philosophical and empirical literature. This demonstrates the complexity of such phenomena. Despite such complexity, the last part of this section concentrated on describing precisely what respect in education entails.

2.5 Conclusion

It is concluded that school communities must turn into spaces where not only academic skills are gained but also positive relationships are encouraged as academic performance itself has little relation to well-being and the experience of fulfilment. As argued, positive relationships are fundamental to personal well-being and therefore it is important to concentrate on relational well-being in school communities. Mainly the educator-learner interactions are highly regarded as influential source for enhancing learners' well-being and academic learning. It is of a great importance that such relationships are based on mutual respect. When learners are exposed to positive relating and respectful engagement with their educators, academic development can take place alongside the enhancement of psychological, social and emotional well-being. Positive educator-learner relationships based on mutual respect are highly relevant for secondary school learners living in high-risk communities, where support and resources for enhancing and developing their psychosocial

well-being is limited. What exactly is respectful interaction is difficult to define as what one person finds respectful, the other person may find disrespectful and therefore it is important to define respectful behaviour in regards to culture and context, in this case a secondary school based in high risk community. The current research is therefore going to hear learners' voices of their own perceptions of respect received from and given to educators.

The further breakdown of the dissertation structure is as follows. The next section is section B, which is in the format of an article aimed to be submitted to Journal of Psychology in Africa. The researcher further presents Section C, which includes summary, conclusions, recommendations, limitations and reflection of this study. This dissertation then ends with the Section D consisting of complete reference list and Section E (addenda section).

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SECTION B

ARTICLE

Title

Learners' perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to qualitatively explore and describe learners' perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community within a high-risk environment in the South African context, in order to promote relational well-being in schools. The participants in this study were fifteen secondary school (Grade 12) learners. A qualitative, phenomenological research design was used in this study. The data were gathered in two phases, namely written assignments, and through the application of the World Café technique. Thematic analysis was used to identify relevant themes. The key findings of the research were that respect is a mutual enterprise and that respect comes in a wide variety of behavioural acts and emotional attitudes. For further research, it was recommended to gain a better understanding of how learners in secondary school communities perceive respect in educator-learner relationships within various different cultures and South African provinces.

Keywords: educators, learners, perception, positive psychology, respect, high-risk community

“I am indebted to my father for living, but to my teacher for living well.”

Alexander the Great (His teacher was Aristotle: the legendary philosopher)

Alexander the Great honoured his teacher as the one who showed him how to live well. Relational living, and more specifically respect and relating, are key issues regarding living well (Seligman, 2011). The experience of positive interacting, based on mutual respect, could encourage positive human health, as well as social functioning towards higher levels of well-being, indicated as flourishing (Keyes, 2006a). The focus of this research was learners' perceptions of respect and educator-learner relationships.

Background to the research

The role of educators nowadays, alongside academic delivery, is to build positive relationships with their learners, as such relationships are of key importance for personal and collective well-being (Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2013). According to Mitra (2009), the common thread in successful youth-adult relationships is mutual respect. This opinion is supported by Giesinger (2012), who argues that respect should be one of the general educational principles, which must be consistent over time. According to Mehta (1997), the meaning of respect is shifting from obedience and subservience to courtesy and kindness. Furthermore, De Cremer and Mulder (2007) provide a working definition of respect, which entails the act of communicating full recognition to other people in the dimensions of belongingness and acceptance. In this sense, respect signals a full recognition as a person, which gives people the sense of being accepted and belonging. This means that healthy relations and reciprocal respect are two sides of the same coin.

However, many educators see mutual respect as a threat to their authority, and as something that undermines their status and power (Dillon, 2007; Goodman, 2009; Hammett & Staeheli, 2011). It is argued that educators, who try to dominate and control learners on the basis of their own authority, hinder learners' intrinsic motivation to learn (Jones, 2002; Witmer, 2005). Sonn (2005) argues that educators can no longer expect respect because of their "teacher-role"; they must earn respect through what they do. This statement correlates with the philosophical notion that respect is something that people ascribe value to, and that someone must be worthy of respect. Respect therefore needs to be earned, instead of being given regardless of an individual's behaviour (Dillon, 2007; The Western Cape Education Department, 2007). In this sense, according to Giesinger (2012), learners need to constantly experience respect, and therefore respectful behaviour towards their learners must become part of educators' daily teaching practice. Van der Merwe (2004) emphasises that a person who wants to be respected needs to show respect, but added that in relationships with learners, the responsibility to initiate and maintain respect rests with the adults. If mutual respect in educator-learner relationships is practised consistently, then learners will feel valued and motivated to learn and become better persons, and educators will experience job satisfaction, due to classrooms that are manageable and motivated (Sonn, 2005).

What exactly respect in education entails and what benefits it holds, have been theorised and identified by a variety of researchers nationally and internationally. One aspect of respectful behaviour was identified as listening to different learners' views and opinions (Giesinger, 2012; Mitra, 2009; Pring, 2012). By listening to learners' views, the educators demonstrate to learners that they value their thinking process and reasoning, and that their opinions count, which results in learners feeling valued and enhances their positive sense of self, self-confidence, positive self-esteem, self-respect and autonomy (Giesinger, 2012;

Pring, 2012; Sonn, 2005). This notion is important in multicultural classrooms, which are rapidly growing worldwide (Greenberg et al., 2003). Difference in claims, views and opinions may occur due to cultural or personal differences, and if educators imaginatively and positively entertain those differences, they create an awareness of diversity among their learners (Western Cape Education Department, 2007). Consequently, learners will not only encounter new ideas and diverse perspectives via official elements of the curriculum, but will also have the opportunity to witness and interact with learners whose backgrounds, perspectives and commitments are different from their own. This may result in independent judgment, tolerance towards other opinions, and an emerging sense of positive identity (Western Cape Education Department, 2007). Hence, allowing learners to express their differences has great value.

It is further argued that adolescents have a growing need for autonomy, which means that secondary school learners desire to govern their own actions and to be part of decision-making processes (Goodman, 2009; Gorard, 2012; Mitra, 2009). When educators allow and respect learners' engagement in the decision-making process in the learning environment, positive change can take place in educator-learner relationships (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010). Witmer (2005) argues that when learners participate in the decision-making process of a project and are given choices, it reinforces the notion that students have a responsibility and say in their own learning. In light of that, giving learners opportunities to make choices is another way to provide inner strength (Oaklander, 1997). Individuals who are fully autonomous possess an internal locus of evaluation, in which they assess themselves by their own personal standards rather than looking to others for approval (Bird & Markle, 2012; Mearns & Thorne, 1999). This results in positive self-esteem and environmental mastery, which means to make successful progress in the world throughout one's life span and to

thrive on life's achievements (Bird & Markle, 2012; Giesinger, 2012). However, if autonomy is restricted, and learners' opinions are ignored, ridiculed or not valued, learners may feel that their views do not count (Giesinger, 2012). As a result, learners may decide not to give their opinions again and to withdraw from educator-learner interaction in the classroom. This could hinder the educator-learner relationship, learning process, personal growth and the development of an emerging self-identity (Macleod, 2010). Good communication skills are also related to respect and educator-learner relationships (Clements & Kuperberg, 2008). O'Grady et al. (2011) highlight that an educator's tone of voice and body language may influence learners' sense of self, as well as their attitude towards the educator.

Trust is another important aspect of positive educator-learner relationships based on respect (Western Cape Educational Department, 2007). A climate of trust and understanding of each other is essential as a basis for the building of relationships, and must be implemented in the classroom, as well as in the entire school (Johnson & Lazarus, 2008). It must be stressed that learners coming from disadvantaged backgrounds have few opportunities to open up and trust others (Mitra, 2009). Therefore it is important that educators are approachable and learners feel safe to disclose their life challenges and worries to them. When this climate is established, mutual respect and learners' willingness to take responsibility for their own actions and deeds can be achieved more easily (Western Cape Education Department, 2007). Another way to enforce learners to respect their educators is by making the classes interesting (Western Cape Educational department, 2007). Educators have to keep learners' attention by amusing and entertaining them, as young people possess an entertainment-seeking attitude (Oosthuizen & Van der Walt, 2008).

Lastly, respectful engagement has been identified as learners being treated fairly and equally by their educators (Evans & Prilleltensky, 2007; Gorard, 2012; Guess & Bowling, 2014; Theron & Theron, 2010). Due to past migration, South African school communities consist of multicultural classrooms, and therefore being treated fairly and equally is especially important in the South African context. Treating learners equally in multicultural classrooms, enables the educator to be a role model for learners, who will learn that every individual, regardless of gender, race, or class, should be treated with respect (Gomez & Ang, 2007). Individuals' perceptions of being treated unfairly due to their ethnic or cultural origins could undermine respect, self-worth and self-image, which will have a negative impact on their academic results and personal development (Sonn, 2005; Gorard, 2012). Gorard (2012) further stresses that adequate application of principles of fairness in schools may have an especially positive impact on poorly achieving learners and learners coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, as they experience injustice more intensely than other learners, and may therefore attach greater value to educators' opinions than their classmates do. This viewpoint is supported by Prilleltensky (2012) who uses the construct "developmental injustice" to describe the abuse of power based on superior psychological or economic resources (Prilleltensky, Nelson, & Peirson, 2001).

The above-mentioned variety of descriptions of what exactly respect in the educational environment entails, demonstrates the complexity of the phenomenon. Despite the evident significance and positive results of mutual respect in relationships, there is insufficient emphasis on building and maintaining respect in educational settings. Giesinger (2012) argues that the issue of respect is often talked about, but is repeatedly neglected and therefore rarely used in educational settings. Mitra (2009) argues that research regarding youth-adult partnerships at schools remains an under-theorised field. According to McLaughlin and

Clarke (2010), the educator-learner relationship has specifically been neglected with regard to learners' perceptions of respect received from and given to educators. Goodman (2009) argues that understanding the meaning of respect from a practical point of view, and knowing how to guide youth throughout their educational years, is more important than limiting ourselves to theoretical views on respect in education.

In light of the above-mentioned, the research question of this study was, "How do learners perceive respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community?" This inquiry directed the aim of the study, namely to explore learners' perceptions of respect in learner-educator relationships in a secondary school community within a high-risk environment in the South African context.

Method

Research Design

A qualitative, phenomenological research design was used in this study. Phenomenological research aims to understand and describe human beings' lived experiences in context under which certain phenomena, issues or concepts are investigated (Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Groenewald, 2004; Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). The chosen research design allowed the researcher to explore and describe learners' perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community within a high-risk environment in the South African context, which was the main aim of the study.

Setting: Research Context

The secondary school where the data were gathered is situated in Western Cape, and it is in the category of lower income communities (City of Cape Town, 2011). The population is predominantly persons of Coloured (52%) and Black African persons (46%) (Strategic Development Information & Geographic Information System, 2013). In terms of social problems, the school's surrounding area is known as a high-risk community due to the prevalence of poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, high levels of crime such as robberies and violent crime, domestic violence, and other negative factors (City of Cape Town, 2011; South African Police Services, 2013).

Participants

Purposeful sampling (Struwig & Stead, 2001) was initially used to select the participants according to specific criteria. There were eight Xhosa-, four Afrikaans- and three English-speaking participants. The following criteria were applied to the selection of the participants:

- Language: Afrikaans- and English-speaking, as well as second language English-speaking isiXhosa learners
- Adolescent life phase: Learners in the adolescent developmental phase (between the ages of 17 and 21 years)
- School grade: Grade 12 learners (having been part of this particular school community for at least 3 years) were selected for the study
- High-risk community: Learners residing in the Delft community, Western Cape, South Africa

- Gender: Boys and girls were selected as participants.

The secondary school has three Grade 12 classes, and five participants were chosen at random from each Grade 12 class. Altogether fifteen participants were selected, of which there were four girls and eleven boys. The average age of participants was 18.8 years of age.

Data Gathering

The researcher met the participants on three occasions. During the first meeting, the participants were asked to fill in a demographic questionnaire. During the second meeting, the first phase of the data gathering, each participant was asked to complete a written assignment that included seven open-ended questions. 1. What is your understanding of respect? What words would you use to explain the idea of respect? 2. What is respect for you in the school context? Give me some examples of respectful behaviour in teacher-learner relationships. 3. Provide examples: When do you experience that you are respected by your teachers? 4. Provide examples: When and how do you respect your teachers? 5. Give some examples of disrespectful behaviour you have experienced from your teachers. 6. Give some examples of disrespectful behaviour of students towards the teachers. 7. How, according to you, can respect be improved in teacher-learner relationships at schools?

During the third meeting, the second phase of the data gathering, the World Café technique (Schieffer, Isaacs & Gyllenpalm, 2004) was applied. Three open-ended questions, similar to those used in the first phase, were used in order to gain validity and clarity on some of the themes that participants mentioned during the first phase of the data gathering. The three questions were as follows: 1. What according to you, is respect in teacher-learner

relationships at schools? 2. How, according to you, should teachers show/give respect to learners? 3. How, according to you, should learners show/give respect to teachers?

The World Café technique allows groups and communities to share their knowledge and insights, and provides opportunities for people sitting in groups around tables to have meaningful conversations. In the World Café technique, the participants travel around the tables, sharing their ideas regarding the topic under discussion with others (Schieffer et al., 2004). There is cross-pollination of ideas across groups, which combines diverse perspectives into collective insights, and allows communities to construct meanings and knowledge based on their lived experiences (Brown & Isaacs, 2005; Oelofse, 2009; Schieffer et al., 2004). All of this takes place in a friendly environment, where all participants feel free to contribute their thoughts and feelings relevant to the topic under investigation. What is powerful about the method is the conversation it allows for, and according to Brown and Isaacs (2005), whatever emerges during those conversations could be put into practice. With the participants' permission, all data collected in the second phase were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for the purpose of data analysis. The participants were informed that the data would be treated in confidentiality and that only relevant people would have access to the data.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) was applied. Analysing data involved a constant moving back and forward between the entire data set (i.e. the coded extracts of data that one is analysing). However six phases can be distinguished: the researcher familiarising himself with collected data, generating initial codes, searching for

themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, producing the report. In the final stage, written thematic analysis was produced. Verbatim statements from the respondents were used, where appropriate, to illustrate and explicate the main themes. Another two professionals were invited to look at the emerged themes and to review the research process to ensure that the researcher conducted the study in an appropriate and systematic manner (Pitney & Parker, 2009).

Trustworthiness of Research

The researcher ensured trustworthiness within the study by applying principles of crystallisation (Ellingson, 2009). The researcher applied the following steps as proposed by Tracy (2010) to ensure trustworthiness through crystallisation: a) the selection of a worthy and relevant topic in the field of study; b) crystallisation of the findings through different methods; c) deep, rich description of the data obtained; d) member-checking by presenting the findings to a small group of participants for clarification purposes; e) other professionals reviewing the research process to ensure that the researcher conducted the study in an appropriate and systematic manner, as suggested by Pitney and Parker (2009).

Procedure and Ethical Consideration

In order to commence with the research process, ethical clearance was obtained initially from North-West University, and then the Western Cape Education Department, to conduct research at the school within its jurisdiction. Afterwards, the researcher gained permission from the principal of the school to conduct the study at that particular school. A secure and private location was obtained at the school to conduct the data-collection. When considering

ethical conducts for the study, human rights as set out in the Constitution of South Africa were reviewed. The researcher further reviewed the code of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (2008), Strydom (2011), ethical principles of the American Psychological Association (2010) and the ethical guidelines of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (2008). Consent and assent forms were obtained prior data collection. The study was conducted in English, and the language and cultural values of the participants were taken into consideration at all times (Welman et al., 2005). Participants were informed whom to contact if they needed debriefing after they had participated in this study.

The researcher made observation notes about all aspects of the contact with the schools' administration staff, principal, and learners. This enabled the researcher to gain a subjective sense of the school. Reflexivity (Potvin, Bisset & Walz, 2010) was practised by the researcher by keeping detailed notes about the perceptions, feelings, emotional responses and preconceived beliefs that the researcher became aware of and experienced during the research process. The process of bracketing or self-observation and note taking enabled the researcher to be consciously aware of the fact that the researcher's social position, race, class and gender have an influence on knowledge production (Roschelle, Toro-Morn & Facio, 2010).

Results and Discussion

The focus of this study was to qualitatively explore learners' perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community. The participants of this research attend a secondary school within a high-risk environment in the South African context. The findings revealed three main themes, each of which includes several subthemes.

The themes were identified as follows: firstly, respect is well-intentioned behaviour; secondly, respect is supportive relationships; and, thirdly, respect is consistent, fair and mutual. For the main themes and relevant sub-themes see the Table 1. For each theme and sub-theme extracts were chosen from both data collection phases and placed into context of current and previous research. Participants' responses illustrate what can be characterized as a collective yet subjective learners' perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community within a high-risk environment in South Africa.

[Insert Table 1 approximately here]

Well-intentioned behaviour

Listening/paying attention

The first theme was well-intentioned behaviour and highlights the importance of listening skills. According to the participants, educators demonstrate respect towards them by listening; that is, paying attention when students are sharing their opinions or presenting in the class. As one participant mentioned: *"Respect is when a teacher gives her undivided attention to you when addressing or presenting to the class"* (P12/3). This finding is supported by Jones (2002) who argues that listening is seen as an important skill used in a range of interpersonal situations, which leads to effective communication and is linked to emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2013; Sheperd, Braham & Elston, 2010). Furthermore, as Dillon (2007) indicates, listening to the learners shows them that they are worth reasoning with rather than giving them the impression that they are being manipulated, or that educators are forcing their views on them. De Vita (2000) suggests that genuinely listening to learners

makes them feel important. According to Mazer, Buchanan, Quinlan and Titsworth (2014), educators who are perceived as poor listeners by their learners are viewed as being unwilling to express relational and substantive messages to learners, which in turn triggers learners' negative relational attitude towards their educators.

It is worth noting that participants were aware that it is not only educators' responsibility to listen, but also theirs. Listening to educators, paying attention to them and not disturbing them are some of the ways in which learners demonstrate respect towards their educators. As the following quote illustrates: *"It is a very good sign of respect that when a teacher is teaching in class, you [learner] listen and not disturb her, which shows that you value her and the hard work she is going through preparing the work"* (P12/2). It is supported by Jones' (2002) findings where participants (learners) identified respect as mutual listening between educators and learners. Therefore, to summarise, listening skills, particularly in terms of paying attention to another person's ideas, conversation or instruction, were identified as a crucial element of respectful behaviour in educator-learner relationships.

Listening to learners' views

Learners indicated that they appreciated it when they were given the opportunity to be heard in the class, to share their point of view on certain things, and when such views were accepted and taken into consideration by their educators. It is demonstrated by the following example: *"Respect is when I am able to give my point of view on certain things"* (P2/2). This supports previous findings from the literature. For example, Edelman (2004) proposes that schools should be an environment in which learners can feel comfortable in displaying and expressing their perceptions, which are often associated with their own developing identity

and individualistic views on things. Giesinger (2012) stresses the importance of learners exercising discursive autonomy in the present which is associated with a sense of self-respect and dignity, rather than passively gaining discursive autonomy for their future. Furthermore, autonomy is an important aspect of adolescents' identity development, which must be respected and enhanced rather than restricted (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010; Petersen, Swartz, Bhana & Flisher, 2010).

By listening to learners' claims, the educator demonstrates respect for the process of thinking and reasoning unique to each individual, and shows learners that each of us reason in different, yet valid, forms, which must be valued (De Vita, 2000; Jones, 2002; Mitra, 2009; Pring, 2012). In multicultural classrooms, listening to different views is especially important as learners can become aware of cultural diversity and how to respect such differences (De Vita, 2000). In instances, when the child's autonomy is restricted, such as when learners' voices are not heard, the child might come to feel that his/her desires, decisions and opinions do not count (Giesinger, 2012). Not listening to learners or ignoring them could lead to a withdrawal from participation in the future: *"The teacher should listen to the learner when the learner is speaking. Because once you show you [educator] ignore my answer or my point of view I will start not participating in the class"* (GR3, P1/2). Such reasoning clearly demonstrates that learners can withdraw themselves from the learning process if they feel that their views and opinions do not count or when their dignity is undermined.

Good communication

Another identified aspect of respectful behaviour in educator-learner relationships was good communication between the learner and the educator, which learners associated with

understanding and maintaining good relationships with their educators: *“There must be communication between the teacher and the learner, if there is no communication there will be no understanding” (GRI, P1/1)*. This is supported by a study by Kitching, Roos and Ferreira (2012), which concentrated on relational patterns in school communities, where learners and educators emphasised the value of effective communication in relationships in their school community. The study revealed that effective communication can bring people closer together and can help to create nurturing and enabling environments. In addition to that, Mazer et al. (2014) argue that if educators possess good communication skills, which are highly rated by learners, learners have a greater sense of well-being in a class.

Educators’ communication behaviour can influence the emotions that learners experience in classroom settings, learners’ perception of educators’ social support, effectiveness and relationships, and identity expression and formation (Clements & Kuperberg, Hargie, 2011; 2008; Kramer & Pier, 1999; Mazer et al., 2014; Sheperd et al., 2010). Clements and Kuperberg (2008) argue that educators should use the power of speech as it can create a more calm and productive learning environment, which can result in an improvement in learners’ behaviour and their level of academic achievement. According to De Vita (2000), good communication skills are especially important in multicultural classrooms. Effective communication enables educators to develop trust and lessen divisions (De Vita, 2000).

Lack of effective communication on the part of educators can potentially contribute to a lack of engagement in learning and academic success, and can trigger emotional processes that heighten learners’ anger, anxiety, shame, hopelessness and boredom. This is often associated with lower academic achievement, diminished self-concept and the perception of

educator-learner relationships as less supportive (Mazer et al., 2014). This is a concern raised mainly for high-risk communities in South Africa, where the prevalence of school dropouts is high (Louw & Eigelaar-Meets, 2011; Petersen et al., 2010).

To summarise, the three abovementioned subthemes (listening/paying attention, listening to learners' views and good communication) indicate the importance of the link between good communication skills and the exercise of respect in educator-learner relationships. The experience of respectful communication encourages learners to be discursively autonomous, which is associated with a sense of self-respect and dignity, and it is an integral part of adolescents' identity development. This, in turn, must be respected rather than restricted. Moreover, being able to communicate effectively is a key criterion for gaining employment and succeeding in the workplace (Hargie, 2011; Smart & Featheringham, 2006).

Obeying educators/school rules

Participants expressed that the act of obeying educators and classroom rules represents another example of respectful behaviour: *"I show respect by obeying the rules of the classroom and by doing what is ask for by teachers"* (P6/4). In line with this, Dillon (2007) identifies obeying as a part of respectful behaviour. For many educators it is of great importance that learners demonstrate respectful behaviour with respect to school rules as the act of obeying such rules demonstrates that learners respect their school environment and the people that are part of this environment, including their educators (Hammett & Staeheli, 2011; Western Cape Educational Department, 2007). However, interestingly, learners highlighted the importance of their educators also following the rules. By doing so, educators

set a good example for learners. One participant mentioned that when educators break the rules, there is a greater likelihood that learners would start breaking the rules too: *“Class rules are agreement, so now the class rules are not only to apply to the learners or should be applied by the learners, the teachers must also apply the rules. For example, if the teacher said the rule says they must be no phones. They must be no phones being answered during the session time you see, that’s the rule. Now we find teachers breaking the rule. If you, as my mother are breaking the rules in the house, then I see you as my inspiration and I also want to break the rule”* (GRI, P2/1). In light of that, given that educators function as role-models within the classroom setup, it is of cardinal importance that they set the example when it comes to good behaviour. This serves to inspire learners and could provide them with the tools to function effectively within the framework of rules and responsibility in the learning/school environment (Sonn, 2005; The Western Cape Educational Department, 2007; Wood & Webb, 2008). This is supported by Van Schalkwyk and Wissing (2010). Participants (secondary school learners) emphasized the importance of educators being good role models in the school environment. The authors define being a good role model as “a person who sets a good example for others”.

Good manners (being helpful, polite, kind, greeting others, saying thank you/please, not yelling)

Participants defined respectful behaviour as well-mannered behaviour. In terms of the behaviour of learners towards educators, this entailed: **being polite** (*“My understanding of respect is for human beings to be polite with each other”* (P3/1)), **greeting each other** (*“When I see them [educators] I greet them to show a sign that I do respect them [educators]”* (P7/4)) and **being helpful** (*“I show my respect towards him by doing things*

like sweeping the class or helping in the lab” (P24/4)). In terms of educators’ behaviour towards learners, well-mannered behaviour is reflected in **saying thank you** (“*My teacher respects me is when she always uses the key words thank you and please” (P4/3)*), **greeting students** (“*When the teacher greets me back, that is respect to me” (P14/3)*) and **displaying a positive manner** (“*Respect is when the teacher is nice to me and when the teacher does not yell at me” (P5/3)*).

Previous research clearly demonstrates the importance of well-mannered behaviour in schools. Dillon (2007) states for example that one way of respecting others is through everyday politeness and courtesies. Examples include saying ‘please’, ‘thank you’, and ‘I am sorry’. Jones (2002) argues that “people show respect to others by being polite and treating others with courtesy”. This is supported by Mehta (1997) who indicate that the meaning of respect is shifting from obedience and subservience to courtesy and kindness. To the contrary, learners also had variety of views on what they considered to be disrespectful behaviour in the classrooms. Disrespectful behaviour in terms of educators’ behaviour towards learners was identified as: ‘yelling at learners’; ‘picking on and ridiculing learners in front of others’; ‘throwing assignments at students’; ‘skelling’; ‘taking stress out on learners (*“Some teachers would shout at the learners for every little thing they do and taking out their stress on the learners, without taking note that they are doing it” (P3/5)*) and not returning learners’ greetings. Western Cape Educational Department (2007) emphasizes the importance of educators displaying positive manners as such skills are needed in order to improve interpersonal relationships in the classroom. It is important to mention that the current results show that learners who had negative encounters with their educators were more likely to withdraw from their learning process: “*If the teacher is going to press a child down...like...if the teacher is going to pick on that one learner the learner is going to feel demotivated”*

(GR1, P1/2). This is supported by the literature which emphasizes that educators must build a nurturing environment by eliminating all sarcasm and put-downs as such behaviour is often associated with poor classroom performance (Mazer et al., 1014; Witmer, 2005). According to Goodman (2009), learners attach themselves to those educators who are 'nice'. Among other things, young learners define 'being nice' as being soft spoken, giving and affectionate. However, such views change with age. Older learners are more discerning in that they stop looking for the most obvious aspects of 'being nice' and start looking for more personally gratifying qualities (Goodman, 2009).

Interestingly, participants' responses clearly indicated that well-mannered behaviour was expected from both parties, educators as well as learners. Previous research supports this finding. According to previous studies, caring interpersonal relationships between learners and educators at schools are associated with learners gaining positive academic attitudes, values and increased satisfaction with school, and in educators gaining more control of unwanted behaviour in the classroom and satisfaction in their work (Kitching, 2010; Morrison, Brown, D'incay, O'Farrel & Furlong, 2006). For educators, such an association is critical as many educators in secondary schools struggle with discipline in their classrooms as well as their own workload (LeeFon, Jacobs, Roux & Wet, 2013). It is therefore important to bring to their awareness that if they build relationships with their learners based on mutual respect they can be more likely to gain satisfaction from their work and classroom that is more manageable. Such achievement would result in gaining more space for learning or having fun, which is also an important but often forgotten aspect of relating (Frenzel, Goets, Ludtke, Pekrun & Sutton, 2009).

Academic responsibility

Some learners referred to respectful behaviour as doing and completing their school work and handing in assignments on time. One student noted: “*Learners should do their work that is given by the teacher and submitting task on due date*” (GR2, P2/2). This finding is important to recognize and highlight as it indicates that the learners themselves are aware of their responsibilities and obligations towards the learning process, which should be successfully fulfilled (Western Cape Educational Department, 2007). Greenberg et al. (2003) note that, while there are individual differences (abilities, motivation, presence/absence of mental disorders) which influence learners’ attitudes towards the learning process, such attitudes can be positively enhanced by educators through the display of respectful behaviour and attitudes towards their learners. This is supported by Witmer (2005) and Mitra (2009) who emphasize educator-learner relationships which can, if positive, improve learners’ academic performance and outcomes. This finding is particularly important in the context of a high-risk community where there is a high incidence of school drop-outs after the age of sixteen, or Grade 10 (Petersen et al., 2010). In most cases, the participants of this study (namely Grade 12 learners) are the first in their families to complete their school education. Therefore, in this context, the respectful behaviour of educators towards learners is of particular importance in order for learners to achieve better academic results and for the prevention of school dropouts.

Receiving support and praise from the educators

Receiving support was noted as an example of respectful behaviour that learners would like to see from their educators: “*Respect is when she/he [educator] helps me with something I don’t understand*” (P5/3). Moreover, learners noted that they would appreciate it if all

questions would be answered during class, as some questions raised by learners were ignored, while others were answered, often in an arbitrary fashion. As one learner mentioned: *“It makes me feel sad when I ask for explanation then the teacher don’t respond but then the other student ask and the teacher explains”* (P14/2). The inconsistency was puzzling for the learner and was considered unfair. According to De Vita (2000), it is important for the educator to stress that there is no question that is irrelevant or annoying. Furthermore, some participants indicated that when an educator told them that they had done something wrong, they would appreciate it if the educator would find the time to explain how to do it right in order for them to complete the task at hand successfully. For example, one student mentioned: *“If I do something wrong they [educators] would correct me and tell me how I am supposed to complete a task or activity”* (P3/3). The response clearly indicates that for some learners it is important to understand the learning material, which would allow them to complete their work successfully. Finishing tasks successfully helps learners to gain a sense of mastery, which is an important tool in Gestalt therapy. Experience of mastery strengthens learners’ belief in themselves and contributes to a positive self-concept and a sense of well-being (Oaklander, 2006). This is particularly important for children living in dysfunctional families and high-risk communities as they who often ‘grow up too fast’ and experience very little mastery experiences, which is essential for healthy development (Oaklander, 2006; Blom, 2004). This is supported by Louw, Bayat and Eigelaar-Meets (2011) who investigated the situation of weak performing schools in the Western Cape. They found that the supporting role of educators in these situations is of crucial importance given the fact that most parents in such communities do not have the know-how to assist their children in their academic careers.

The current qualitative analyses further revealed that the learners associated respectful behaviour with being motivated: *“When I experience I am being respected by my teachers is when I maybe did extremely well in a test or an assignment and then they would tell me and I would feel proud and respected”* (P7/3). According to social learning theory, behaviour is in large part a consequence of the reinforcement or lack of reinforcement that follows an action that is associated with a certain emotion. Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak and Hawkins (2004) state that behaviour strengthened through positive reward (positive reinforcement) affects an individual’s motivation to engage in similar behaviour in the future. Learners who become more self-aware and confident about their learning abilities, acquired through constant positive encouragement and motivation from educators, can manage their learning better by motivating themselves to study harder, set goals, manage their stress levels and organise their approach to work, which might eventually lead to improved academic performance (Greenberg et al., 2003; Johnson and Lazarus, 2008). This is supported by Van Schalkwyk and Wissing (2010) who argue that through praise, educators empower learners to develop their competencies. In light of that, Greenberg et al. (2003) emphasize the importance of looking at students individually as their abilities and motivation for learning vary widely and each student would benefit from being given support according to their own specific and individual needs.

Finally, it is important to note that according to some of the participants, learners would appreciate it if educators would listen to their explanations instead of shouting and accusing them. For example, educators might reprimand learners for not having their homework done or not wearing a school uniform when this behaviour can often be ascribed to poor family circumstances rather than any intention to display negative behaviour. In light of that, Bailey (2012) suggests that in order to be an effective educator, it is of critical importance to

understand a learner's background in an attempt at being more empathetic towards the learner's family circumstances. By doing so, Bailey argues, educators can uplift learners' negative attitude towards their educators.

In summary, well-intentioned behaviour as perceived by learners comes in many forms. What mainly stands out is that well-intentioned behaviour should be displayed by both parties, learners as well as educators. In this sense, it is of a great importance that educators become role-models for their learners, as learners are more likely to display positive behaviour if educators do so in the first place. Displaying well-intentioned behaviour towards others can enhance learners' sense of self-respect and dignity, assist in developing identity, promote academic achievement, improve behaviour, provide opportunities for the experience of mastery, positively influence the perception of educators' social support, and enhance effectiveness and inter-personal relationships. As a result, it assists in creating nurturing and enabling environments. In contrast, the absence of well-intentioned behaviour can initiate development of learners' negative relational attitudes towards their educators, resulting in learners withdrawing from the learning process and refusing/refraining from participating in class. Such negative attitudes and behaviours can trigger emotions that can influence perceptions about learners' self-concept and abilities and their overall view on schooling. To conclude, it is imperative to promote respectful attitudes and behaviours in educators towards learners as this can assist in creating enabling school communities that enhance learners' sense of worth. In high-risk communities this may assist learners in completing their education and might help prevent school dropouts.

Positive relationships

Building a relationship

Current results indicate that learners view the act of building personal relationships with their educators as another aspect of respectful behaviour. One participant suggested: *”Respect can be improved if a teacher and the learner had an outside school relationship, for example doing activities and getting to know each other in a personal way and not just knowing each other at school”*(P7/7). This is supported by Sonn (2005), who emphasizes the importance of such relationships. He further argues that if educators build relationships with their learners outside of the classroom, for example during sport, drama or other activities, learners know that educators are interested in them as people and not just in teaching them a particular subject.

“Parent-child” relationships

Several participants compared the ideal educator-learner relationship as being similar to the relationship between a parent and a child: *“All learners to bond with them [educators] like with their own parents and teachers love learners like their own children”* (P11/2). This is very interesting and represents a valuable finding, especially in the context of learners living in high-risk communities. Such communities are often associated with significant challenges, for example high crime rates, unemployment, gangsterism and substance abuse. Due to these stressors, learners often have to cope with unsupportive parents and dysfunctional families (Theron, 2007). Challenges such as having to cope with unsupportive parents and dysfunctional families, and the toxic environment in general, can be associated with learners’ desire to build relationships with their educators on a more personal level. However, this is only an assumption as the current research did not look into the personal

family circumstances of each learner. This was a conscious decision by the researcher in an attempt to avoid raising any issues that could have been emotionally painful and that could possibly have required additional therapeutic intervention. By previous research it has been found that if learners perceive their relationship with their educators as positive, their behaviour, academic attitudes and pace of progress improve, while their sense of school connectedness increases (Johnson & Lazarus, 2008; McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010; Mitra 2009; Morrison et al., 2006; Tian, Han & Huebner 2014; Witmer, 2005).

School connectedness can lower the likelihood of health-risk behaviour, while enhancing positive educational outcomes and learners' self-esteem, which in turn enhances positive well-being (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010). To summarise, it is important to promote positive spirals of educator-learner relationships in order to enhance learners' psychosocial well-being and strengthen their resilience in the face of hardship as opposed to perpetuating sick or negative cycles, which could negatively affect well-being (Bird & Markle, 2012; Giesinger 2012; Goodman, 2009; Hammett & Staeheli, 2011; Kitching, 2010; LeeFon et al., 2013; McLaughlin & Clarke; 2010; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010; Pring, 2012; Schalkwyk & Wissing 2013).

Trust and confidentiality

The current findings indicate that learners value educators in whom they can confide and who endeavour to keep their disclosures confidential. Such educators were considered as trustworthy and valued by the learners. This is captured in the following comment: *“The teacher should be trustworthy because learners bring their personal issues to them so they should not expose those thing to other learners” (GR1, P1/1)*. From this finding it is evident

that learners had the need to disclose their private matters to their educators and therefore it is important that educators make themselves available, approachable and trustworthy. Johnson and Lazarus (2008) find that while educators were often available to their learners, learners found it hard to trust them and to open up to them. Some students were even afraid that their educators would judge them. Therefore, all three of the above mentioned components are of paramount importance. Learners coming from disadvantaged backgrounds have little opportunity to open up and trust others (Mitra, 2009). Wissing and Temane (2014) argue that people regain strength by sharing their painful experiences. Therefore it is important that educators are willing to listen to such stories and are able to show understanding.

Receiving feedback in regards to negative behaviour discretely, instead of in front of the whole class, was highly appreciated by learners and viewed as one of many aspects of respectful behaviour. This is captured by the following comment: *“Respect is when the teacher warns me from doing wrong things like bunking class, staying absent too often, but only when the teacher does this privately not in the class with students, this is what you call respect” (P14/3)*. This comment demonstrates that this particular learner appreciated the educator’s concern and that he/she did not perceive it in a negative way, for example as criticism or command. This is associated with learners trusting and building relationships with their educator. When this climate is built on trust and a relationship is established, mutual respect and the willingness to take responsibility for one’s own actions can be achieved more easily (Western Cape Education Department, 2007). To conclude, as Morrison et al. (2006) state, supportive relationships at school enhance positive academic attitudes among learners which could in turn lead to greater satisfaction with school.

It was evident that learners wished to have positive relationships with educators who are approachable, who they can disclose to and who they can trust in regards to their private matters. This suggests that, even though adolescents are seeking independence (Giesinger 2012; Goodman, 2009; Gorard, 2012; Mitra, 2009; Morrison et al., 2006), they still have the need to build relationships with adults. From this finding the researcher concluded that adults must be sensitive in attempting to find the right balance between allowing learners to be independent and giving them the right amount of support.

Mutual, consistent and fair

Respect is a two way street

With the exception of one participant, it was reported that respect between learners and educators should be mutual in order to develop a genuine respectful educator-learner relationship: *“The teacher-learner relationship is that teacher respects the learner and the same goes for the learner, respecting the teacher” (GR1, P1/1)*. Seeing respect as a mutual enterprise in educator-learner relationships is supported by previous empirical as well as philosophical research (Hemmings, 2003; Mitra, 2009; Pring, 2012; Sonn, 2005; Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010; Western Cape Education Department, 2007; White, 2008). O’Grady et al. (2011) identify this as ‘interpersonal respect’ as opposed to ‘respect to the role of the teacher’. The current findings clearly demonstrate that participants were aware of respecting their educators and did not perceive respect as being a one way street from educators towards learners. However, it is noteworthy that learners found it difficult to exhibit respectful behaviour towards educators who were not in turn respectful towards them: *“Teachers have to understand that we are children and we need respect too, like them*

[educators] but somehow respect becomes difficult when the teacher does not respect students. The way they [educators] talk to the students, they [educators] are impossible to accept” (GR1, P3/3). Such a statement supports Dillon’s (2007) view on respect. Dillon defines respect as a form of regard: a mode of attention to and perception and acknowledgment of a person’s right to be respected.

For some participants it was important to stress that educators should initiate respect first: *“I think the teacher should earn respect first because it is elder and learner is a child, you can’t respect someone that doesn’t give respect to you” (GR2 P1/2).* This is critical to note as educators often expect respect from their learners without considering what implication their behaviour has on learners. Van der Merwe (2004) emphasises that a person who wants to be respected needs to show respect, but argues that in relationships with learners, the responsibility to initiate and maintain respect rests with the adults.

Respect must be earned

Seeing respect as mutual entity in relationships with their educators was also associated with the notion that respect must be deserved or earned: *“My understanding of respect is that it should be earned, it is a give and take” (P12/1).* Another learner suggested that by doing his work, he would earn educators’ respect: *“When the teacher is giving you tasks or homework to complete and you do it, you will earn the respect of your teacher” (P1/4).* It is in agreement with previous literature. For example, Sonn (2005) argues that educators can no longer expect respect because of their ‘teacher-role’, but that they must earn respect by what they do. This is supported by Goodman (2009) who stresses that respect is like learning, it

cannot be commandeered; one must possess and exhibit the qualities and values that deserve to be respected.

Respect is consistent over time

When analysing data, it was found that many participants' responses repeatedly included claims such as: *"At all times"*, *"Every day"*, *"Always"*, *"The minute I walk into the classroom"*, *"whenever you go"*. It is therefore concluded that learners value consistency. Educators should express respect continuously and consistently, on a daily basis, rather than only on rare occasions. Learners need constant experiences of respect and therefore respectful behaviour should become a part of daily educator-learner interactions (Giesinger, 2012). This is supported by Jones (2002), who states that respect is something that young people develop over time as it has to be earned through actions.

Respect is treating everyone equally, fairly and with acceptance

Fairness

Several learners mentioned that educators should treat everyone fairly by doling out punishment for misbehaviour in a consistent manner. Participants mentioned that they were often punished or reprimanded for certain behaviours, while other students exhibiting the same misconduct were not: *"What makes the students disrespectful is the unfairness of teachers, if one student got punishment for certain thing that must happen for everyone"* (P14/7). Sonn (2005) emphasizes the importance of learners seeing that justice is done fairly and that consequences for certain types of misbehaviour are applied in a consistent manner.

Previous national and international empirical findings reported the prevalence of unfair behaviour and favouritism, which is supported by the current findings (Goodman, 2009; Gorard, 2012; Kitching, Roos & Ferreira, 2011). In such cases, favouritism was associated with learners forming negative attitudes towards their educators. Additionally, participants suggested that before an educator blames someone for a negative behaviour or attempts to resolve a dispute among learners, he/she should listen to everyone's side of the story rather than jump to conclusions: *"Teachers should always give us a chance to explain our side of the story"* (P12/7). In light of this finding, Goodman (2009) argues that students are more likely to like educators who are fair in response to social disputes. It is important to give everyone a fair chance and to not let personal feelings influence decisions about others. Only then will learners gain the feeling that justice has been met (Wissing & Temane, 2014). If a learner feels that he/she was not treated fairly he/she is more likely to withdraw from the relationship with his/her educator: *"When it [not being treated fairly] happens that the learner is being chased out, then the learner when he or she comes back to school, he or she will look at the teacher in a different eye. He or she will start to disrespect the teacher, then what will happen next? There is not good relationship between the teacher and the learner"* (GR2, P1/1). Goodman (2009) stresses that a learner is entitled to withhold respect in cases where injustice is inconsistent and arbitrary and therefore leads to favouritism. Gorard (2012) further argues that experiencing unfairness can impair the learning process, which could have a negative impact on learners' academic performance and could harm their self-esteem. However, it is important to mention that few participants reported that they were not being treated equally or fairly due to their race: *"The school is not treating the learners with same way (inequality) between Xhosa learners and Afrikaans speaking (persons of colour)"* (P8/2). This statement clearly indicates that the learner associates unfairness with racism, or possibly that he misinterpreted unfairness as synonymous with racism. This supports the notion that

learners form opinions/perceptions based on their subjective worldview and experience, and that these opinions/perceptions are, by definition, unique to every learner. In other words, while one learner might interpret specific behaviour as a simple case of the educator behaving in an unfair manner, a different learner might interpret the same behaviour as being racist. Therefore, it is important for learners who experience injustice (or who feel that they have been treated unfairly) to take part in open discussions with educators in order to resolve the issue and to bring about mutual understanding (Dillon, 2007). By doing so, learners and educators communicate respect, which in turn leads to greater social coherence (Kitching et al., 2012; Wissing & Temane, 2014). However, if the disputes stay unresolved and educators' views unexplained, there exists the possibility that the development of educator-learner relationship will be hindered (Kitching et al., 2012). It is important to note that experiencing fairness assists learners in acquiring moral values, an important ingredient in the building of a democratic society (Seligman, 2002; Sonn, 2005).

Acceptance

The wish to be treated equally was associated with student's perception of unconditional acceptance despite of their religion, background and/or race: "*We are different people with different ideas and religions we need to accept each other and understand our differences*" (P12/1). According to De Cremer and Mulder (2007), respectful behaviour entails the act of communicating to other people that they are accepted and that they belong. Wissing and Temane (2014) describe social acceptance as a facet of social well-being, characterised by acknowledgement of others and general acceptance of people. Respectful engagement in a secondary school context is associated with unconditional acceptance of people as equal despite their dispositions, as well as consideration or acknowledgement of

their individual needs (Kitching et al., 2012; Nelson-Jones, 2006). In this case, Kitching et al., (2012) argue that we must accept the person as a holistic being without reducing such acceptance to only a certain aspect of a learner's life; for example, "I will accept you only as long as you perform academically."

To summarise the notion that respect must be mutual, consistent and fair, it is once again highlighted that respect should entail the practice of 'interpersonal respect' in the classroom as opposed to practising 'respect to the role of the educator'. Interpersonal respect is something that cannot be commandeered; one must possess the qualities and values that deserve to be respected. Therefore, interpersonal respect must become an ever-present and consistent part of daily teaching practice. Furthermore, practising respect is something that young people develop over time. They often decide to genuinely respect someone only if, in their subjective perceptions and evaluations, the person is worthy of respect. In other words, learners are more likely to respect educators who demonstrate respectful behaviour towards them in the first place. In relation to fairness, participants highlighted the importance of being treated fairly in regards to misconduct and their racial and religious backgrounds. If learners feel that they have been treated unfairly, they are more likely to withdraw from the learning process, as well as the relationship with their educator. However, the current findings indicate that fostering a sense of fairness and justice in multicultural classrooms is complex and can only be achieved if educators handle such issues with a high degree of sensitivity. One possible strategy entails the promotion of open discussion, which could serve to resolve disputes regarding fairness and racial discrimination.

In summary, the themes identified and described in this section can be characterized as collective, yet subjective, learners' perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships in

a secondary school within a high-risk community in South Africa. The findings are supported by existing literature and therefore hold significant value for educators, researchers and policy makers.

Conclusions

Based on the findings obtained, it can be concluded that learners within a high-risk context perceive respect in educator-learner relationships as a wide variety of behavioural acts and emotional attitudes. The results clearly indicate that respectful interaction between educators and learners must be explored within context, as perceptions of respectful behaviour are based on personal lived experiences. Respect is perceived as well-intentioned behaviour (using good communication skills, being helpful and polite to each other, etc.) and building relationships based on trust, understanding and supportiveness. It is therefore derived that learners thrive on positive social interaction with their educators. However, such interaction must be based on mutual respect, as learners are less likely to exhibit respectful behaviour towards their educators if their educators do not respect them. Some educators view mutual respect as a threat to their authoritative status and are unwilling to build relationships with their learners. However, the results of this study indicate the contrary – that if educators prioritise building relationships based on respect with their learners, they are more likely to gain a classroom full of learners who will flourish personally, socially and academically. Quality of social interaction is necessary alongside the academic to fuel personal and collective well-being.

The strength of this research is that the results are derived from learners' perspectives as informed by real-life examples and scenarios. These perspectives are gained by developing

a subjective understanding of their unique experiences in the educator-learner relationship. And therefore, without listening to those voices, research becomes meaningless.

Limitations of the study

The main limitation of the research is small sample size, which, when considered from a statistical point of view, cannot be taken as a representative sample of the entire population of secondary school learners.

Furthermore, most research mentioned originates in developed countries such as the USA and the United Kingdom, while only limited research has been conducted in developing countries. Due to the uneven distribution of resources, differences in living conditions and significant cultural differences in these countries, it is difficult to generalise findings. This limitation could be linked to the Western approach in understanding relating and respect, which could limit the non-western aspects of relational living and interacting with specific reference to respect. The researcher's openness to respect and the participants' cultural or ethnic understanding of respectful engagement could be a significant opportunity for future research.

Recommendations

The positive psychology perspective has been growing over the last three decades and concentrates mainly on the well-being and enhancement of individuals and communities. When concentrating on well-being, it is important to emphasize that lived experiences are culturally and contextually influenced. The importance of context and culture is emphasized

by South African researchers in particular, who are at the forefront of international research in this field (Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2013; Wissing & Temane, 2008). However, there remains much to be done and it is therefore suggested that this domain presents fertile ground for further research. Due to the growing number of multicultural classrooms and the different views on respect, it is important to gain a better understanding of how learners in secondary school communities perceive respect in educator-learner relationships, particularly within the context of the various cultures and different provinces of South Africa.

Concluding remarks

Ultimately, Alexander the Great honoured his teacher as the one who showed him the way to live well and provided him with the tools to achieve greatness. This research added the voices of the male and female adolescents who represent the future of South Africa. These voices must be encouraged to speak up and must be heard, as the collective wisdom and insights gained from their own unique lived experiences enrich scientific understanding. It is important to nurture educator-learner relationships based on respect as they provide the key mechanism in opening doors towards enabling spaces.

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Table 1

Respect in Educator-Learner Relationships

Main themes	Subthemes	Disrespectful behaviour
Well-intentioned behaviour	1) Listening/paying attention	<u>Learners:</u> back-chatting
	2) Good communication	swearing, calling educators
	3) Obeying educators/school	names, eating in class,
	4) Good manners (being helpful, polite, kind, greeting others, saying thank you/please, not yelling	teachers, using phones, stealing from educators
	5) Academic responsibility	<u>Educators:</u> yelling at learners, taking stress on learners, not
	6) Receiving support and praise from educators	greeting learners back, picking on learners
Positive relationships	1) Building a relationship 2) Parent-child relationship 3) Trust and confidentiality	
Mutual, consistent and fair	1) Respect is a two way street 2) Respect must be earned 3) Respect is consistent over time 4) Respect is treating everyone equally, fairly and to accept everyone	

SECTION C

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND REFLECTION

3.1 Introduction

This section provides a summary of the research problem and literature review, followed by a summary of the research findings indicating whether the research aim was adequately met, the research question answered and identified literature gap filled. The researcher further presents conclusions and recommendations of the study. Limitations of the study will then be discussed, followed by the researcher's reflection on the research project as a whole. This section will then end with a general conclusion.

3.2. Summary of the research problem and literature review

From a positive psychology perspective, the last few decades have seen continuous growth in research emphasising well-being in school communities. Schools should be viewed as spaces that enable life success, as opposed to mere learning environments aimed at academic success. Well-being is often associated with relational well-being and building, enhancing and maintaining positive relationships at schools. Along with academic performance, relational well-being is vital to learners' current and future development. Such social well-being may, in turn, affect psychological well-being positively, as these two are interrelated and influence each other greatly.

In this context, positive educator-learner relationships must be based on mutual respect, as it may provide a vast array of benefits to secondary school learners' well-being and academic performance. However, some educators perceive mutual respect in relation to their learners as a threat; in other words, they expect respectful behaviour from their learners without considering their own attitudes and actions towards the learners. Educators do not

realise that the ‘unilateral respect’ they demand (you have to respect me, because I am the authoritative figure) could impair relational well-being between themselves and their learners, which may lead to further impairment of the psychological well-being of both parties. However, the experience of mutual respect in educator-learner relationships could have a positive impact on learners’ achievements, feelings of school connectedness, self-respect, self-esteem, sense of autonomy, growth of identity and resilience. All of these are interconnected and associated with effective coping skills, which allow learners to achieve higher levels of well-being.

Moreover, positive interpersonal connections between educators and learners based on mutual respect are valuable tools for managing effective discipline in classrooms, which means that educators also benefit from building and maintaining good relationships with their learners. Positive educator-learner relationships based on mutual respect are highly relevant for secondary school learners living in high-risk communities, where support and resources for enhancing and developing their psychosocial well-being is limited. Such learners spend most of their waking hours at school, which is often the only safe and supportive environment they have. Due to the environmental stressors they have to deal with in such communities, learners often bring their problems to school, and therefore the educators’ roles are expanding beyond only delivering academic results.

Consequently, it can be summarised that it is imperative to bring the personal into the educational environment by building, enhancing and maintaining respectful educator-learner relationships based on mutual respect. The enhancement of respectful educator-learner relationships at schools as enabling environments has been greatly encouraged by a vast number of researchers. However, educator-learner relationships have specifically been

neglected in regard to learners' perceptions of respect as experienced from and given to educators. Due to the identified gap in the literature, the main aim of this study was to explore and gain better understanding of learners' perceptions of respect in learner-educator relationships in a secondary school community within a high-risk environment. Thus, the following research question emerged: How do learners perceive respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community in South Africa?

The researcher used several forms of literature in the qualitative study: firstly, theoretical literature in order to gain insights and information from existing literature as context knowledge; and secondly, empirical literature to gain understanding from field studies. A review of combined theoretical and empirical literature assisted to contextualise, compare and generalise various research findings (Delpont, Fouche & Schruik, 2011). In order to place the literature in the right context related to the topic investigated, the researcher started broadly by finding the core definitions of psycho-social (relational) well-being and respect, and then narrowed it down to mutual educator-learner respectful, relational well-being at secondary school communities. It was also important to look at the developmental psychology in order to gain insights into how learners (adolescents) in secondary school communities develop and how such development influences themselves and others. Even though there is a growing awareness of concentrating on well-being in secondary school communities, field studies that address such topics and bring practical solutions to high-risk communities are scarce. Most research originated from developed countries such as the USA and United Kingdom, while limited research originated from high-risk communities.

In summary, the literature review indicated how complex it is to study the phenomena of respect in educator-learner relationships at secondary school communities. Overall,

respect has many definitions, but not all of the researchers demonstrate how respect can be practically applied in real-life situations. Furthermore, taking the ecological perspective into consideration means that every school context is different, that interactions between learners and educators vary in every classroom, as do the school climate, context of each individual, and the school community itself; therefore to generalise all findings can give misleading information.

3.3 Summary of the research procedure

The researcher followed a variety of qualitative research methods, including semi-structured interviews consisting of open-ended questions, and a World Café activity to gather the data to address the research problem and fulfil the aim of the research. The data were gathered in two phases. In the first phase, written assignments with open-ended questions were completed by all participants. In the second phase, the World Café technique was applied (Schieffer, Isaacs, & Gyllenpalm, 2004). The World Café technique and open-ended questions allowed participants to discuss their own experiences regarding the topic under investigation. The second phase was especially valuable, as the World Café technique gave the participants opportunities to share and discuss their views and opinions in a non-threatening environment. Participating in both phases ensured the richness of the data, which provided strength to the research. Since a wide variety of learners' perceptions on respect were gained, it is clear the World Café technique was the right choice. The validity of such analysis of data and findings were strengthened by collecting data in two phases, dependent and yet independent of each other - dependent in the sense that both phases investigated the reached topic, and independent in the sense that the data were gathered in different times using different data collection methods.

Thematic analysis was used to transform data into meaningful information, and to identify themes within the data that articulate the perceptions that the learners hold regarding their interactions with their educators with particular reference to their understanding of respect. The thematic analysis was inductive in nature, as the researcher approached the data without a theoretically informed coding frame. Processing the data in this way enabled the researcher to capture significant, generalised units of meaning about the learners' perceptions of their interactions with their educators in regard to respect. In summary, the methodology used was relevant, since it yielded rich results.

3.4 Summary of findings

The aim of the study was to qualitatively explore and describe, through the use of phenomenological research design, learners' perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community within a high-risk environment in the South African context. The research question was: How do learners perceive respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community? The data analysed delivered fruitful insight into how learners perceive respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community, and therefore it can be concluded that the research question has been answered and research aim achieved. Furthermore, the research findings indicated that the identified gap in research has been filled. The gap in research has been identified as very limited research regarding respect in educator-learner relationships in educational settings. More specifically, there is a limited amount of research concentrating on learners' perceptions of respect received from and given to educators.

The findings revealed three main themes, and each theme includes several subthemes. Firstly, respect is well-intended behaviour, with the subthemes being listening and paying attention; good communication; obeying educators and school rules; good manners such as being helpful, polite and kind, and greeting others; saying thank you and please; academic responsibility; and receiving support and praise from educators. Secondly, respect is positive relationships, with the subthemes being building a relationship; parent-child relationship; as well as trust and confidentiality. Thirdly, respect is consistent, fair and mutual, with the subthemes being respect as a two-way street; respect as something to be earned; respect as something that is consistent over time; and respect that means treating everyone equally, fairly and with acceptance. It can be summarised that all participants' responses illustrated a collective yet subjective learners' perception of respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community within a high risk community in South Africa.

From gaining students' insights on how they perceive respect in educator-learner relationships, two important findings were derived. The first is that respect comes in many forms and in a wide variety of behavioural acts and emotional attitudes. Specifically, respect has been perceived as listening and paying attention; good communication; obeying educators and school rules; good manners such as being helpful, polite and kind, and greeting others; saying thank you and please; academic responsibility; receiving support and praise from educators; building a relationship; parent-child relationship; trust and confidentiality; respect as a two-way street; respect as something to be earned; respect as something that is consistent over time; and respect that means treating everyone equally, fairly and with acceptance. Such findings are in conflict with the existing literature. Several studies concentrating on relational matter in school communities concluded that positive relationships consist of perceived support and caring; fairness; respect; trust; being listened

to; and feeling competent and engaged in decision-making processes (Gomez & Ang, 2007; Gorard, 2012; Greenberg, O'Brien, Zins, Resnik & Elias, 2003; Guess & Bowling, 2014; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008; McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010; Mitra, 2009; Morrison, Brown, D'Incau, O'Farrell & Furlong, 2006; Sonn, 2005; Witmer, 2005). This is just one of the many facets of respectful behaviour, as identified in the current research. Such discrepancy, along with the wide variety of definitions of respect in previous literature, can cause confusion among researchers.

The second finding is that respect is a mutual entity, which was confirmed by fourteen of the fifteen participants. This means that educators and learners must behave respectfully towards each other. However, participants expressed the importance for educators to initiate and maintain respectful behaviour. Participants were less likely to exhibit respectful behaviour towards educators if such expectations have not been met. This is of crucial importance to educators, school management and policy makers. The reason for this is that some educators see mutual respect as a threat that deprives them of their authoritative roles and undermines their status and power. In many instances, educators expect respect from their learners due to their social position as authoritative figures, regardless of their behaviour and attitudes towards their learners. However, as the previous literature indicated, such respect is based on submissiveness and the fear of being rejected, which is more likely, as the current findings indicated, to hinder learners' academic progress and trigger learners' negative relational attitude towards their educators.

Furthermore, it is important to mention that the current findings were supported by the previous literature. What stand out are the benefits respectful engagement in educator-learner relationships can deliver. For instance, letting students express their views results in feelings

of worthiness and autonomy. Effective communication in educator-learner relationships can trigger positive emotions such as enjoyment, hope, pride and relief, which can positively influence engagement in learning, as well as learners' perceptions of their learning environment and educators. Motivation received from educators can help manage learners' learning better by motivating them to study harder, set goals, manage their stress, organise their approaches to work and perform better. Support received from educators enhances positive academic attitudes, which lead to learners' satisfaction with school. Caring interpersonal relationships between learners and educators at schools are associated with learners gaining positive academic attitudes, values and more satisfaction with school, and with educators gaining more satisfaction from their work and more control over unwanted behaviour in the classroom. If students perceive their relationships with their educators as positive, their behaviour, academic attitude, progress and sense of school connectedness improves. School connectedness can lower the likelihood of health-risk behaviour, and enhances positive educational outcomes and learners' self-esteem, which in turn enhances learning and positive well-being. As a result of that, learners' psychosocial well-being can be enhanced and their resilience can be fortified.

Conversely, absence of respectful behaviour or the presence of disrespectful behaviour can have negative consequences for educator-learner relationships and well-being. For instance, educators' poor listening skills can trigger learners' negative relational attitudes towards their educators. Furthermore, educators' sarcasm and put-downs are often associated with poor classroom performance. Lack of communication on the part of educators can contribute to learners' lack of engagement in learning, and hinder their academic success. It can also trigger feelings of anger, anxiety, shame, hopelessness and boredom in learners, which could lead to lower achievement and diminished self-concept in learners, as well as the

perception of educator-learner relationships as unsupportive. Lastly, learners' perceptions of not being treated fairly or equally are associated with withdrawal from the relationships with their educators, which can negatively influence learners' academic performance and self-esteem. Generally, learners who experience negative encounters with their educators are likely to withdraw from the learning process, and their relationships with their educators are likely to deteriorate. All of the above is clearly supported by existing literature, and therefore holds significant value.

3.5 Conclusion

The qualitative investigation delivered two important findings associated with researching respect in high-risk secondary school communities. The first finding is that respect comes in many forms and in a wide variety of behavioural acts and emotional attitudes. The second finding is that respect is a mutual entity. This means that educators and learners must exhibit respect towards each other. However, the participants expressed the importance of educators initiating and maintaining respectful behaviour. Participants were less likely to exhibit respectful behaviour towards educators if such expectations have not been met. This is of key importance, especially within a high-risk community where learners have very little contact with positive role models.

Learners' responses were looked at in a context supported by the previous literature. Overall, many positive aspects of respectful behaviour in educator-learner relationships were identified. For learners, these positive aspects include feelings of worthiness, autonomy, enjoyment, hope, pride and relief. Such positive emotions enhance engagement in learning. Being treated with respect by educators can further uplift learners' attitude towards their

educators. Conversely, when learners experience a lack of respect from their educators, they are more likely to withdraw from the learning process. An impaired learning process can have a negative impact on learners' academic performance, which can trigger negative emotional responses towards others or themselves.

Considering the above, it is imperative that educators, policy makers and researchers emphasise the importance of mutual respectful behaviour in classrooms to help empower learners to achieve well-being and to flourish. Only then can learners be successful in their work environment and private lives, and make a positive contribution to society. It is essential to mention that, even though the researcher emphasised psycho-social and emotional well-being, the academic domain must not be neglected. The participants mentioned that they respect their educators, because they supply knowledge, and as such the relations with educators are of key importance to learners' academic success. Academic success is viewed as the key to unlock future opportunities to flourish, and to avoid negative outcomes like joblessness, being economically inactive, gangsters and youth violence.

In conclusion, it needs to be underlined that the findings must be interpreted from a bio-ecological perspective. The context and cultural conditions under which the current research has been conducted must be taken into account, as respectful encounters are greatly influenced by the environment they are taking place in. Overall, what is considered as respectful by one person or culture may not be considered as respectful by others, and therefore it is important to emphasise that respect is contextually and culturally defined and constructed. This is of great importance within South African society and school communities, considering the country's great cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.

3.6 Reflection

The aim of the study was to qualitatively explore learners' perceptions of respect in learner-educator relationships in a secondary school community within a high-risk environment in the South African context.

During the literature review, it became evident that a positive psychology perspective needed to be applied, as this study focused on the relational well-being of participants living in a high-risk community, but who did not suffer from disorders or diseases. Moreover, it is important to regard adolescents (learners in secondary school communities) as resources to be developed, instead of problems to be managed. However, learners do not live in isolation, but are constantly influencing and being influenced by the environment they live in and their social encounters with others. The researcher therefore took Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory (third phase) into consideration, which supports such views. The context of the study was learners living in a high-risk community in South Africa, more specifically in the Western Cape. Many adolescents living in high-risk communities have to face many challenging stressors. These stressors include unsupportive parents, dysfunctional families, abusive relationships and poverty. Living in such stressful conditions with limited support affect learners' well-being negatively. This means that without intervention strategies, learners' ill-being is more likely to happen, and to persist into adulthood.

In First World countries, adolescents are offered supportive services; however such services are scarce in underprivileged areas in South Africa. Schools, as learning environments, are often associated with the promotion of learners' well-being, and are often the only supportive environment for learners living in high-risk communities. Apart from the

importance of encouraging adolescents towards positive health, there is an added necessity to turn school communities into spaces which will encourage positive developmental changes, and will allow adolescents to thrive and flourish in order to become citizens who will be able to contribute positively to self, family and community in their present as well as adult life. However, this cannot be achieved through the acquisition of academic skills alone, as academic performance itself has little relation to well-being and the experience of fulfilment. Despite the evident significance and positive influence of practising mutual respect in educator-learner relationships, there is not sufficient emphasis in the literature on building and maintaining such relationships in secondary school settings. Therefore the identified gap in the literature was that the educator-learner relationships have specifically been neglected with regard to learners' perceptions of respect received from and given to educators. In the light of this, the current research stressed the importance of looking into how learners perceive respect in educator-learner relationships, in order to gain an understanding of how educator-learner relationships can be enhanced and developed. It is believed that understanding the meaning of respect from a practical point of view is more important than limiting ourselves to theoretical views on respect in education. Lastly, it is of crucial importance to pay attention to learners' views regarding respect and the educator-learner relationships, since the learning environment is never solely about the fulfilments of school curricula. This was a great strength of this research, namely the bottom-up approach, versus the top-down approach where the learners' perceptions are mostly represented by adults.

To conclude, the qualitative investigation appeared to be successful in terms of ensuring that the specific aims and objectives of the research were achieved. The general aim of the study was to qualitatively, through the use of phenomenological research design, gather data, that would ultimately provide a deeper or richer understanding of the

participants' shared experiences of respect in educator-learner relationships. The data gathered demonstrated that the World Café technique for data gathering was the right choice. The validity of such analysis of data and findings was strengthened by collecting data in two phases, dependent on yet independent of each other. Overall participants' responses illustrated wide variety of collective yet subjective learners' perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships in a secondary school community within the high risk community in South Africa. It is therefore concluded that the literature gap identified has been filled.

Mutual respect is a social mechanism of healthy relating and interacting which, if positive, encourages personal and collective well-being, and if negative, hinders psychological and collective well-being. When applied to the school environment, it means that the role of an educator is expanding beyond only delivering academic results. This comprises the key role of relational functioning and psychological well-being, which can be enhanced through positive social interactions, based on respect, between educators and learners.

3.7 Recommendations

3.7.1 Recommendations for school communities

Defining what learners perceive as respectful behaviour in educator-learner relationships can give educators guidance regarding the exact behaviour they could apply in order to build and maintain good relationships with their learners. New educators have little experience when it comes to managing their classrooms and building relationships with their learners (Clement & Kuperberg, 2008). Therefore it is important to support new educators in

gaining understanding of the importance of developing positive relationships with their learners based on mutual respect, and how this can be achieved (O'Grady, Hinchion, & McNamara, 2011).

As results indicated, respect is context-specific and a subjective term; therefore respect at schools must be applicable in regard to socially-agreed conventions that meet the needs of the specific school culture and climate. Thus it is recommended that educators hold regular meetings with each other to discuss and create their own norms and rules which must be consistent over time. It is then important to establish such agreed conventions, and reinforce them. Educators must make sure that the rules that need to be adhered to are clearly communicated to learners. Preferably, educators should discuss rules and what is regarded as respectful behaviour with their learners in order to ensure clarity and understanding. It is important that educators, being the role models, follow the agreed norms and rules as well. Practising respectful behaviour can also be considered as one aspect of intervention strategies, which are needed in school communities (Patel, Flisher, & Nikapota, 2007). In comparison to other intervention strategies, which often require new resources, are costly and therefore short-lived, this strategy allows for a longer period of sustainability, as the only necessary resources are the educators and learners themselves.

3.7.2 Recommendations for parents

Since learners living in high-risk communities are exposed to dysfunctional families and often have parents who did not complete their own school education, special attention should be given to empower learners' parents towards respectful engagement. School and family environments are commonly perceived in research as having great influence on

children. It is therefore of great importance to highlight to parents how respectful behaviour can be beneficial, and to educate them about the importance of practising respect themselves. They must act as role models for their children, and encourage their children to respect adults and others in their community. Schools could develop resources to educate parents about such respectful engagement. This will lead to cooperation between schools and parents, and provide consistency in respectful behaviour practised at the school and the learners' home environment.

3.7.3 Recommendations for policy makers

It is important that school policies allow for and emphasise the creation of an environment where educators and learners can concentrate on interpersonal as well as academic growth (LeeFon, Jacobs, Le Roux, & De Wet, 2012; Soon, 2005).

3.7.4 Recommendations for further research

Learners' views on respect may vary according to age (Dillon, 2007; Goodman 2009) and therefore it is important to replicate studies in relation to different age groups.

In order to fully understand how respect is perceived in educator-learner relationships in secondary school communities, it is important to listen to both voices – educators' as well as learners'. Therefore it is recommended to explore how educators perceive respect in educator-learner relationships in secondary school communities, with specific reference to South Africa's various cultures.

The positive psychology perspective has grown over the last three decades, and concentrates mainly on the well-being of individuals and the whole community. When concentrating on well-being, it is important to emphasise that lived experiences are culturally and contextually influenced. However, the importance of context and culture is missing when looking at positive psychology perspective worldwide, and therefore the South African researchers are leading the international researchers in this domain (Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2013; Wissing & Temane, 2008). It is therefore suggested that researchers should follow suit. Due to the growing number of multicultural classrooms and different views on respect, it is important to gain a deeper understanding of how a variety of cultures and ethnic groups view respect in educator-learner relationships in secondary school communities.

3.8 Limitations to the research

The main limitation of the research was small sample size, which if considered from a statistical point of view, cannot be taken as a representative sample of the whole population of secondary school learners.

The first language of most participants was either IsiXhosa or Afrikaans; however, the research was conducted in their second language, English. Although the research gained sufficient data for fruitful analysis, the researcher wondered whether even richer data could've been gained if the study were conducted in the learners' mother tongues.

The phenomenological field of the researcher always influences how the data is analysed and generalised, and therefore the findings of this study must be seen as one view among many others.

Most of the research mentioned came from developed countries such as the USA and United Kingdom, while only a limited amount of research originated from developing countries. Due to the uneven distribution of resources, as well as different living conditions and cultural differences within those countries, it makes it difficult to generalise all findings.

3.9 Strengths of research

The application of a qualitative phenomenological research design allowed the researcher to explore the ways in which respect is realised through the everyday interactions between learners and educators in the context of a high-risk community (Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2005). The use of the World Café technique facilitated the accumulation of rich, contextualised meanings. These meanings were assembled into themes that revealed commonalities in the learners' perceptions in a community where underperforming schools are prevalent, and respectful relating is scarce.

Besides the limited research which identifies respect in education and the benefits of respectful interaction for all stakeholders in the school community, there is also a scarcity of research regarding learners' perceptions of respect in the educator-learner relationship. The current research stresses the importance of examining what learners perceive as standards of respect from a bottom-up approach, in order to improve and build positive social functioning in secondary school communities. Listening to learners' views is of great value to research, as they allow the researcher to gain insights through meaningful interactions in a real-life context. Ignoring learners' views leads to research that is reductionist instead of achieving a holistic paradigm which takes complex systems into account.

3. 10 General conclusions

To conclude, the findings from the research can be practically utilised for the improvement of educator-learner relationships, which may result in positive change for individuals' personal well-being, as well as for the whole school community. The people of South Africa are well-known for their warm relating and unique social functioning. The continuous enhancement of respectful, relational wealth can contribute immensely to personal and communal well-being. This research gave adolescents, who are part of South Africa's future, the chance to make their voices heard. It is of the utmost importance to listen to these voices, as they understand their own lived experiences best, and can provide insights which can enrich scientific knowledge.

3. 11 References

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SECTION E

ADDENDA

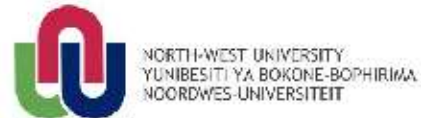
ADDENDA

ADDENDUM A: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Date:
Name and participant's number:
Grade:
Age:
Date of birth:
Gender:

1. Who are the caregivers in your family?
2. What is the composition of your household with whom you live?
3. How many brothers and sisters have you got? How old are they?
4. Please specify your culture. Are you Afrikaans-, isiXhosa-, English-speaking, or any other?
5. Who in your family do you respect the most? And why?
6. Who, in your school, do you respect the most? What is his/her/their role at school and why do you respect him/her/them?

ADDENDUM B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



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ETHICS APPROVAL OF PROJECT

Ethics Committee
Tel: +27 18 299 4850
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Email: Ethics@nwu.ac.za
2012/08/31

This is to certify that the next project was approved by the NWU Ethics Committee:

Project title <i>DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE SUPPORT TO ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE AND WELLBEING FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES IN SOUTH AFRICA: A TRANS-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH.</i> Project leader: Dr. H Grobler & Prof V Roos Ethics number: NWU-00060-12-A1 <u>Legend:</u> S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation Expiry date: 2017/08/30
--

The Ethics Committee would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Committee for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

The formal Ethics approval certificate will be sent to you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Me. Marietjie Halgryn
NWU Ethics Secretariate

ADDENDUM C: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY FROM WESTERN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Directorate: RESEARCH



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REFERENCE: 20140220-25125

ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Ms Lucie Grimova
74 Sea Hare Circle
Atlantic Beach Estate
Melkbosstrand
7441

Dear Ms Lucie Grimova

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF RESPECT IN EDUCATOR-LEARNER RELATIONSHIPS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL CONTEXTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **24 February 2014 till 30 May 2014**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:
**The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

Directorate: Research

DATE: 20 February 2014

**ADDENDUM D: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY FROM THE
PRINCIPAL OF THE SCHOOL**



HINDLE HIGH SCHOOL

Hindle Road
Deft
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Fax: 086 678 5719
E-mail: hindlehigh@wmc.co.za

P.O. Box 10170
Belhar
7507

25. 2. 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

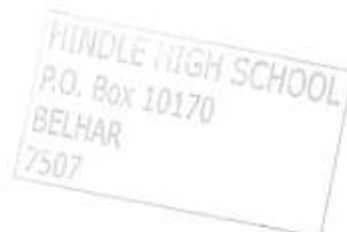
Dear Sir/Madam,

I the undersigned herewith grant Lucie Grimova permission to administer her research at our institution. Her research topic is: Learners' perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships in secondary school communities. Fifteen (15) of our learners were identified for the research. The participants in the study will be drawn from our grade twelve (12) classes. All data will be collected on the school premises in one of our classrooms.

This research project will be of great assistance and value to the management and staff of our institution.

Thanking you

.....
Mr Jansen
Principal



ADDENDUM E: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT



Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies
Corner of East and College Street
Wellington
7655
Tel: 021 8643593
Fax: 021 8642654

25 February 2014

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

A research project of the North-West University

Dear participant,

You are invited to engage in a research project of the North-West University. Before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand why the study is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information.

My name is Lucie Grimova and I have worked as a teacher for the last 10 years. I am in my final year of studying MA Psychology (Magister Artium) and I have decided to conduct my final year research project at Hindle Road West Secondary School – Delft.

The Title of the study is ‘Learners’ perceptions of respect in educator-learner relationships in secondary school contexts in South Africa.’ This study intends to explore learners’ perceptions, that is their understanding and experience of respect in their relationships with their educators. The exploration should contribute to the enhancement of well-being in South African school communities.

You will be involved in two data gathering sessions for approximately 1 or 2 hours at a time. In each group there are going to be 15 students: i) In the first session the students will be asked to complete a written assignment that will include open-ended questions in regards to respect, ii) and, in the second session the students will be discussing their perception of respect in groups. Both sessions will be audio recorded and recording will be transcribed for the purpose of data analysis. Please note that Ethical approval was obtained for the research project which is conducted by the Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies (CCYF), Faculty of Health Sciences at the North-West University's Potchefstroom Campus. Also the school Headmaster has given permission for this study to be conducted.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts when you agree to participate in the study. The results of the study may be published, but your name or any identifying information will not be revealed. The North-West University will maintain confidentiality of all records, material and recordings. You will not be compensated for participation in the study. One of the school members (Dr Izanette Van Schalkwyk) is going to be present during the data gathering. She has been involved in the school community for a while and therefore most of the children know her. It will give you the opportunity to discuss and address any issues that may arise during or after the data gathering. Taking part in the study is voluntary, if you decide you would not like to participate you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason or explanation.

.....
For the participant:

Me as a participant, I declare that I have been informed about the nature of this research project. I have also read and understand the above information that has been given to me. I am aware that the results of and information about the study will be processed anonymously. I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw from participation in this study. In signing this consent form, I am not waiving any legal claims, rights and remedies. I declare that I will participate in this study.

.....
First name of the participant

.....
Surname of the participant

.....
Signature of the participant

.....
Date

ADDENDUM F: ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT



Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies

Corner of East and College Street

Wellington

7655

Tel: 021 8643593

Fax: 021 8642654

18 February 2014

LEARNER'S ASSENT FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

A research project of the North-West University

Dear Learner,

Hereby you are invited to participate in a project of the North-West University which is about promoting well-being in South African schools. More specifically you are invited to participate in a study that is exploring the educator-student relationship in regards to respect. Before I ask you to join, I first, want to tell you about our project. This study intends to explore your (learners) perceptions of respect in your relationships with your educators. The exploration should contribute to enhancement of well-being in South African school communities. The aim of the research is to explore through qualitative phenomenological research how learners perceive respect in educator-learner relationships, in secondary school contexts in South Africa.

You will be asked to attend two group sessions. Each will take for about 1 or 2 hours. I will let you know well in advance when the sessions will be held. In each group there are going to be 15 students. In the first session you will be asked to complete a written assignment that will include open-ended questions in regards to respect. In the second session you will be discussing respect in groups. Both sessions will be audio recorded and recording will be transcribed for the purpose of data analysis. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts when you agree to participate in the project. Although, the discussions will be reported on in a research report, your name will not be mentioned. The North-West University will maintain confidentiality of all records, material and recordings. Please note that the teachers will not have any access to the recordings and your responses will maintain strictly confidential. Please note that if you will need any support during or after the research

it will be available. You will not receive anything in return for your participation in the project. You can decide if you want to participate in the project or not. You are not obliged to participate in this project.

The Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies (CCYF), Faculty of Health Sciences at the North-West University's Potchefstroom Campus has permission to conduct the research. Your parents / legal guardians were informed about the project and they said you can be part of the project if you want to. You can talk this over with them before you decide if you want to participate in the project or not. If you change your mind during the project, you can withdraw at any time. You can ask any questions about the project next time I visit your school or you can phone me on my cell: 0606477257.

Writing your name on this page means that you would like to be in the project and that you know what will happen in the project

.....		
Name and Surname (Participant / Child)	Signature	Date

.....		
Name and Surname (Researcher)	Signature	Date

ADDENDUM G: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE 1ST PHASE OF DATA COLLECTION

Dear participant,

Please answer the following questions. Please note, that there is not such a thing as right or wrong answer.

1. What is your understanding of respect? What words would you use to explain the idea of respect?
2. What is respect for you in the school context? Give me some examples of respectful behaviour in teacher-learner relationships.
3. Provide examples: When do you experience that you are respected by your teachers?
4. Provide examples: When and how do you respect your teachers?
5. Give some examples of disrespectful behaviour you have experienced from your teachers.
6. Give some examples of disrespectful behaviour of students towards the teachers.
7. How, according to you, can respect be improved in teacher-learner relationships at schools?

ADDENDUM H: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE 2ND PHASE OF DATA COLLECTION

Please discuss with your fellow students the questions on the table. Please note that there is not such a thing as wrong answer.

1. What, according to you, is respect in teacher-learner relationships at schools?
Describe, name, give examples.
2. How, according to you, should teachers show/give respect to learners? Describe,
name, give examples.
3. How, according to you, should learners show/give respect to teachers? Describe,
name, give examples.

ADDENDUM I: INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

Journal of Psychology in Africa

Editorial policy

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By submitting to JPA for publication review, the author(s) agree to any originality checks during the peer review and production processes. A manuscript is accepted for publication review on the understanding that it contains nothing that is abusive, defamatory, fraudulent, illegal, libellous, or obscene. During manuscript submission, authors should declare any competing and/or relevant financial interest which might be potential sources of bias or constitute conflict of interest. The submitting author must provide contact information for all co-authors. The author who submits the manuscript accepts responsibility for notifying all co-authors and must provide contact information on the co-authors.

The Editor-in-Chief and Associate Editors will collaborate with Taylor and Francis using the guidelines of the Committee on Publication Ethics [<http://publicationethics.org>] in cases of allegations of research errors; authorship complaints; multiple or concurrent (simultaneous) submission; plagiarism complaints; research results misappropriation; reviewer bias; and undisclosed conflicts of interest.

Manuscripts

Manuscripts should be submitted in English. The manuscripts should be typewritten and double-spaced, with wide margins, using one side of the page only. Manuscripts should conform to the publication guidelines of the latest edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) publication manual of instructions for authors.

Submission

Manuscripts should be submitted to the Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Psychology in Africa, Elias Mpofu, PhD., DEd, CRC, Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Sydney, Cumberland Campus, East Street, PO Box 170 Lidcombe NSW 1825, Australia, email: elias.mpofu@sydney.edu.au . We encourage authors to submit manuscripts via e-mail, in MS Word, but we also require two hard copies of any e-mail submission. Before submitting a manuscript, authors should peruse and consult a recent issue of the *Journal of Psychology in Africa* for general layout and style. Manuscripts should conform to the publication guidelines of the latest edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) publication manual of instructions for authors.

Manuscript format

All pages must be numbered consecutively, including those containing the references, tables and figures. The typescript of a manuscript should be arranged as follows:

- **Title** : this should be brief, sufficiently informative for retrieval by automatic searching techniques and should contain important key-words (preferably <13 words).
- **Author(s) and Address(es) of author(s)**: The corresponding author must be indicated. The author's respective addresses where the work was done must be indicated. An e-mail address, telephone number and fax number for the corresponding author must be provided.
- **Abstract**: Articles and abstracts must be in English. Submission of abstracts translated to French, Portuguese and/ or Spanish is encouraged. For data-based contributions, the abstract should be structured as follows: *Objective* - the primary purpose of the paper, *Method* - data source, participants, design, measures, data analysis, *Results* - key findings, implications, future directions and *Conclusions*- in relation to the research questions and theory development. For all other contributions (except editorials, book reviews, special announcements) the abstract must be a concise statement of the content of the paper. Abstracts must not exceed 150 words. The statement of the abstract should summarise the information presented in the paper but should not include references.
- **Text**:
 - (1) Do not align text using spaces or tabs in references. Use one of the following:
 - (a) use CTRL-T in Word 2007 to generate a hanging indent; or (b) MS Word allows author to define a style (e.g., reference) that will create the correct formatting.
 - (2) Per APA guide-lines, only one space should follow any punctuation.
 - (3) Do not insert spaces at the beginning or end of paragraphs.
 - (4) Do not use colour in text.
- **Tables**: Tables should be either included at the end of the manuscript or as a separate file. Indicate the correct placement by indicating the insertion point in brackets, e.g., <Inset Table 1 approximately here>. Tables should be provided as either tab-delimited text or as a MS Word table (One item/cell). Font for tables should be Helvetica text to maintain consistency.
- **Figures/Graphs/Photos**: Figures, graphs and photos should be provided in graphic format (either JPG or TIF) with a separate file for each figure, graph or photo. indicate the correct placement by indicating the insertion point in brackets e.g., <Inset Figure 1 approximately here>. Provide the title for the item and any notes that should appear at bottom of item in the manuscript text. Items should be cropped to avoid the appearance of superfluous white space around items. Text on figures and graphs should be Helvetica to maintain consistency. Figures must not repeat data presented in the text or tables. Figures should be planned to appear to a maximum final width of either 80 or 175mm. (3.5 or 7.0''). Complicated symbols or patterns must be avoided. Graphs and histograms should preferably be two –dimensional and scale marks provided. All lines should be black but not too heavy or thick (including boxes). Colour only in photos or colour sensitive graphic illustrations. Extra charges will be levied for colour printing

Referencing

Referencing style should follow latest edition of the APA manual of instructions for authors.

- **References in text:** References in running text should be quoted as follows: (Louw & Mkize, 2012), or (Louw, 2011), or Louw (2000, 2004a, 2004b). All surnames should be cited the first time the reference occurs, e.g., Louw, Mkize, and Naidoo (2009) or (Louw, Mkize, & Naidoo, 2010). Subsequent citations should use et al., e.g. Louw et al. (2004) or (Louw et al., 2004). ‘Unpublished observations’ and ‘personal communications’ may be cited in the text, but not in the reference list. Manuscripts submitted but not yet published can be included as references followed by ‘in press’.
- **Reference list:** Full references should be given at the end of the article in alphabetical order, using double spacing. References to journals should include the author’s surnames and initials, the full title of the paper,, the full name of the journal, the year of publication, the volume number, and inclusive page numbers. Titles of journals must not be abbreviated. References to books should include the authors’ surnames and initials, the year of publication, full title of the book, the place of publication, and the publisher’s name. References should be cited as per the examples below:

Reference samples

Journal article

Peltzer, K. (2001). Factors at follow-up associated with adherence with adherence with directly observed therapy (DOT) for tuberculosis patients in South Africa. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 11 , 165-185.

Book

Gore, A. (2006). *An inconvenient truth: The planetary emergency of global warming and what we can do about it*. Emmaus, PA: Rodale.
(edited book)

Galley. K. E. (Ed.). (2004). *Global climate change and wildlife in North America*. Bethesda, MD: Wildlife Society.

Chapter in a book

Cook, D. A., & Wiley, C. Y. (2000). Psychotherapy with members of the African American churches and spiritual traditions. In P. S. Richards & A. E. Bergin (Ed.), *Handbook of psychotherapy and religiosity diversity* (pp 369-396). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Magazine article

Begley, S., & Murr, A. (2007, July 2). Which of these is not causing global warming? A. Sport utility vehicles; B. Rice fields; C. Increased solar output. *Newsweek*, 150 (2), 48-50.

Newspaper article

(unsigned)

College officials agree to cut greenhouse gases. (2007, June 13). *Albany Times Union*, p. A4.

(signed)

Landler, M. (2007, June 2). Bush’s Greenhouse Gas Plan Throws Europe Off Guard. *New York Times*, p. A7.

Unpublished thesis

Appoh, L. (1995). *The effects of parental attitudes, beliefs and values on the nutritional status of their children in two communities in Ghana* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Trondheim, Norway.

Conference paper

Sternberg, R. J. (2001, June). *Cultural approaches to intellectual and social competencies* . Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Society, Toronto, Canada.

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