





# Effective Safety and Security Measures in the Prevention of Various Crimes in Selected Ordinary, Public Secondary Schools: A Participatory Framework Approach



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## ABSTRACT

Worldwide, various crimes have permeated schools, creating a major challenge when it comes to the maintenance of the safety and security of both educators and learners and, to a large extent, school infrastructure. It is surprising that South Africa is constantly grappling with a burgeoning wave of diverse crimes, a problem that is confined to the broader society but has infiltrated secondary schools. This study examined the types of crimes caused in secondary schools to establish effective safety and security measures for the prevention of those crimes. The study employed a qualitative approach in the form of an explanatory multi-case study of nine Tshwane South District (D4) public ordinary secondary schools in the province of Gauteng, South Africa, entrenched within Borda's (1987) Participatory Theory. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews which were conducted with 30 purposively selected participants and analysed using thematic content analysis (TCA). The findings revealed the prevalence of various crimes in all the schools under study, and further exposed the lack of efficiency in the preservation of safety and security. To preserve safety and security, community involvement and participation are key because schools cannot rely only on technological advancement. Furthermore, all the stakeholders constituting a school community are urged to methodically consult and analyse all the existing policies for better and informed safety and security measures formulation. The study provides a unique opportunity for all stakeholders to assess strengths and weaknesses, thereby enabling the development of more effective measures to curtail and minimize the ongoing prevalence of such crimes.

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## INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, various crimes have permeated schools, creating a major challenge when it comes to the maintenance of the safety and security of both the educators and the learners, and to a large extent, the school infrastructure. Unsurprisingly, South Africa is consistently grappling with a burgeoning wave of diverse crimes, a problem that is confined to the broader society but has infiltrated its secondary schools.

The spillage confirms that schools are microcosms of the communities they are embedded in. Although the present study's focus is on the South African perspective, Mathe and Gina, maintain that the challenge of safety and security in schools is not peculiar to South Africa but is also highly experienced by other countries globally.<sup>1</sup> It is for this reason Mathe underscores the need to consider international safety and security conditions as that might assist in learning what is transpiring within that space, and measures in place for deterrence purposes.<sup>2</sup> For a presentation of the context at the global level, the following examples are provided.

A report by Bucher and Manning revealed that in the United States of America, 135, 000 youths in typical schools carry various weapons to schools for their own safety.<sup>3</sup> Still in the USA, an enquiry by Wang and Thompson recorded a total of 93 school shootings in both public and private schools collectively with fatalities of 43 deaths and 50 injuries, respectively.<sup>4</sup> In Sweden, the 2021 outcome on safety and security, indicates that 45% of students reported having experienced criminal activities such as theft, assault, threats, robbery, or sexual offence, and this happened at least once in the past twelve months.<sup>5</sup> According to Uzuegbu Wilson, Nigerian schools continue experiencing safety and security challenges such as youth restiveness, terrorism and insurgent attacks, kidnappings, hostage takings for financial gains, and murders.<sup>6</sup> The 2014 Chibok incident where 276 girls were abducted was the most popular and gained international attention.<sup>7</sup>

Within the South African context, reports by Saferspaces, and Le Roux and Mokhele revealed that, South African schools experienced various crimes ranging from, burglary, theft, arson, bullying, rape, other sexual violence, and murder.<sup>8</sup> This may be attributed to the absence and poor security measures in some of the schools. The study conducted under the auspices of the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) and the South African Department of Basic Education also established that 20 % of educators in South Africa believed that schools are crime-prone spaces, where they suspect their learners and colleagues bring weapons to schools.<sup>9</sup> The statistics by Statistics South Africa indicate that one million out of 13 million school-going learners experience maltreatment such as corporal punishment, and physical violence by either an educator or by other learners. Indicators of various crimes affect all the school community members.<sup>10</sup>

Hamdan purports that if a country takes a resolution to improve the sense of human security from the threat of crime amongst its community members, such members and the community at large will benefit positively.<sup>11</sup> The schools should benefit as well, regrettably, safety and security in most South African public schools are never experienced. This is despite some of the various existing policies meant to promote safety and security such as the school safety policy, code of conduct for learners, code of conduct for educators, Chapter 2 (Bill of Rights), Constitution (108 of 1996), and the South African Schools Act (84 of 1996). South African schools still experience various crimes, signalling the ineffectiveness or inappropriate application of current safety and security measures. These crimes have cast a pervasive shadow of fear over both learners and educators as they navigate their daily lives within the educational system. This atmosphere of fear and insecurity has taken a toll on the academic

<sup>1</sup> Khethiwe Sibongiseni Jabulisile Mathe, *Discipline, Safety and Security in Schools: A Challenge for School Management* (University of Johannesburg (South Africa), 2008). M. J. Gina, *Safety and Security in Schools: The case of KwaZulu-Natal Province*. Tshwane University of Technology. DEd Thesis (Educational Studies), 2013. Unpublished.

<sup>2</sup> Mathe, *Discipline, Safety and Security in Schools: A Challenge for School Management*.

<sup>3</sup> K.T. Bucher and M.L. Manning, "Creating Safer Schools," 2010.

<sup>4</sup> C. Wang and A. Thompson, "Report on Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2021," 2022, chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2022/2022092.pdf.

<sup>5</sup> National Council for Crime Prevention, "School Survey on Crime: On Crime Victimisation and Participation in Crime," Swedish Ministry of Justice Report on crime in schools, 2021, www.bra.se.

<sup>6</sup> Emmanuel Uzuegbu-Wilson, "The Challenges of Safe School in Nigeria: The Role of Security Agencies," 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Sulaimon Adewale, Sherifat Shola Adebayo, and Peters Abiodun Afolabi, "Managing School Safety in Nigeria in the 21st Century: The Need for A Balanced Approach," *African Journal of Humanities and Contemporary Education Research* 10, no. 1 (2023): 72.

<sup>8</sup> Saferspaces, "National School Safety Framework," 2023, https://www.saferspaces.org.za/be-inspired/entry/national-school-safety-framework-nssf#; C S Le Roux and P R Mokhele, "The Persistence of Violence in South Africa's Schools: In Search of Solutions," *Africa Education Review* 8, no. 2 (2011): 318–35.

<sup>9</sup> Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), "Schools Are so Violent Teachers Live in Fear," June 15, 2017, http://www.hsrc.ac.za/en/hsrc-in-the-news/education-and-skills-development/violence-in-schools.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics South Africa, "60.6 Million People in South Africa," 2023, https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=15601.

<sup>11</sup> M. Hamdan, "Review of International Studies on Perception of Safety and Human Security," 2022, https://www.journalcswb.ca/index.php/cswb/article/view/234/619.

performance of both learners and educators, hampering their ability to thrive within the educational environment.

Therefore, employing effective safety and security measures in the prevention of various crimes in District Four (D4) public ordinary secondary schools in the province of Gauteng remains crucial. Failure to do so may result in the violation of the learners' and educators' rights to facilitate teaching and learning respectively. By first establishing the type of various crimes perpetrated within public secondary schools, this study provides a unique opportunity for all stakeholders to assess strengths and weaknesses, enabling the development of more effective measures to curtail and minimize the ongoing prevalence of such crimes. In sum, this explanatory qualitative research endeavour, entrenched within Borda's Participatory Theory aspires to be a catalyst for positive change, aiming to transform the landscape of security and safety within ordinary South African public secondary schools. The study is driven by the following research objectives.<sup>12</sup>

- i) Examining the types of various crimes experienced by secondary schools.
- ii) Establishing effective safety and security measures in the prevention of various crimes.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The type of crimes perpetrated in secondary schools

It is very important to be familiar with the types of crimes and violence that usually occur within the school environment against both teachers and learners. This will assist in making suitable safety and security measures to prevent whatever identified challenge is in line with the expected return on investment. According to UNESCO schools represent a critical space for learning, including the knowledge of learners to understand the issue of gender roles.<sup>13</sup> Gender is identified as one of the factors that influence persisting violence in the school environment. Further, "less attention on gender discrimination and power imbalances in schools encourage attitudes and practices that subjugate school children, uphold unequal gender norms, and allow the toleration and continuation of gender-based violence." According to Kollapen, South African school-based violence is multi-dimensional and takes on various forms.<sup>14</sup>

In relation to the violence experienced by learners inflicted on them by other learners, Mashaba et al. and Shumba and Ncontsa revealed the type of violent criminal activities experienced in various acts and forms such as bullying, sexual violence, physical assault, gang violence, psychological abuse, and threats of violence.<sup>15</sup> Dangerous weapons such as (knives, and scissors) are discovered and confiscated from learners during unannounced crime prevention search operations by the collective criminal justice stakeholders. The search also discovered that knives are the most common weapons discovered, followed by firearms. Additionally, pepper sprays, screwdrivers, pangas, and bats are part of the harmful weapons students carry around.<sup>16</sup> Delving into other types of crimes occurring in secondary schools, it is also worth noting that certain acts of crime are interconnected, making it difficult to distinctively discuss. That said, the types of crimes are discussed below.

### The prevalence of school vandalism and break-ins

According to the report by the Gauteng Education MEC, during the 2022 learning period alone, a total of 120 schools were vandalised, while 24 schools experienced vandalism during the December holidays. In the previous year, 57 schools were reported to have been damaged. In total, by 2023, 488 schools were on an infrastructure maintenance programme. For the year 2021, in Gauteng alone, the department spent R50

<sup>12</sup> Orlando Fals-Borda, "The Application of Participatory Action-Research in Latin America," *International Sociology* 2, no. 4 (1987): 329–47.

<sup>13</sup> UNESCO, *Let us decide on how we measure violence*. 2017. [Online]. Available from: <https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/taxonomy/term/197> [Accessed on 29 October 2023].

<sup>14</sup> J. Kollapen, "Crime and Its Impact on Human Rights: Ten Years of the Bill of Rights," 2007, <https://www.sahrc.org.za/home/21/.../Crime%25%20Conference%2520Report.pdf2007.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Mashaba E K et al., "Learner Learner- on- Learner Violence: A Case of Tshwane West District (D15), Mabopane, Gauteng Province," *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review* 5, no. 8 (August 16, 2022): 115–29, <https://doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v5i8.378>; V.N. Ncontsa and A. Shumba, "The Nature Causes and Effects of School Violence in South African High Schools," 2013.

<sup>16</sup> S.S. Khumalo, "Implications of School Violence in South Africa on Socially Just Education," 2023, [file:///C:/Users/ngovetd/Downloads/IMPLICATIONS\\_OF\\_SCHOOL\\_VIOLENCE\\_IN\\_SOUTH\\_AFRICA\\_ON\(4\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/ngovetd/Downloads/IMPLICATIONS_OF_SCHOOL_VIOLENCE_IN_SOUTH_AFRICA_ON(4).pdf).

million to repair 54 schools that were targeted by vandalism.<sup>17</sup> Although vandalism is not limited to any social or economic section, these criminal activities usually take place in areas of low economic status where educational provision is of a lower standard.<sup>18</sup> School vandalism causes serious challenges for schools and communities, and police and fire departments as the custodians of ensuring safety and security for everyone within the school including the resources itself.<sup>19</sup> According to Sokutu, Gauteng was reeling from a scourge of public schools being burgled and vandalised coupled with the theft of furniture, gates, window frames, doors, and taps.<sup>20</sup>

As already highlighted, the symptoms of school vandalism, just like other crimes, are not exclusive to South Africa. Even developed countries such as Canada spent dollars of taxpayer money repairing schools because of vandalism, damages that are sometimes caused by the learners themselves.<sup>21</sup> Although vandalism is not limited to any social or economic section, these criminal activities usually take place in areas of low economic status where educational provision is of lower standard.<sup>22</sup>

### **Drugs challenge**

Despite various measures by various institutions including nonprofit organisations, and the government, the use of drugs in secondary schools is still a major problem.<sup>23</sup> Substance abuse is significantly determined by the social environment including the older generation, who are supposed to provide guidance. Nzama and Ajani concur and indicate that family challenges, inadequate care or neglect, and inadequate support by educators including the structure of the family of learners staying and raised by mother-parents without a father figure have a high risk of being involved in drug substance abuse.<sup>24</sup> The use of drugs hampers the aim of teaching and learning, leading to poor performance that produces dropouts.<sup>25</sup> Nzama and Ajani discovered cigarettes, marijuana (dagga), alcohol, and dagga as the most commonly used substances by the learners.<sup>26</sup> The crimes and violence occurring in schools require more than only the South African Police Service (SAPS) to solve; instead, a proactive, multitasking strategy including a range of expertise is required. Hence, this study posits that for a multitasking strategy to be effective and successful, the participation of all the affected school community members as the participatory framework suggests is necessary.

### **Gangsterism and Violent Attacks**

Various urban schools, particularly townships, are more exposed to gangsterism. The following various contributing factors such as poverty, unemployment, especially among youth, rural-urban drift, the availability of firearms, and the general legacy of violence play a role in the evolution resulting in the outcome of schools being robbed, and the killing of teachers and learners in the process. In line with the statement herein, according to Naicker from the Public Service Association union, schools continue experiencing a lack of resources and overcrowding, bullying, and gangsterism resulting in schools being toxic areas.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>17</sup> B Sokutu, "Back to School: 24 Gauteng Schools Vandalised during December Holidays," *The Citizen*, 2023, <https://www.citizen.co.za/news/24-vandalism-incidents-gauteng-schools-december/>; M. Lindeque, "57 Schools in Gauteng Vandalised or Affected by Harsh Weather over Holidays," 2022, <https://ewn.co.za/2022/01/11/57-schools-in-gauteng-vandalised-or-affected-by-harsh-weather-over-the-holidays>.

<sup>18</sup> C.P. De Buzna, "A Study of School Vandalism—Causes and Prevention Measures Currently Found in Selected Secondary Schools in Cities throughout Alabama," 1975, <https://ir.ua.edu/bitstream/handle/123456789/10177/675640.pdf?sequence=1>.

<sup>19</sup> K. DEDEL, K., *The problem of school vandalism and break-ins*. 2005. [Online]. Available from: <https://popcenter.asu.edu/content/school-vandalism-break-ins-0> [Accessed on 04 October 2023].

<sup>20</sup> Sokutu, "Back to School: 24 Gauteng Schools Vandalised during December Holidays."

<sup>21</sup> Jim Cooze, "Curbing the Cost of School Vandalism: Theoretical Causes and Preventive Measures," *Education Canada* 35, no.3(1995): 38-41.

<sup>22</sup> De Buzna, "A Study of School Vandalism—Causes and Prevention Measures Currently Found in Selected Secondary Schools in Cities throughout Alabama."

<sup>23</sup> M.V. Nzama and Ajani O.A., "Substance Abuse among High School Learners in South Africa: A Case Study of Promoting Factors," 2001, [https://journals.co.za/doi/epdf/10.10520/ejc-aa\\_affrika1\\_v2021\\_nsi1\\_a12](https://journals.co.za/doi/epdf/10.10520/ejc-aa_affrika1_v2021_nsi1_a12).

<sup>24</sup> Nzama and Ajani O.A., "Substance Abuse among High School Learners in South Africa: A Case Study of Promoting Factors."

<sup>25</sup> K.E. Mokwena and N.J. Setshego, "Substance Abuse among High School Learners in a Rural Education District in the Free State Province, South Africa," 2021, <https://safpj.co.za/index.php/safpj/article/view/5302/6854>.

<sup>26</sup> Nzama and Ajani O.A., "Substance Abuse among High School Learners in South Africa: A Case Study of Promoting Factors."

<sup>27</sup> T. Tshabalala, "Teachers' Perceptions towards Classroom Instructional Supervision: A Case Study of Nkayi District in Zimbabwe," 2013, <chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnibpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.ijssse.com/sites/default/files/issues/2013/v4i1/paper/Paper-3.pdf>.

Between 2016 and 2022, in the Western Cape alone, 33 teaching staff members were seriously attacked. Country-wise, two months into the 2023 academic calendar year 2023, six violent incidents were reported within South African schools. In line with self-defense, a Kagiso secondary school teacher shot and killed a man alleged to be threatening the school principal.<sup>28</sup> The crime above and the possession of a firearm by one of the teachers highly indicate the fear that has been instilled in teachers and learners in the school environment, while the entrance of the alleged suspects raises eyebrows in terms of safety and security within the school premises. Responding to the incident, the South African Democratic Teachers Union was concerned indicating that “schools are no longer the safe havens, resulting in the lives of both the educators and learners, and everyone around the premises at large to be in danger.”<sup>29</sup> Khumalo ascertained that many forms such as bullying, teen suicides, sex scandals, various forms of discrimination based on ‘race’, sexuality, religion, and ethnicity, as well as unprofessional educator conduct, play a part in the manifestation of violence that is experienced within the school environment.<sup>30</sup>

### **Effective safety and security measures to prevent various crimes**

Despite various interventions complemented by initiatives by the Department of Basic Education aimed at fostering safety and security in schools, the issue of violence keeps on persisting and evolving, resulting in chaos that leads to loss of teaching and learning time because the existing phenomenon demands attention from the community at large.<sup>31</sup> Crimes happening in schools cannot be treated as an isolated phenomenon, detached from the surrounding community. As underscored by the Participatory Theory, public participation remains essential. Therefore, participation by other community-orientated structures and implementation of measures aimed at preventing various crimes are succinctly elucidated below.

### **Community Policing**

Currently, worldwide, policing strategies are influenced by the existence of community policing that must be embraced by all within the community.<sup>32</sup> To successfully implement safety and security measures in crime prevention within schools needs the involvement of the community, in this case, the utilisation of community policing which serves as the key platform. According to Wantenaar and Govender, from local and international perspectives, community policing is regarded as the best philosophy for reducing crime as it accommodates a multi-discipline approach that involves SAPS, community policing forums (CPFs), Private security, and community members in various formats including their participation through CPFs and Community Security Forums (CSFs) respectively as already alluded.<sup>33</sup>

### **The benefits of Community Policing**

Community policing, the worldwide mostly democratised utilised policing, when established, and emphasised, brings in certain positive benefits for both the police and the community, including educators and learners in their area of jurisdiction.<sup>34</sup> This is supported by Sozer and Merlo, indicating that the application of the community policing problem-solving partnership dimension has a positive association with both violent crime and property rates in various forms.<sup>35</sup> Not only does South Africa recognise the value of using community policing to encourage group participation in crime prevention, but it is also a

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<sup>28</sup> T. Tshabalala, “Alarm over Increase Violence Incidence in South African Schools,” IOL, 2023, <https://www.iol.co.za/sundayindependent/news/alarm-over-increase-in-violent-incidents-at-sa-schools-f8e9a491-038a-4789-96ff-a11d9f80f979>.

<sup>29</sup> Tshabalala, “Teachers’ Perceptions towards Classroom Instructional Supervision: A Case Study of Nkayi District in Zimbabwe.”

<sup>30</sup> Khumalo, “Implications of School Violence in South Africa on Socially Just Education.”

<sup>31</sup> Khumalo, “S.T. Implications of School Violence in South Africa on Socially Just Education,” 2019.

<sup>32</sup> Mehmet Alper Sozer and Alida V. Merlo, “The Impact of Community Policing on Crime Rates: Does the Effect of Community Policing Differ in Large and Small Law Enforcement Agencies?,” *Police Practice and Research* 14, no. 6 (December 1, 2013): 506–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15614263.2012.661151>.

<sup>33</sup> Angeliqne Antoinette Wantenaar and Doraval Govender, “Experiences of Community Policing Forum Members in Liaison with SAPS, Private Security and Community Members Regarding Community Policing,” *African Security Review* 32, no. 4 (October 2, 2023): 458–72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2023.2248095>.

<sup>34</sup> J. Burger, “Submission to the Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of Police Inefficiency in Khayelitsha and a Breakdown in Relations between the Community and the Police,” 2014, <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3.sourceafrica.net/.../3-b-johan-burger-report.p>.

<sup>35</sup> Sozer and Merlo, “The Impact of Community Policing on Crime Rates: Does the Effect of Community Policing Differ in Large and Small Law Enforcement Agencies?”

system that, when prioritised, will benefit our schools as a whole. The system has been created and is in use in numerous nations, including the US, China, the UK, and European nations that follow the organisation for cooperation and security.<sup>36</sup> Finally, from the standpoint of community policing (CP), communities must be strengthened on the ideology of CP if the criminal justice system is to prevent crime and develop more significant neighbourhoods, including safety and security at schools.<sup>37</sup> The creation and distribution of a brief pamphlet to community members—in this example, CPFs and other specified stakeholders, such as the school governing bodies (SGBs) for their reference and informational purposes should take precedence over the evolution, application, and significance of CP. The ideology of CP places a strong focus on the necessity of teamwork. Thus, further integrated approaches are discussed below as necessary for crime prevention efforts.

### **Integrated collective approach in promoting safety and security in crime prevention.**

According to Karuri and Muna, in terms of safety and security in crime prevention within the schools, and the country at large, collaborative crime prevention involves various structures that include people in general, members of the communities, non-profit organisations, all government structures that involve national, provincial, and local government.<sup>38</sup> All are aimed at addressing various social and environmental factors that play a role in increasing the crime risk, syndrome and persecution the educators, learners, and members of the community at large.<sup>39</sup> Supporting this collective approach to crime prevention, Kole maintains that by its nature, crime prevention must be the activity that is continuously practiced by members of the community while always taking into consideration security and safety precautions, as their safety comes first.<sup>40</sup> The community safety network can be used as a platform to involve members of the community in crime prevention. The legal relationship with positive by-ins among various crime prevention stakeholders such as SAPS, CPFs, Private Security, SGBs, and the media can play a critical acceptable standard in crime reduction in the community.<sup>41</sup>

### **South African Police**

In emphasising safety and security in crime prevention and realising the high negative impact of school vandalism and theft, in line with the integrated criminal justice approach, the Gauteng province requested the police visibility and patrol and set-up of mobile police stations within a radius of one (1) kilometre from the schools, the decision that must be highly regarded and given a realistic approach.<sup>42</sup>

### **The Community Policing Forums (CPF's)**

The White Paper on Safety and Security emphasises the importance of a collaborative approach to crime prevention in relation to members of the community participation.<sup>43</sup> According to the Department of Police members of the community through CPFs in cooperation with other law enforcement should not only deal with a crime directly but also address the causes of their crime problem in their area of jurisdiction to overcome the criminal activities and other area-specific problems experienced within the schooling environment, and other areas in the jurisdictions, the support from members of the community is very critical in every department irrespective of its size.<sup>44</sup> In relation to members of the community participation in crime prevention, Kole indicates the fact that organisations are expected to give back to

<sup>36</sup> N. Ekici, Kelly H. Akdogan, and S. Gultekin, "A Meta-Analysis of the Impact of Community Policing on Crime Reduction," 2022, <https://www.journalcswb.ca/index.php/cswb/article/view/244/736>.

<sup>37</sup> Bureau of Justice Assistance, "Understanding Community Policing. A Framework for Action," 1994, <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles/commp.pdf>.

<sup>38</sup> J G Karuri and W Muna, "Effects of Community Policing on Crime Prevention in Kakamega County, Kenya," *International Academic Journal of Law and Society* 1, no. 2 (2019): 312–27.

<sup>39</sup> Karuri and Muna, "Effects of Community Policing on Crime Prevention in Kakamega County, Kenya."

<sup>40</sup> O.J. Kole, "Partnership Policing between the South African Police Service and the Private Security Industry in Reducing Crime in South Africa," Doctoral thesis, Pretoria, University of South Africa, 2015, [https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/19153/thesis\\_kole\\_oj.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/19153/thesis_kole_oj.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

<sup>41</sup> Kole, "Partnership Policing between the South African Police Service and the Private Security Industry in Reducing Crime in South Africa."

<sup>42</sup> Sokutu, "Back to School: 24 Gauteng Schools Vandalised during December Holidays."

<sup>43</sup> South Africa, *White Paper on Safety and Security, in Service of Safety 1999-2004* (Pretoria: Government Printers, 1998).

<sup>44</sup> Department of Police. Undated. *Civilian secretariat for police. Community safety forums policy*. [Online]. Available from: [http://www.policesecretariat.gov.za/downloads/policies/community\\_policing.pdf](http://www.policesecretariat.gov.za/downloads/policies/community_policing.pdf) [Accessed on 06 March 2024].

the community in which they reside and operate, and this can be achieved by applying what is called social responsibility, where members of the community take ownership of that organisation as their beneficiary platform.<sup>45</sup>

### **School Governing Bodies (SGBs)**

Safety and security in schools is one of the important issues that confront every parent. Therefore, through the SGB, parents are expected to also perform the supportive role to the learners and raise their voice on certain laws and daily running of the school for a positive outcome.<sup>46</sup> Concurring, Squelch highlights the legal duty bound and liability of the SGB in ensuring that there is safety in schools.<sup>47</sup> Basic Education promoting safety at school, according to Gauteng province, the Department of Basic Education in promoting school safety, adds powers of the SGB and is expected to erect boards highlighting anyone entering the school premises that such person does so at their own risk, may be subjected to search, no drugs, alcohol, guns or weapons is permitted within the school, and drivers without valid driving license will be allowed to drive vehicles on the school property.<sup>48</sup> Complimenting the SGB, the Minister of Basic Education (Honourable Motshekga), has indicated that “a functioning and involved School Governing Body (SGB) is one of the greatest indicators of a school that works.”<sup>49</sup> Generally, the School Act, 84 of 1996, gives the SGB the powers to make decisions that are bidding to the schools, for example, the decision to hire or implement safety and security measures in crime prevention in line with the criminal justice system.<sup>50</sup>

### **Scholar Patrols**

Although scholar patrols do not directly deal with crime prevention, their presence can be seen as an additional tool to promote the safety and security of learners in the morning and afternoon as they go to their classes and return home after school. As a result, the presence and observation by the scholar patrols can play a deterrent role to the crime predisposing factors. They can play a role as an observatory on everything that takes place during that period.<sup>51</sup> A similar scenario can be drawn from New Brighton members of the community who took a resolution to apply day and night patrols to act against the criminal activities that were negatively impacting their I Thembelihle Technical School in Gqeberha, South Africa, where the R6 million equipment was stolen.<sup>52</sup> One of the other impacts of scholar patrol is fostering ties between members of the community and the schools in general and making such schools visible to the community at large and ensuring safe crossing to all old members of the community and learners.<sup>53</sup>

## **THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF THE STUDY**

This study is anchored on the theoretical underpinning of Borda’s Participatory Theory (PT) that came to light through other theorists such as Paulo Freire, who contributed to its development to emphasise community involvement and social change.<sup>54</sup> PT highlights the importance of members of the community together with other legitimate fighting units to partner in all matters within their area, and this also includes

<sup>45</sup> Kole, “Partnership Policing between the South African Police Service and the Private Security Industry in Reducing Crime in South Africa.”

<sup>46</sup> M. Motimele, “Educational Rights Project. School Governing Bodies, Rights and Responsibilities,” 2021, <https://www.uj.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/school-governing-bodies-rights-and-responsibilities.pdf>; Republic of South Africa, “Safety in Schools,” 2021, <https://www.education.gov.za/Programmes/SafetyinSchools.aspx#:~:text=In terms of the Regulations,atmosphere of fear and aggression.>

<sup>47</sup> Joan Squelch, “Do School Governing Bodies Have a Duty to Create Safe Schools? An Education Law Perspective: Current Issues in Education Law and Policy,” *Perspectives in Education* 19, no. 1 (2001): 137–49.

<sup>48</sup> Department of Basic Education, “Guidelines for Capacity Building of School Governing Body Members,” 2018, [https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Publications/SGBs/GUIDELINES FOR CAPACITY BUILDING of School Governing Body Members \(final 1\).pdf?ver=2018-06-08-094707-203.](https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Publications/SGBs/GUIDELINES FOR CAPACITY BUILDING of School Governing Body Members (final 1).pdf?ver=2018-06-08-094707-203.)

<sup>49</sup> Department of Basic Education, “Guidelines for Capacity Building of School Governing Body Members.”

<sup>50</sup> R. Mestry, “Financial Accountability: The Principal or the School Governing Body?,” 2004, file:///C:/Users/ngovetd/Downloads/ajol-file-journals\_154\_articles\_24977\_submission\_proof\_24977-1837-31707-1-10-20060523.pdf.

<sup>51</sup> Road Traffic Management Corporation, “Scholar Patrol Policy, Standing Operations Policy,” 2018, [http://www.kzntransport.gov.za/rd\\_safety\\_ed/activity-booklets/Scholar Patrol Policy.pdf](http://www.kzntransport.gov.za/rd_safety_ed/activity-booklets/Scholar Patrol Policy.pdf).

<sup>52</sup> J. Chirume, “Equipment Worth More than R6 Million Stolen from Technical School Gqeberha,” 2021, <https://groundup.org.za/article/equipment-worth-more-r6-million-stolen-technical-school-gqeberha/>.

<sup>53</sup> Road Traffic Management Corporation, “Scholar Patrol Policy, Standing Operations Policy.”

<sup>54</sup> Fals-Borda, “The Application of Participatory Action-Research in Latin America”; Paulo Freire, “2000, Pedagogy of the Oppressed,” *Continuum, New York*, 1970; .

participation in the safety and security engagements within their schools to become safe and secure spaces to educate and learn. The introduction of the South African National Crime Prevention Strategy that considers the members of the community through CPFs serves as the mirror of the participatory theory. In the PT, according to Maphazi, Raga, Taylor & Mayekiso, public participation is important as it provides members of the public with an opportunity to influence public decisions and has long been regarded as one of the elements of democratic decision-making processes.<sup>55</sup>

According to the National Council for Crime Prevention, to effectively fight against crime within the schools, different stakeholders must form part of the criminal justice system.<sup>56</sup> Hence, this study purports that a community-centred approach system may yield positive outcomes, resulting in the school environment as a viable place to teach and learn. All South Africans are expected to be part of the safety partnership, where members of the communities from various stakeholders such as civil society, community structures, religious, and other organised groups, business, and law enforcement must come together to guard against any criminal activities in their children's learning environment.<sup>57</sup> In addressing the symptoms of crime, including crime experienced within the school environments, the South African government came up with the participatory approach that led to the establishment of, among other things, the democratic SAPS and CPFs that are used as the SAPS and community integrated platform in crime prevention within their area of jurisdiction.<sup>58</sup> The PT tenets, of collaboration, active engagement and social interaction resonate with the South African government's intention to prevent various crimes in schools, so it was chosen as the lens to sustain the study.

## METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative approach in the form of an explanatory multi-case study of nine Tshwane South District (D4) public ordinary secondary schools in the province of Gauteng, South Africa. The secondary schools fall under clusters 1- 3 and reside in Mamelodi West, Eersterust, and Silverton geographical areas, respectively. The multi-case explanatory attempts to explain the circumstances and nuances of a specific phenomenon.<sup>59</sup> In this case, the study sought to employ effective safety and security measures to be implemented in the prevention of various crimes. The purposefully selected schools share some common characteristics and have also experienced safety and security incidents, making them a relevant multi-case to investigate within D4.

The population of the study consisted of all principals, deputy principals, educators, learners, and SGB Chairpersons of D4. In line with the study herein, the researchers applied purposive sampling to collect data from knowledgeable and witnessed participants. As a result, 6 principals, 6 deputy principals, 6 educators, 6 learners from the Representative Council of Learners, and 6 SGBs chairpersons agreed to take part in the semi-structured interviews. The decision to select the above participants was based on their authority and knowledge within the schools in relation to crime prevention from the management and governance perspective.

In adhering to the ethical principles, ethical approval was required and granted by both the DBE and Tshwane University of Technology, respectively, to conduct the research. Subsequently, the participants were formally informed of the purpose of the study and also made aware that their participation was voluntary, and that they could stop it at any given time. The consent form was subsequently signed by the participants. The consent of the legal guardians' was sought and given before the learners could participate, as heightened by Louw.<sup>60</sup> The interviews lasted between 20 and 40 minutes, and they were tape-recorded.

<sup>55</sup> N Maphazi et al., "Public Participation: A South African Local Government Perspective," 2013.

<sup>56</sup> National Council for Crime Prevention, "School Survey on Crime: On Crime Victimisation and Participation in Crime."

<sup>57</sup> Republic of South Africa, "Safety in Schools."

<sup>58</sup> Tinyiko David Ngoveni, Witness Maluleke, and Christopher Mabasa, "Insights on the Use of Community Policing Forum for Crime Prevention: A Case Study of the Brooklyn Police Station, South Africa," *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science* (2147-4478) 11, no. 5 (2022): 482–94.

<sup>59</sup> R. Bezuidenhout and F. Cronje, "Qualitative and Data Analysis and Interpretation," in *Research Matters*, ed. F. Du Plooy-Cilliers, C. Davis, and R. Bezuidenhout (Juta and Company Ltd., 2021), 262–86.

<sup>60</sup> M. Louw, "Ethics in Research," in *Research Matters*, ed. F. Du Plooy-Cilliers, C. Davis, and R. Bezuidenhout (Juta and Company Ltd., 2021), 262–86.

Data analysis began during the process of data collection to bring order, structure, and meaning to the volume of data collected. The researchers employed thematic content analysis. Data collected during the unstructured interviews was transcribed from the tape recorder onto a paper to clean and edit manuscripts to eliminate typographical errors and contradictions; checking and editing where transcripts were checked and edited and the data was prepared for further analysis. The data was then analysed using thematic content analysis, and coded, where two themes emerged and were discussed along the participants’ verbatim accounts.

**PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

From the analysis of the findings, the following two themes emerged, 1) schools are prone to various crimes, and 2) effective measures to prevent various crimes. The findings are clustered into six categories and are presented verbatim, followed by a discussion. Each category is represented by six participants. The table below illustrates the specific cluster each school falls under.

**Table 1: School Cluster Classifications**

<i>Cluster 1: Schools</i>	<i>Cluster 2: Schools</i>	<i>Cluster 3: Schools</i>
<i>Nellmapius secondary school</i>	<i>Vukani Mawethu Secondary School</i>	<i>Silverton Secondary school</i>
<i>Thuto Bohlale Secondary School</i>	<i>Jafta Mahlangu Secondary School</i>	<i>Mamelodi Secondary schools</i>
	<i>J Kekana Secondary School</i>	<i>Eersterust Secondary school</i>
	<i>Prosperity secondary school</i>	

**Theme 1: Schools are prone to various crimes**

The question herein was aimed at identifying the types of crime(s) schools are negatively challenged with. All participants concurred that, just like other institutions and the country as a whole, schools are not immune to crimes in various categories that hamper their daily schooling purpose which is more on educating and learning. In this theme, all participants indicated the ghastly situation they are confronted with daily:

**Category one: The Principals**

- “Substance abuse, bullying, burglary, theft, and violence” (Participant 1).*
- “Bullying, Sexual violence, Cyberbullying, Physical violence, Carrying a weapon in the school environment, Illegal drug use, theft, crime against educators” (Participant 3).*
- “Burglary is the most prevalent crime in the school. Bullying of other learners by fellow learners. Stealing cell phone amongst learners. Learners selling illegal substances, e.g. dagga” (Participant 6).*

**Category two: The Deputy Principals**

- “Burglary at the beginning of the year 2024 (February). A smart board was stolen and reported to the police, it was recovered but the case has been postponed all the time to date. Bullying of learners by their fellow learners. Stealing – learners stealing branded products like cell phones and school bags” (Participant 1).*
- “The burglary is the serious crime we are experiencing at school. In February 2024 there was arson where books and laptops were burned to ashes. The second type is the stealing of laptops among learners. Every day a child will lose his/her laptop. The third type is the selling of drugs within the school premises and smoking drugs in the toilets. We experience break-ins, that are committed at night by thieves” (Participant 6).*

**Category three: The Educators**

- “Burglary has been affecting our school in the past few years, criminals have been stealing our smartboards. They also stole the learners’ scripts and burnt them. Some of the learners’ tablets went missing and they were never found” (Participant 1).*

*“Dangerous weapons: Learners in possession of dangerous weapons. Bullying: verbal and emotional bullying. Burglary: unlawful entry to school, with intent to commit theft” (Participant 5).*

#### **Category four: Representative Council of Learners**

*“The theft of electronic gadgets like laptops, tablets, and printers, has become an element of disruption to learning. The rising theft too of tables and chairs creates a shortage with some learners receiving lessons while on their feet for over seven hours”. (Participant 1).*

*“Schools experience a range of crimes that threaten the safety and well-being of students, staff, and the learning environment. These crimes range from physical violence; bullying; substance abuse; cybercrimes; theft and assaults on educators” (Participant 4).*

*“Bullying and harassment take many forms including physical, verbal and cyberbullying. Drug and alcohol abuse; learners put illegal drugs in their bags on their way to school and sell them to their classmates or fellow learners. If the school fence is not properly built, learners go out to buy alcohol and drink during break time. Theft includes stealing that occurs between learners, e.g., stealing money or stationaries.” (Participant 7).*

#### **Category five: The SGB Chairpersons**

*“We experience a lot of crimes i.e.: violence (amongst learners), assault (amongst learners, a couple of cases of learners towards educators), drug-related (possession, distribution and use), fire-arm possession, gang activity, hate crimes (motivated by racism, class-disruptions (though minimal), robbery (outside the school yard, Online bullying & harassment” (Participant 3).*

*“Gangsterism, fights, stabbing using knives or scissors, selling and using drugs at the schools, bullying, theft of bags, cell phones” (Participant 6).*

Like any other community, schools are prone and susceptible to various crimes involving different actors within and outside the premises. All five categories of participants confirmed various crimes occurring in their schools, with the prominent crimes being burglary in all its forms, various forms of violence among the learners, and sometimes directed against the educators, theft, bullying, gangsterism, including the carrying and usage of dangerous weapons such as firearms and an assortment of sharp objects, and the use and peddling of drugs mostly among the learners. The learners' cohort also raised concerns about the perpetuation of corporal punishment by some of the educators. The above findings resonate with the appraised literature, highlighting that South Africa is not immune to what is happening worldwide.

Participants unanimously agree that crimes herein exist within their schools, and it has a negative impact on both educating and learning collectively, something that cannot be ignored. All parents wish and hope to send their children to a safe and secure schooling environment, which Donkor regards as a place where educators, non-educators, and all learners work, teach, and learn without fear of violence, intimidation, humiliation, or ridicule.<sup>61</sup> One that is free from risk and potential injury for learners to receive quality education. Criminal activities within the schools, according to Xaba need a proactive approach by the security and safety school committee. This should involve all stakeholders and should further be in line with their mandate. The outcome should lead to learners being educated and becoming adults who produce positive outcomes for their families and the country at large.<sup>62</sup> However, this right to education without violence is still missing three decades after democracy.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> A. K. Donkor, *School safety issues in Northern Ghana: A way forward*. 2018. [Online]. Available from: <https://www.arcjournals.org/pdfs/ijhsse/v5-i2/10.pdf> [Accessed on 13 March 2024]

<sup>62</sup> Mgadla Isaac Xaba, “An Examination of the Effectiveness of the Implementation of Safety and Security Measures at Public Schools in South Africa,” *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no. 27 (2014): P1.

<sup>63</sup> B.M. Zulu, G Urbani, and A. van der Merwe, “Violence as an Impediment to a Culture of Teaching and Learning in Some South African Schools,” 2004, <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/saje/article/view/24984>.

The second theme drawn from the findings is elucidated below.

## **Theme 2: Effective measures to prevent various crimes.**

In relation to their suggested safety and security measures that are considered necessary and effective to prevent various crimes, all participants highlighted various prevention safety and security measures that can be installed. Their responses were as follows:

### **Category one: The Principals**

*“Appoint security officials from the immediate community who have been vetted” (Participant 1).*

*“School patrollers and we (the school) have employed security personnel to guard the school during the night due to burglaries” (Participant 2).*

*“Un-announced ground search by police. Implementation of policies. Lighting system in school premises. Monitoring of movement (access) at the gate. Equipping the safety committee with workshops and training” (Participant 3).*

*“Have a professional security company employed to deal with all the security measures at their disposal” (Participant 4).*

*“I think the safety measures we have currently reduced the above-mentioned incidents. However, I think working with the police to address the learners and random searching will also assist significantly. Again, we believe working with our health practitioners and social workers can bring a big difference” (Participant 5).*

*“The school must have the emergency contact numbers displayed or easily accessible to the local police station, circuit manager, and wardens, and must adopt a COP. We ensure that the school does not have falling wall structures or doors and no broken windowpanes. We also ensure that the school has developed the safety plan and evacuation procedure. The school should establish a safety committee and conduct the safety audits and submit to the department” (Participant 6).*

### **Category two: The Deputy Principals**

*“The police must be visible at all times around schools. School searches must be conducted unannounced. The communities in the area must be involved in crime prevention. Schools must have an adopted cop. Patrollers must search for suspected learners every morning. The perimeters of the school must be monitored at all times” (Participant 1).*

*“School patrollers on the ground during lessons, lunchtime and after school are needed. Installation of CCTV cameras is also needed. Committed parental involvement must be ensured. School-based psychologists must assist learners with socio-economic challenges they may be facing” (Participant 2).*

*“Learners should be in full school uniform for identification, involve the police to conduct the private search, follow learners code of conduct, gate control by security guards, involvement of community and CPF, a proper fence at school with alarms” (Participant 4).*

*“CPF is always visible around school premises for monitoring, it has a positive effect with regards to the prevention of occurrence of crime in the school premises. Secure entrance and exits must be properly monitored. Parental involvement is also important to assist the school” (Participant 5).*

*“Intervention strategies to identify learners with issues ASAP before it becomes something that cannot be managed internally” (Participant 7).*

### **Category three: The Educators**

*“To prevent the occurrence of various types of crimes in my school, the following measures have been put in place: anti-bullying programs and policies have been put in place. There is also counselling and support service for victims of drug and alcohol abuse. Drug addiction and awareness program officers are often invited to motivate and raise awareness. Random drug searches are often conducted. For sexual harassment misconduct, we allow clear reporting and*

*follow-up investigations. These are also support services for victims of sexual misconduct” (Participant 1).*

*“Unannounced police visits, More security personnel, Gate search every day” (Participant 4).*

*“Expelling dangerous individuals and having the support from the Dept of Education and parents, regular searches by security and dogs, metal-detectors installed at all entrances, cuffs to detail learners and avoid further injuries to staff/learners in the vicinity, weekly testing for illegal substance abuse, parents/guardians should pay for property damage” (Participant 5).*

#### **Category four: The Representative Council of Learners**

*“Talking to community members as the stolen goods are sold in the community, develop an open relationship with learners and police services to make it easier to increase school safety in our community” (Participant 1).*

*“An effective visitor management procedure must be implemented. Strangers cannot just enter and go freely. Strict access measures are necessary”. (Participant 2).*

*“To combat violence, schools must prioritise implementing comprehensive anti-bullying programs and conflict resolution strategies. This includes fostering a culture of respect and empathy among students, providing counselling and support services for victims and perpetrators, as well as addressing underlying issues such as peer pressure and social exclusion” (Participant 4).*

*“Random learner searches by the police without violating us” (Participant 7).*

#### **Category five: The SGB Chairpersons**

*“Our learners are exposed to drug abuse and gangsterism, so we have partnered with crime wardens who regularly come to our school to search learners and make sure our school is a crime-free zone” (Participant 1).*

*“Identifying learners at risk of violence and those displaying aggressive behaviour, intervene before causing harm to others. Implementing a programme to prevent bullying and conflict. The referral system must be active and functional. Educator training on how to respond to violence occurring at schools” (Participant 6).*

*“Cooperation between all stakeholders could yield positive results. Furthermore, the school should have policies that will protect both learners and educators and that will ensure that decisive action is taken where necessary” (Participant 2).*

The accounts of the participants show that effective safety and security measures are imperative for the betterment of both educators and learners in educating and learning environments collectively. They (participants) are in consensus that community involvement and participation hold the key to safe, secure and conducive learning environments. When community members play a proactive role in preventing various crimes, schools are bound to benefit from such an intervention, which may lead to a social change of crime-free learning spaces, as emphasised by the participatory theory. The intervention may be operationalised not only through the CPFs but also through immediate community members' participation. Bringing CPFs closer to schools forms an integral part of safety and security preventive measures. All of these will be possible when open communication channels have been established between all stakeholders, aligned with one of the principles of the study's theoretical basis.

Some participants called for the implementation of new policies to prevent crime, despite an overabundance of legislature promulgated to fight crime in general and criminal activities occurring within the school environment.<sup>64</sup> All the stakeholders constituting a school community must methodically consult and analyse all the existing policies for better and more informed safety and security measures formulation, with the main purpose of preventing crime before it infiltrates and occurs in schools.

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<sup>64</sup> South Africa, *White Paper on Safety and Security, in Service of Safety 1999-2004*; “Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Act 11 of 1993 (Published in the Government Gazette, (15369),” Cape Town: Government Printers., n.d.; South African Council for Educators (SACE), “Handbook for Teachers’ Rights, Responsibilities and Safety,” 2020, [https://sace.org.za/assets/documents/uploads/sace\\_90707-2020-01-10](https://sace.org.za/assets/documents/uploads/sace_90707-2020-01-10); UNICEF & Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention Department of Basic Education, “The National School Safety Framework,” 2015, <http://www.cjcp.org.za/national-school-safety-framework-nssf.html>.

The participants further highlighted the importance of surprise visits and searches by SAPS as per the SAPS Act 68 of 1995 to address crime within the school such as the use of drugs and smuggling of illegal weapons. Effective safety and security measures in secondary schools are of paramount importance for the sustenance of positive learning environments typified by satisfactory learners' academic achievement. Therefore, to come up with effective safety and security measures to promote and ensure a safe and secure school environment, the best police-practice policing models must also be used. They will serve as the source for the establishment and implementation of efficient safety and security measures that must be monitored by all the structures involved to determine the current situation and plan.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

As a preliminary action, the awareness campaigns directed at the learners about the impact of committing a crime and the criminal records must be conducted thereafter. The campaigns must spread to encompass parents and the community at large for their buy-in, in promoting school crime-free zone. Since crime affects all persons, and no single section such as SAPS can fight it alone, all stakeholders, in this case for example, SAPS, CPFs, DBE, Provincial government (MEC of safety), councillors, school patrollers, SGBs, educators, learners and members of the community at large must take this matter of crime seriously and collectively come on board. The school must be a "crime-free zone area". Therefore, as mandated by the constitution, the Ministry of Basic Education must be at the forefront to ensure that the established multi-disciplinary criminal justice approach works to enforce safety and security within all schools to prevent all forms of crime and further monitor the effectiveness and progress. All stakeholders constituting a school community are urged to methodically consult and analyse all the existing policies for better and more informed safety and security measures formulation.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study has examined the types of crimes happening in secondary schools to establish effective and preventive safety and security measures for those crimes. The findings revealed that the preservation of security and safety in all nine schools clearly lacks efficiency, resulting in both educators and learners being more vulnerable to all sorts of criminal acts. The findings further confirmed the prevalence of various crimes occurring in all the schools under study, with the prominent crimes being burglary in all its forms, various forms of violence, theft, bullying, gangsterism that include the carrying and usage of dangerous weapons such as firearms and a variety of sharp objects, and the use and peddling of drugs primarily among the learners. This is unsurprising because, like any other community, schools are prone and susceptible to various crimes involving different actors within and outside the premises, resulting in a negative impact on both educating and learning collectively, something that cannot be ignored. All the participants are in consensus that community involvement and participation hold the key to safe, secure, and conducive learning environments because schools cannot only rely on technological advances. Various recommendations have been proffered and stakeholders of school communities must ensure that the strategies are implemented to maintain safety and security at all times.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION**

The authors acknowledge the limitations within the study, and some were precipitated by limited budget constraints. The first is the exclusion of ordinary public primary schools, and the Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN) schools in general within the district, overlooking the fact that all schools fall within the D4, and are not immune from all the various crimes identified by the study. Secondly, even though the study's focus was on the development of effective measures to prevent various crimes in schools, more emphasis should have been placed on the location of the respective schools, to see how various crimes are swayed by the schools' location. This will contribute to the implementation of preventive measures that are context-specific. Future research should focus on mixed methods, large-scale studies encompassing both primary and ordinary secondary public schools and LSENs looking specifically at how context makes schools vulnerable to various crimes.

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