

**THE IDENTIFICATION OF RESILIENT AND NON-RESILIENT
MIDDLE-ADOLESCENT LEARNERS IN A SOUTH AFRICAN
TOWNSHIP SCHOOL**

by

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, MOTLALEPULE RUTH MAMPANE (Student number 9923757) declare that:

“The identification of resilient and non-resilient learners in a South African township school”

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature

Date

THIS DISSERTATION IS DEDICATED TO

My children Hollo Tiego and Ngwanagwato Selogadi and

my husband, Kgwane Joseph who inspired, supported,

loved and motivated me during my study.

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‘Agee Pebetse a Mmatlabetlabe lekau la bo senkgile’

SUMMARY

THE IDENTIFICATION OF RESILIENT AND NON-RESILIENT MIDDLE-ADOLESCENT LEARNERS IN A SOUTH AFRICAN TOWNSHIP SCHOOL

The aim of the research was to generate a way of identifying resilient and non-resilient middle-adolescent learners in Grade 8 and 9, in a South African township secondary school. The theoretical frameworks on resilience, the developmental context and middle-adolescence were explored and two questionnaires were developed using the literature reviews and the theoretical frameworks.

A Resilience Scale was developed to identify resilient and non-resilient learners in a township school, in terms of self-evaluation. A Learning Behaviour Scale was developed to determine the ability of teachers to identify learners' resilient and non-resilient (academic and social) behaviours. In-depth interviews were conducted to identify themes of resilience and non-resilience in the coping behaviour of adolescents in township schools, and to evaluate the credibility and dependability of the Resilience and Learning Behaviour Scales.

The Grade 8 and 9 learners of the school were targeted for the research, since they are within the middle-adolescent age range (14-16 years). The participants were 190 Grade 8 and 9 learners, who all completed the Resilience Scale.

In-depth interviews were conducted with twelve learners (in three groups of four according to their Resilience Scale scores, that is, highest, lowest and those grouped most closely around the mean). The curricular teachers were requested to complete the Learning Behaviour scale for the selected interviewees.

Although all the items of the Resilience Scale proved statistically reliable, the scale appeared not to reliably identify resilient and non-resilient learners, as judged by the interview data, which indicated ten to be resilient and two to be non-resilient. The interview data were used to determine the resilience status of each learner

according to the Resilience Process Models of Kumpfer and Boyd and Eckert. Interviews were found to be the most reliable research tool to identify the resilience and non-resilience status of the participants. The Learning Behaviour Scale yielded strongly inconsistent results and thus failed to identify resilient and non-resilient learners.

KEY WORDS

Resilience

Non-resilience

Learner and learning

Middle-adolescence

South African township

South African township school

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION, THE RESEARCH QUESTION, PURPOSE OF THE STUDY, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, ASSUMPTIONS, RESEARCH DESIGN, ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS, CLARIFICATION OF TERMS AND PROGRAMME OF STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Research indicates that resilience is developmental in nature and interactive with vulnerability (Blum, McNelly & Nonnemaker 2002:29). Throughout the child's development, traces of resilience can be identified during each developmental stage. Werner and Smith (1992:26-28) in their longitudinal study of high-risk children were able to identify temperamental characteristics of resilience in children as young as two years and the study continued until adulthood with identifiable resilient characteristics at each stage of development. Children, who are exposed to stressors and reared in social environments that threaten their survival and healthy development, are vulnerable to negative outcomes and maladaptive functioning, frequently termed stress-related behaviour in the resilience literature (Smith & Carlson 1997:232-235).

The resilient child demonstrates strength, endurance, persistence and coping under stressful situations. Such children are able to draw positive factors from the social environment and they do not give up, are optimistic and have a strong sense of purpose and future (Smokowski, Reynolds & Bezruczko 1999:427).

The resilience researchers ask themselves the question: What makes it possible for resilient individuals to have and maintain that adaptive behaviour amid adversity while others cannot? What factors facilitate the process of overcoming adversity? (Smokowski *et al.* 1999:426; Blum *et al.* 2002:29; Werner & Smith 1992:55; Aronson 2001:2; and Haggerty, Sherrod, Garmezy & Rutter 1996:12).

Resilience is influenced by factors within the individual, the environment and the individual's history (Blum *et al.* 2002:29; Werner & Smith 1992:2-3; Joseph 1994:25-

27; Smith & Carlson 1997:238-239); it continuously illustrates the coping strategies of the individual and the role the environment plays in the individual's life. By contrast, Barnard, Morland and Nagy (1999:55) recognise less of a personal factor in non-resilient children, when they state that non-resilience indicates failure of the child's normal support structures and evidently challenges the caregivers to rectify the factors in the child's care-giving. Especially in South Africa at present, caregivers are indeed challenged to maintain a healthy care-giving environment and to alter the unhealthy support structures in order to foster and nurture resilience in children.

The characteristics of resilience in children serve as protective factors that reduce the chances for dysfunction and enhance resistance to risk factors (Haggerty *et.al.* 1996:34). Protective factors include personal factors and environmental resources and their role is to modify the child's reaction to adverse situations and prevent maladaptive outcomes. The following characteristics and factors have been included as present in resilient children (Joseph 1994:28-31; Haggerty *et al.* 1996:14; Hauser 1999:7; Burt 2002:139; Benard 2004:14; Kumpfer 1999:196; Werner & Smith 1982:89-93; Brooks & Goldstein 2001:193; Thomsen 2002:7; and Krovetz 1999:7):

- Proactive nature, internal locus of control and independence.
- Ability to construe their experiences positively and constructively.
- Sense of coherence.
- Sense of control, challenge and commitment.
- Positive self-concept.
- Nurturant, responsible, achievement-oriented attitude and assertiveness.
- Problem solving abilities.
- Ability to plan and have aspirations.
- Identification with competent role models.
- Competence (social competence) and perceived efficacy.
- Attractiveness to peers and adults.
- Stable care-giving environment.
- Sense of purpose and autonomy.

- Spirituality, emotional stability, physical well-being, cognitive competencies, good parenting skills (child-parent relationship).
- Responsibility, communality, femininity and socialization.

Middle-adolescence (\pm 14-16 years) as a developmental life cycle is characterised by changes and transitions in the biological, cognitive and psychosocial facets of life. These developmental changes are affected by the adolescent's social environment (Rutter 1995:6).

The developmental transition of the adolescent is also characterised by risk and protective factors associated with adaptive and maladaptive development. Risk factors are associated with negative outcomes and disrupted development while protective factors modify the effects of risk factors and are associated with resilience. It is essential to consider these factors in order to maximally support adolescent development and identify those youth in need of intervention (Hoge 1999:37-40). The developmental task of adolescence has behaviours that are characteristic of the stage and risk behaviours that adolescent learners are likely to be involved in, including drugs, crime and sex. According to Rutter (1995:3), the adolescent period needs not be 'storm and stress', but a normal individual development unless societal conditions prompt it to be different. Burt (2002:137) concurs that adolescence is viewed as '*continuity between the child that was through the adolescent that is and the adult that will be; normal adolescents go through the life transition with little major disruptions while maintaining relationships with parents, developing identity and building extra relationships and skills.*' Burt (2002:137) further maintains that family, peers and community (social systems) are essential in helping the adolescent to establish a satisfying identity to encourage healthy development and possibly preventing developmental barriers they might not overcome on their own.

Complex factors including biological or genetic factors, social environments, personality and behavioural characteristics determine adolescent behaviour (Hoge 1999:38). In South Africa, the middle-adolescent in Grade 8 has changed educational institutions, from primary to secondary school and there is strong demand for adaptation to the new environment and greater academic expectations. In different school contexts, these demands may differ considerably.

The middle-adolescent needs to establish positive relationships with caregivers or an adult, and identify positive role models that will be supportive and nurturing to him or her. The middle-adolescent spends much time at school, and the school, as a care-giving environment, needs to provide him or her with supportive relationships and skills to manage and overcome stressful events in the environment.

The township environment can be classified as a risk factor in the development of the middle-adolescent, irrespective of other factors that the learners can be faced with in their care-giving environment. The middle-adolescent in a township secondary school is accommodated in an educational environment that is often inadequately resourced in both the material and human sense. The culture of poverty and an inappropriate curriculum tend to inhibit the adolescent's explorative nature. The absence of a broad choice of curricular and extra-curricular activities may limit the adolescent's chances of exploration and future perspectives. The school environment may thus frequently function as an impediment to the learner's functioning to full potential, thereby contributing as a stressor to his development.

The inadequate availability of resources at many township schools is illustrated by the extract below, representing the frustrations of a young man who aspires to be a scientist or an aircraft engineer (Kuhlase & Arenstein 2003:2):

'...I know that this dream will probably never materialise'. ...as one of the tens-of-thousands of talented township children, crippled by inadequate facilities at township schools. ..the school is considered hollow because it lacks so many facilities, it has no real substance. Science is taught without laboratories or empty laboratories, parrot learning is emphasised and learners lack understanding.'

The middle-adolescent learner is also influenced by community-related problems that surround the school, such as crime, overcrowding, lack of security on the premises, transport problems and bullying by criminals to and from school. The learner in a South African township school is also exposed to risk and stress factors that affect children at risk namely poverty, family discord, violence and abuse, parental mental illness, parental substance abuse and addiction, illness, single parenting and death. The middle-adolescent in a township school is therefore faced

with many stressors at school that often do not seem to be addressed by relevant authorities. This can make the learner feel helpless and defenceless, which can contribute to negative adjustment.

While risk can indicate the potential for negative outcomes for the adolescent learner, such outcomes can often be avoided. The resilient child is a survivor, such a child is able to bounce back after adverse experiences. The resilient learner in a South African township school will display behavioural characteristics that will facilitate healthy development despite risk and stress factors in the care-giving environment. Resilient learners are able to elicit positive responses in people and form relationships with caring and supportive adults and thus manage to receive positive attention from the relevant adult (Joseph 1994:29). The non-resilient learner in a South African township school will display behavioural characteristics that indicate inability to cope and vulnerability to stressors and risk factors in their environment. Indications of this include delinquent behavioural practices and psychological problems.

Township schools can also serve as a support and protective factor to the learner. The premises safety measures ensure safety and protection of the learner during school time. The educational opportunities that the learner receives at the school serves to promote and enhance his/her cognitive and language development. The school also offers opportunity for developing and strengthening peer relations necessary for social development. Diverse exposure to peers and adult teachers enable the learner to develop role models and to encourage and enhance future perspective. The governance structure of the school is inviting to the learners, by awarding them the opportunity to take part in school governance through their democratically elected student representatives. School governance promotes future participation in democratic structures and serves to facilitate learner's participation in decision making.

The teacher in a township secondary school is required to have knowledge and understanding of how to recognise and encourage the resilient and non-resilient learners, how to identify the learners' strengths and weaknesses and to understand the underpinning factors of their specific behaviours with the aim to support and nurture the learner. The teacher who is able to identify resilience and non-resilience

in his or her learners could then be able to apply more effective measures to prevent and address problem behaviour in the learners (Kruger & Schalkwyk 1997:116).

1.2 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question is formulated as follows:

By which means and criteria can resilient and non-resilient middle-adolescent learners reliably be identified in Grade 8 and 9 in a South African township school?

The research question is unpacked to contain the following subquestions:

- (a) What identification criteria for resilience are applicable to learners in Grade 8 and 9 in a South African township school, and how should the criteria be operationalised for these learners?
- (b) By which criteria do learners in Grade 8 and 9 in a South African township school evaluate themselves as being resilient and non-resilient?
- (c) By which criteria do teachers identify resilient and non-resilient learners in Grade 8 and 9 in a South African township school?

1.3 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to generate a way of identifying resilient and non-resilient middle-adolescent learners in Grade 8 and 9 in township schools, in order to support the development of resilience under various stressful circumstances. The school's role in creating a positive educational environment to identify, encourage and nurture resilience in all learners should ultimately be enhanced.

The overarching purpose of the SANPAD-project to which this study will make a contribution, is to gain understanding of the environmental and developmental factors that encourage and motivate resilient middle-adolescent learners to beat the

odds, and in the process elucidate the role, which the school can play in fostering resilience in children.

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are various theoretical frameworks that can be applied in resilience study, including:

- The Cognitive Affective Personality framework of Mischel and Shoda, which indicates that to understand resilience and non-resilience in children, requires dynamic conceptualisation of personality (Freitas & Downey 1998:263).
- The Social Ecological model or Person-Process Context model of Bronfenbrenner, which studies the relationship of contextual risk, protective factors, intervening processes and the person's characteristics (Glantz & Johnson 1999:183).
- The Transactional model of Kumpfer that identifies four areas of influence namely, the environmental precursors, the individual's personal characteristics, and the dynamic processes that mediate between the environment and the individual or the individual and the outcomes (Glantz & Johnson 1999:226).
- The Stress and Coping model of Moos, which surmises that environmental contexts and personal factors are potential moderators of stressful life events and wellness outcomes depend on the interactions of the internal processes and stressful states (Walters & Simoni 2002:521; Wissing 2000:17).

What I select for my theoretical framework is the Transactional Model of Kumpfer. The framework indicates the interaction between the person and the environment and argues that the person negotiates with the environment with or without the benefit of resilience (Glantz & Johnson 1999:226). According to Glantz and Johnson (1999:227), Kumpfer suggests that the transaction between the person

and the environment creates an atmosphere for resilience to occur, '*To be resilient one does not merely give or receive.*'

Developmental and ecological theories are furthermore also essential in this study of resilience in middle-adolescence, in a township school, since together they could explain the interactions between the learners and their environment and the influencing outcomes and processes.

Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Development emphasises the developmental changes through the life span and the influence of social environment and culture in personality development (Hjelle & Ziegler 1985:113). Erikson's stages of child development include crises from the psychological and social demands, assuring healthy development for the child with successful resolution of the crises. It is important for the child to resolve each crisis successfully in order to progress to the next stage of development in an adaptive and healthy manner (Hjelle & Ziegler 1985:118).

The formation of a personal sense of identity versus identity confusion is of great concern in adolescence (Adams, Gullotta & Montemayor 1992:9). According to Adams *et al.* (1992:173), identity as a developmental stage occurs during the normal maturational process within the appropriate and supportive social context. Marcia's Identity Status Model elaborates Erikson's views on identity formation by describing four identity statuses based on exploration and commitment which the adolescent is experiencing or has experienced (Meeus, Oosterwegel & Vollebergh 2002:93; Meeus, Iedema, Helsen & Vollebergh 1999:420).

Bronfenbrenner (1979:7) mentions that parents' performance as caregivers depends on role demands, stresses and support from the environment that serve as the influencing factors in the care-giving environment of the child.

The Ecological Theory of Development deals with the developing person, the environment and the interaction between them, where the child becomes an active participant in the interactions with the environment. The township secondary school as a microsystem for the middle-adolescent learner has an essential role in the academic education and socialisation of the learner. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979:22), environmental aspects that are more powerful in influencing and shaping

psychological growth of the child are those that have meaning to the child in a given context and the school is such an institution.

1.5 ASSUMPTIONS

Resilience is an important developmental characteristic that enables healthy development of children and non-resilience forms a barrier to optimal development. The identification of South African township school middle-adolescent resilient and non-resilient learners is perhaps nowhere more essential in making the caregivers aware of potential risk and stress-related factors that affect normal and healthy development of the child.

It is further assumed on the basis of their cognitive development and expected level of learning that the middle-adolescent learners in a township secondary school will have developed the necessary skills to be able to self-evaluate, assess and relate logically their life experiences and the role of their care-giving environment with regard to their resilience and non-resilience.

The characteristic resilient and non-resilient behaviour of middle-adolescent township learners will be considered in relation to their environmental context, assuming environmental influences on learner's behaviour in both positive and negative ways.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

The learners that will be involved in this research are Grade 8 and 9 middle-adolescents in a South African township school. The process and context-specific content by which to identify resilient and non-resilient middle-adolescents in a township secondary school will be examined by designing a Likert-type scale for learners and teachers and by conducting interviews. The following research steps will be followed:

1.6.1 LITERATURE STUDY

Literature that concerns resilience in children, the developmental phase of middle-adolescence and South African township schools will be consulted. A review will be done of literature on risk and protective factors, stress and resilience especially in middle-adolescence, in order to identify possibly salient criteria to include in the questionnaire and interview.

1.6.2 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

1.6.2.1 Participants

- A school will be selected that represents a diverse composition of township learners, and feeder areas with diverse socio-economic status and has an average or above average academic performance profile based on its matric results over the past two years.
- A Likert-type scale questionnaire to self-evaluate their degree of resilience will be administered as a screening instrument to all the Grade 8 and 9 learners. Twelve learners will be selected for interviews. Three groups consisting of four learners per group will be interviewed. The learners will be grouped according to their questionnaire scores, in the highest, lowest and mean range. Each group will consist of two boys and two girls, randomly selected in any group consisting of more than two learners each.
- Grade teachers, who offer curricular activities to those learners who are selected to be interviewed will be asked to evaluate the learners blind on a Likert-type scale questionnaire.

1.6.2.2 Questionnaire in a Likert-type format

- A twenty five-item scale in the form of a five- point Likert type will be designed for the purpose of learner identification. The twenty-five items are selected from a pool of items in the literature on learner's resilience as conceptualised in this study.

- The lay out of the questions will be designed to be learner and teacher friendly and easy to complete in a short time. Thirty minutes is allocated for completion of the questionnaire. The scale will be written in English and the main African language of instruction at the selected school.
- The teacher and learner's questionnaire will differ slightly with regard to the structure of the questions. The teachers' responses will include their perceptions of the learners' socio-emotional competence and academic engagement on the basis of their observations.
- The learners' questionnaire results will be compared to those of the teachers to sensitise the researcher to possible differences, which need to be explored further.

1.6.2.3 Interviews

Interviews will be conducted with the Grade 8 and 9 learners who obtained the highest, lowest and mean range scores on the Likert-type scale, that is, four learners in each category of scores. Interviews will help determine qualitatively whether the results on the questionnaire, as completed by the learners and/or teachers reliably and consistently reflect resilience and non-resilience. The interview will thus supplement the data obtained from the questionnaire.

1.7 CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

1.7.1 RESILIENCE

Gilligan (2001:5) defines resilience as a set of qualities that helps an individual to withstand many negative effects of adversity. According to Fraser, Richman and Galinsky (1999, in Gilligan, 2001:5), there are three dimensions to resilience, namely:

- Overcoming the odds, being successful despite exposure to high risk.
- Sustaining competence under pressure, adapting to high risk.
- Recovering from trauma, adjusting successfully to a negative life event.

According to Joseph (1994:25), resilience is:

- The glue that keeps the individual functioning when confronted with misfortunes and challenges.
- The attitudes, coping behaviour and personal strength in people who manage adversity and adjust well to changes in their lives.
- The ability to bounce back from a bad or difficult situation.

Kumpfer (1999:181-182), defines resilience as:

- A process, capacity or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenges or threatening circumstances,
- Good outcome despite high risk status,
- Sustained competence under threat and recovery from trauma.

Kumpfer (1999:181-182) further criticise the notion of focusing on resilience factors disregarding the complex interaction between the resilient individual and the environment; Hauser (1999:4) places more emphasis on the protective factors for moderating the effects of vulnerabilities even though they do not lead to resilience. Hauser (1999:3-4), define resilience as successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances, and protective factors are viewed as key constructs to conceptualisation of resilience; Hauser (1999:2-4), further indicates that resilience can refer to three phenomenon, namely:

- Individuals in at-risk groups with better than expected outcomes.
- Good individual adaptation despite adverse events and experiences of misfortunes.
- Individual differences in recovering from trauma.

1.7.2 NON-RESILIENCE

According to Glantz and Johnson (1999:19), non-resilience is the negative pole of the comprehensive phenomenon of individual differences in people's response to stress and adversity. Glantz and Johnson (1999:19) define non-resilience as the

presence of one or more diagnoses of a serious nature, with problems persisting over time.

Werner and Smith (1982:49) define non-resilient children as those who developed serious learning and behaviour problems. Non-resilient children are vulnerable children who live in persistently disordered family environment that provide little support and/or who have experienced biological insults that prevented them from experiencing successful and healthy developmental outcomes, Werner and Smith (1982:133).

1.7.3 LEARNER AND LEARNING

According to The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1992:673), a learner is a person who is learning a subject or a skill. In South Africa, the term learner is an inclusive definition for all individuals involved in learning, from pre-school to Adult Basic Education and Training. A learner is involved in a continuous learning process with no chronological and academic limit. The learning process aims to create access to learning and to redress the illiteracy rate created by the discrepancies in the past education system. According to Gillis (1996:196), learning is a process that results in a relatively permanent change in performance or behaviour because of experience, while Mwamwenda (1996:523) recognises also the change in behaviour due to practice or experience.

1.7.4 MIDDLE-ADOLESCENCE (PERIOD BETWEEN 14 TO 16 YEARS)

According to Gillis (1996:73), middle-adolescence is the crossover period between childhood and adulthood, a period that is characterised by experimentation and the acquisition of skills necessary to make adult decisions. The middle-adolescent's developmental changes include biological, cognitive and psychosocial development (Rutter 1995:6). According to Louw, Ede and Louw (1998:387), South African adolescents experience the stage as a difficult developmental stage because of the effect of a change-oriented society in which they are growing up. The society is characterised by technological and social changes, role changes, behavioural

norms, ideologies and values; the youth have to achieve a synthesis between the many traditional cultures and the Western culture (Louw *et al.* 1998:387).

1.7.5 SOUTH AFRICAN TOWNSHIP

According to The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1992:1291), a township is an urban area set aside for black occupation. A township is a residential area built during the apartheid era for blacks so that they should be near their places of employment and segregated from the white community. Since housing is a problem in South Africa, townships are now overcrowded and surrounded by informal settlements.

1.7.6 SOUTH AFRICAN TOWNSHIP SCHOOL

A township school is a previously disadvantaged black public school in a township residential area. Most township schools are regarded as having a poor culture of teaching and learning and limited educational resources. Most parents who can afford better education enrol their children in private and former Model C schools.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations as explained by Babbie and Mouton (2002:520-526) will be implemented as follows:

1.8.1 VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

The school selected by the Gauteng Department of Education and the researcher to participate will be approached to give informed consent for the researcher to meet with the learners in Grade 8 and 9 and to explain to the learners the nature, goal and procedure of the study. Learners will be informed of their right to voluntary participation in the study. The researcher will, however, motivate all learners to participate in the questionnaire survey, to encourage a substantial majority of sample participants. Informed consent will again be obtained from the learners selected by the result of the questionnaire for recorded interviews.

1.8.2 ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Using numbers for identification will ensure learners' anonymity and confidentiality during the questionnaire survey. The researcher will create a file with the names and numbers of learners to be used only to track responses for the purpose of the research. Interview information will be kept confidential; names of learners will not be used in the study.

1.8.3 NO HARM TO PARTICIPANTS

The research does not require or encourage learners to be engaged in any harmful psychological, emotional and physical activities. Confidentiality protects the learner's confidential information from being revealed. The researcher will however advise and encourage the learner to agree to specialised help should there be incidences of exposure and potential to harm the learner.

1.9 PROGRAMME OF STUDY

Chapter One contains background orientation on resilience, the developmental context and the stage of middle-adolescence, followed by the research question, the purpose of the study, assumptions, theoretical frameworks, research design, ethical considerations, clarification of terms and the research programme.

Chapter Two will be reviewing relevant literature in relation to resilience, developmental context and middle-adolescence and the identifying characteristics of resilient learners. The review will culminate in the development of questionnaires for learners and teachers to be used in data collection.

Chapter Three will be concerned with the procedure of data collection and processing. The results obtained from self-reports of learners and teachers' observation reports and interviews will be interpreted quantitatively and qualitatively.

Chapter Four will contain the summary, conclusions and the recommendations on the research.

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CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS: RESILIENCE, MIDDLE-ADOLESCENCE AND THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The township school and community environment including informal settlements, mostly contain many risk factors that could form a key barrier to learning. These include socio-economic factors, poor access to basic services, poverty and unemployment, crime and gangsterism, language and communication constraints, inaccessible and unsafe residential environments, poor parental involvement in educational matters, poor human resource development in schools and an inflexible curriculum (Department of Education 2001:17-19). It is also essential to recognise that township schools remain racially segregated due to demographic distribution, in contrast to the school integration policy which is advocated by the Department of Education, and which occurs more readily in urban and rural schools.

The adolescent learner in the township school is thus exposed to various risk factors. Protective social factors and resilient individual characteristics are essential in helping the adolescent to cope and bounce back after stressful experiences. It is essential in this study to place emphasis on the individual characteristics of the adolescent learners since this influences how adolescents interact with the risk factors in their social environment. This study assumes that the identification of resilience factors, based on the resilience literature, can help in understanding the individual learner and provide support to help build up resilience in non-resilient learners. Building up resilience requires promoting the development of resilience factors in learners through empowerment by primary and secondary educators. Joseph (1994:45) argues that the environment plays a major role in helping individuals express their abilities and traits. Through social interaction learners gain experience, receive reinforcement/punishment for their behaviour and are exposed to various role models; and all these experiences have an influence in their successes and failures in life.

These individual characteristics include a sense of identity. According to Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer and Orlofsky (1993:8-9), an identity can be achieved if one is committed to specific areas of development and has intensively explored the alternatives, because 'identity gives meaning and significance to an individual's world'. The identity status of the adolescent influences the individual behaviour of the learner since it indicates a sense of commitment and the exploration of alternatives the learner has achieved and is engaged in. The individual behaviour of a learner can also be expected to reveal the learner's resilience and non-resilience.

Firstly, in this chapter, resilience and non-resilience will be contemplated, followed by a discussion on the adolescent phase, which will be contextualised within the township secondary school and finally the literature review will be operationalised in the design of the questionnaire.

2.2 RESILIENCE AND NON-RESILIENCE

2.2.1 INTRODUCTION

The study of resilience in the earliest literature mostly included individuals who astonishingly survived adverse events in their care-giving environments, thus the relevancy of the phrase 'vulnerable but invincible' (Werner & Smith 1992:2; 1982:3). In addition, most data on resilience research concentrated on individual and environmental factors, which protected the 'vulnerable' children who inadvertently remained 'invincible' (developed healthily) despite an adverse care-giving environment.

However, Joseph (1994:xii-xiii); Krovetz (1999:ix-x); Boyd and Eckert (2002:8); Winfield (1994:37); Brooks and Goldstein (2001:xiii-xiv); Thomsen (2002:vii-xiii); and Brown, D'Emidio-Caston and Benard (2001:19-28) mention resilience education, an intervention to promote and nurture resilience in individuals and to develop resilience programs in the care-giving environment. Resilience education promotes the importance of adult support by primary and secondary caregivers for the development of resilience in all individuals by providing skill programs, building

resilience factors and encouraging the awareness and development of strengths and talents to augment their weaknesses.

Resilience education programs do not exclude the importance of coping and linking resilience to the development of the child. Winfield (1994:37-39) considers resilience as a long term and developmental process that views individuals with strengths, not deficits, and nurtures protective processes to enable children to succeed. I view the resilience model of Winfield (1994:39) relevant and wonderful for township intervention, but it further requires interaction and interdependence between the school, community and the family systems and the training in identification and mobilisation of assets. The inclusive policies are not yet in place in most township schools and the model capitalizes on policies that support protection of learners, building strengths and assets and effective interventions. The model aims to (Winfield 1994:41-43):

- Reduce the negative chain reaction of risk exposure, risk exposure being considered as e.g. gang involvement, which normally results in school dropout. However, the current situation of limited resources in township schools, which leads to high teacher: learner ratios, undiagnosed learning problems, limited specialised services and lack of multidisciplinary support will expectedly inhibit the success of the model.
- Reduce negative outcomes by altering the risk or the child's exposure to risk; for example, sometimes when it is impossible to entirely remove the child from home by social services, the school can design programs to support the individuals and seek solutions to reduce the child's exposure to risk, e.g. provide a mentor. However, my experience of working with children in social services (those removed from home) is that very little is being done to build their resilience, the essence is currently in removal from the risk environment and searching for alternate care-giving environment.
- Establish and maintain self-esteem and self-efficacy, by encouraging positive interactions with peers and adults and striving for experiences of success in task accomplishment. It is essential for the school to offer

learners the opportunity to experience success not only in academic activities, but also in extra-curricular activities and the opportunity to identify their talents.

Joseph (1994:8) also advocates self-esteem and self-efficacy as resilience builders and regards productive individuals to have high self-esteem. However, most township secondary schools encourage learners to follow a strictly subject grouping to ensure matriculation exemption or an academic career ignoring or excluding art, cultural and physical programs, which disadvantage learners with a poor aptitude in those academic areas.

- Open up opportunities for individuals to acquire skills, foster persistence and invest in prosocial activities e.g. community-based programs. Most participants from the township school used for research utilise community-based projects to develop their sports talents. Communities indeed need to expand their programs to promote cross-racial friendships, especially since township schools remain racially segregated even when racial integration is encouraged.

Krovetz (1999:ix-x) mentions that, the resilience theory includes 'the belief that every person can overcome adversity if important protective factors are present in the person's life'. According to Krovetz (1999:x), the theory is based on the belief that care, purposeful support and high expectations from the school, community and family enable the individual to have future aspirations and the ability to overcome challenges. The Resilience Theory is based on the research of Werner and Smith (1992), and their longitudinal study of the 1955 Birth Cohorts of Kauai, which presented the cumulative effects of stress, poverty and disordered care-giving environment on the development of children from birth to adulthood and the search for their strengths and resilience (Werner & Smith 1982:2-3). Resilience Theory Model encourages building care, high expectations, purposeful support, maintaining faith in the future and valuing child participation and by the schools, communities and families (Krovetz 1999:10). The Resilience Theory Model was used to encourage resilience in schools through building assets, capacities and skills and strengthening the environment not fixing the child and thus encouraging change in

the system (Krovetz 1999:6). However, the model is not explicit in explaining non-resilience and resilience reintegration after exposure to stressors and risk factors, a process Kumpfer (1999:185) explains clearly for me.

The Resilience Framework of Kumpfer aims to '*review resilience forces in multiple environmental risk factors and the interaction between the high-risk environment and the internal resilience factors of the individual*' (Kumpfer 1999:180). This background, of resilience research mostly founded on high-risk individuals, may seem to exclude individuals from a seemingly supportive care-giving environment; however, it is essential to note that 'the support and opportunities that represent protective factors of individuals facing adversity apply equally to all individuals' (Benard 2004:9). Resilience literature mentions that resilient individuals are able to bond with a nurturing or mentoring adult who can help them develop healthily (Werner & Smith 1982:96-97:19; Thomsen 2002:5; Joseph 1994:29). The Resilience Framework of Kumpfer (Figure 2.1) takes a holistic view of the individual and elucidates internal resilience factors that can be considered in resilience education. The design of the model will facilitate the design of the questionnaires and interviews to identify resilient and non-resilient middle-adolescent learners, using the environment and resilience factors as the frame within which to construct questions.

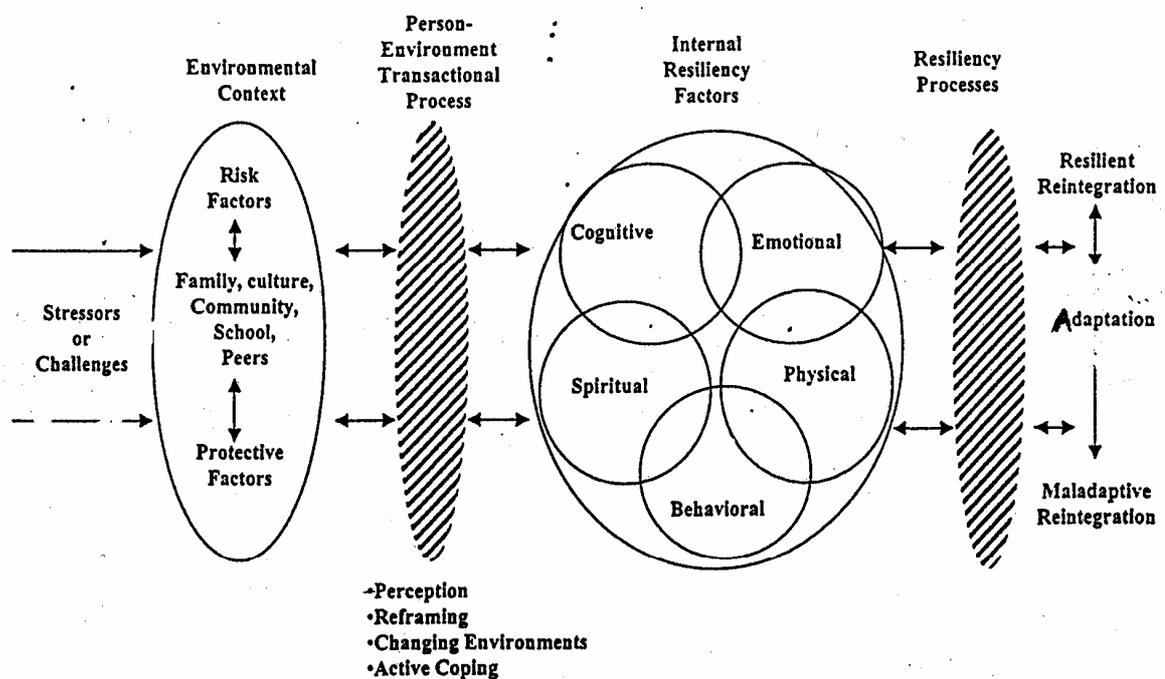
Karol Kumpfer's resilience model is described in Kumpfer (1999 179-215). The model consists of four main areas of influence and two areas of transactional processes, making up six major predictors of resilience (Kumpfer 1999:183). The model begins with an initiating event, which is a stressor or a challenge that signifies the disruption in homeostasis of the individual or the environment and calls for a resilient integration to maintain the stable equilibrium of the individual or environment (Kumpfer 1999:185). The initiating event marks the beginning of the resilient process, and the process ends with an outcome, which may constitute either resilient reintegration or maladaptive reintegration, the latter constituting non-resilience. As illustrated in Figure 2.1, the six major predictors of resilience are:

1. The stressors or challenges.
2. The environmental context.

3. The person-environment transactional process.
4. The internal resilience factors or individual characteristics and outcomes of interactions.
5. The resilience process or the area of transaction between the individual and the outcomes.
6. Adaptive, resilient reintegration or maladaptive, non-resilient reintegration.

2.2.2 THE RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK OF KUMPFER (1999:188-214)

Figure 2.1: Resilience Framework (Karol Kumpfer, 1999:185)



The Resilience Framework of Kumpfer consists of six major predictors of resilience, with each predictor of resilience being discussed individually below.

2.2.2.1 Stressors or challenges

According to Kumpfer (1999:183), when individuals are not experiencing stressful circumstances and are feeling 'OK/fine', equilibrium or a homeostatic state is maintained. However, introduction of stressors disturbs this state and activates the resilient process, creating disequilibrium in the individual. The model indicates that the resilient process begins with an exposure to stressors, demands and

challenging situations that compel an individual to develop strength and grow from such experiences, and cope successfully with the negative events (Kumpfer 1999:188-189). In most resilience literature, overcoming major stressful events is seen as a precursor to resilient development.

The studies of Werner and Smith (1992); Rutter (1995); Haggerty *et al.* (1994); Wang and Gordon (1994); and Kumpfer (1999) regarding the lives of troubled children from troubled environments include major stressful events like poverty (unemployment), parental death, psychopathology and violent environments. In *this* study, stressful events will include major and acute stressors such as being bullied, experiencing academic problems, struggles with relationships and peer pressures and being exposed to stressful environmental and individual demands. It is essential to note that what one individual learner experiences as a minor stressor can be interpreted as major stressors by others, depending on the level of protective factors available in the environment, their perceptions and cognitive evaluation of the problem (Kumpfer 1999:185; Lewis & Frydenberg 2002:420; and Boekaerts 2002:403). Boekaerts (2002:403) further maintains that the intensity of the individual's emotions is stressor-specific and affects the coping strategy. Through their perceptions and cognitive evaluation, individuals are able to interpret whether the level of stress they are exposed to is threatening or unpleasant.

2.2.2.2 The environmental context

According to Kumpfer (1999:189), the social environment of an individual is extremely important in the resilience process. It influences the development and socialisation of the child. It also serves to either cushion or intensify the impact of stressful and challenging events on the child.

Kumpfer (1999:192) mentions that resilient individuals even in high-risk social environments manage to find some support that will ensure them adequate opportunity for a positive and healthy development. The support and nurturance that individuals receive from caring families, communities, schools and peer group members enable them to acquire positive and healthy socialization skills. The individual's social environment is able to provide the following support to encourage the resilience process:

- Effective teaching, advice, a sense of connectedness, family cohesion, good parenting styles and values, positive role modelling, effective supervision and discipline
- Opportunity for meaningful involvement, empathy and emotional nurturance, prosocial peers (as opposed to antisocial) and social support, a sense of autonomy and self-worth

2.2.2.3 Person-environment transactional process

As mentioned in par. 2.2.2.1 above, under the heading on *stressors*, the level of stress that individuals experience is subject to their own interpretation through individual perceptions and cognitive evaluation. The transactional process reconciles the social environment and the individual (Kumpfer 1999:191). It also explains different strategies the individual implements to adapt and modify the environment in order to reduce environmental risk factors. Figure 2.1 (The Resilience Framework Model of Kumpfer), illustrates strategies that can be employed by the individual to adapt and modify the environment. These include using selective perceptions, cognitively reframing, changing the environment and actively coping (Kumpfer 1999:191-197). The resilience literature by Kumpfer (1999); Werner and Smith (1992); Rutter (1995); and Joseph (1994) mention internal resilience factors like temperament as precursors to resilience. Kumpfer (1999:197-200) mentions that certain temperamental characteristics in individuals discussed in par. 2.2.2.4 under Internal resilience factors, tend to either evoke social support and nurturance or foster rejection by the social environment.

The Resilience Framework of Kumpfer indicates that the interactional processes, which empower individuals to reduce the effect of stressors, challenges and demands, include seeking and identifying with prosocial elements in the environment and facilitating relationships with positive role models and mentors. It also includes:

- The need to change the risky social environment by either migrating or seeking the company of prosocial peers or individuals in their environment who will serve as protective factors.

- Individuals seeking a positive life development and adaptation by identifying with adults/peers who provide positive role modelling, advice, nurturance, support, structure, discipline, supervision, and create opportunities for effective and meaningful involvement.

2.2.2.4 Internal resilience factors

The internal resilience factors form the core resilience traits of each individual. They include the spiritual, cognitive, social and behavioural, emotional and physical strengths, competencies and characteristics that are essential for the success of individuals in their social environment and for achieving developmental tasks (Kumpfer 1999:197-210). The five areas of competencies and strengths will be discussed individually below.

(1) The spiritual characteristics

The spiritual competencies are composed of motivational qualities of resilience including the belief system that motivates the individual to maintain focus and success in life. According to Kumpfer (1999:197-200), the spiritual characteristics include the following:

- Dreams and goals, which offer resilient individuals the ability to create fantasies for themselves.
- Existential meaning in life (resilient children are able to cope and survive stressful situations as they believe that they have a mission to accomplish, a purpose to fulfil and problems to solve).
- The spirituality of families and individuals offers predictive positive life adaptations. Religious beliefs have been found to offer anchor, stability and a sense of community. Resilient individuals find healing through helping and caring for others.
- Belief in the uniqueness of oneself and independence, internal locus of control, hopefulness and optimism, a sense of powerfulness, and the ability

to modify negative life circumstances. According to Galambos and Dixon (1984:286-289), locus of control is stable and affects individual behaviour across situations. Caregivers who exercise ultimate control over their children foster an external locus of control, which is associated with powerlessness. Galambos and Dixon (1984:288-287) mention that adolescents with internal locus of control demonstrate social adjustment, high self-esteem, empathy and sometimes self-blame, e.g. individuals might blame themselves for the exposure to abuse, but not the abuse itself. Internal locus of control is influenced by nurturance, consistency, positive involvement, acceptance and approval and support. Poverty might lead to external locus of control through greater external expectations (Galambos & Dixon 1984:289-290).

- Determination and perseverance—resilient individuals are practical, street smart, flexible and possess the ability to formulate new or alternative plans when in a predicament.

(2) The cognitive characteristics

The cognitive competencies help individuals to achieve their dreams and goals (Kumpfer 1999:201). Resilient individuals are achievement orientated and tend to perform better in their academic activities and homework; they are found to possess higher intellectual and academic abilities than non-resilient individuals. Individual learners who are motivated and achievement orientated are building for themselves a pathway to future employment and life success (Kumpfer 1999:201). According to Kumpfer (1999:201-204), the cognitive competencies include the following:

- Higher intellectual and academic abilities and achievement orientation. However, Werner and Smith (1982:89) state that resilient children are not unusually gifted nor do they possess an outstanding scholastic aptitude but they have a strong need to achieve.
- The ability to delay gratification to achieve success. It is essential to indicate that reluctance to delay the gratification of needs and external locus of control cause even intelligent individuals to underachieve.

- High moral reasoning, good judgement, compassion, fairness and decency. Resilient individuals have personal insight and are able to judge their strengths and weaknesses. They are aware from early on that they are different in strength to their parents and siblings.
- Insight and intrapersonal reflective skills and adaptive distancing that enable them to distance themselves successfully from maladaptive coping skills observed in their care-giving environment.
- High self-esteem and the ability to restore self-esteem by overcoming stressors innovatively. Resilient individuals are creative, able to plan and make choices.

(3) The behavioural characteristics

The behavioural and social domain, (unlike the cognitive competencies which entail thought and talents), requires a display of behavioural actions and social skills to accomplish dreams and goals. According to Kumpfer (1999:204-208), the behavioural competencies are characterised by:

- Social skills and being street smart, which require the individual to function effectively in different environments and have problem-solving skills, communication skills and the ability to resist peer pressure. The problem-solving skills enable the individual to be flexible, creative and original.
- Empathy and interpersonal social skills in interactions. Resilient individuals possess an engaging personality, are responsible and willing to care for others, are polite, have good listening and communication skills and are empathetic to the needs of others. They have positive temperaments.

(4) The emotional characteristics

The emotional skills and characteristics of resilient individuals include the ability to manage their emotions. Kumpfer (1999:208-210) lists the following as examples: Happy individuals who are hopeful, positive and optimistic about life. They sometimes use humour to reduce stress and tension and to maintain stable social relationships. They have faith that the odds can be beaten and tend to adopt a

positive attitude towards life. They are aware of their emotions and can control their feelings, e.g. anger, fear and depression. It is essential to note that adults model acknowledgement and expression of feelings to children; some children may not be able to recognise feelings due to lack of modelling in their care-giving environment. According to Masten (1986:461-462), humour is related to positive adaptation, emotional and cognitive adjustment, effective coping, and social competence and it enhances the quality of social engagement and transactions. Humour can be used to cope with fear, anxiety and problems. However, Lewis and Frydenberg (2002:421) warn against the use of humour and denial as coping strategies, in that they can be helpful in releasing tension or even avoiding catastrophic events, but denying the severity of the problem might also lead to avoidance of appropriate action which relates to ignoring or accommodating the incident.

(5) The physical characteristics

According to Kumpfer (1999:209-210), physical characteristics of the internal resiliency factors include a talent for sports, physical attractiveness and good health.

- Healthy individuals can internalise their strengths and interpret themselves as physically and psychologically strong.
- Learners with sports talents and accomplishments including arts and culture are mostly valued in their social environment. Such individuals feel connected and supported through their achievements and involvement in physical activities and the pursuit and recognition of their talent, leading to increased feelings of self-efficacy and self-worth.
- Physical attractiveness, charm and social skills also increase positive life adaptations. Attractive individuals are more liked and valued by their caregivers and they easily attract the attention of other caregivers.

2.2.2.5 The resilience process

The resilience process includes, as illustrated by Figures 2.2 (a&b) the interaction between the internal resilience factors of an individual, the environment and the

outcome of the transactions. The aim of this process is to deal with the procedures that are essential in nurturing and developing resilience in individual learners. According to Kumpfer (1999:210), it is not enough to identify the risk and protective factors in the individual's environment, but it is also important to know how to recognise and discover the talents and assets of each individual to encourage resilience factors to develop.

Building resilience in individuals includes modifying their social environment and providing them with support and nurturance and empowering them with coping skills to overcome stressors beat the odds and finds a 'good fit' (Kumpfer 1999:210). Resilient individuals have the ability to recover and bounce back after stressful events. It is essential to know how to help individual learners to develop resilient characteristics in the absence of predictive risk and protective factors.

Resilient outcomes occur even when individuals fail to overcome stressors but manage to develop stronger (Kumpfer 1999:211). According to Zeitlin and Williamson (1994:21), effective coping occurs when there is a 'good fit' between the stressors, challenges and demands, and the available protective factors; a 'good fit' occurs when:

- The stressors and demands fit with each individual's capacity to meet them.
- The individual has personal resources to cope effectively.
- The environment provides appropriate supportive and evaluative feedback.

2.2.2.6 Resilient reintegration

During the resilience process, stressors and challenges that the individual is exposed to and which are not buffered by external and internal protective factors, disturbs the equilibrium or homeostatic state of the individual. When an individual is experiencing tranquillity, peace and 'crisis-free' moments, when life seems predictable and stable, then the individual is in equilibrium, homeostatic or comfort zone (Kumpfer 1999:211; Johnson 1999:227, and Boyd & Eckert 2002:10). Boyd and Eckert (2002:8) mention that disruptions and chaos are part of life and they can push an individual to reintegrate to different zones as illustrated in both models

Figure 2.2 (a&b). The resilient reintegration is a better zone or state that surpasses the 'homeostatic, equilibrium or comfort' state.

Boyd and Eckert (2002:5-11) use a similar Resilience Process Model as Kumpfer, to explain the resilience reintegration process and their definition of the process is much clearer than Kumpfer's. Both Resilience Process Models are illustrated in Figures 2.2 (a&b) and I will use both Resilience Process Models to explain resilience reintegration. According to Boyd and Eckert (2002:10), the comfort zone, what the Resiliency Process Model of Kumpfer refers to as homeostatic reintegration or homeostasis, indicates a stable and predictable state. Every individual is presumed to have developed protective factors (learned characteristics or strategies from previously coping with stressors or internal traits and environmental factors) in order to maintain development and adaptation in the comfort zone; disruption and change through stressors and demands is not appreciated and encouraged by the individual (Boyd & Eckert 2002:10). However, stressors create disruptions in the comfort zone and compel the individual to reintegrate to any of the following zones (Boyd & Eckert 2002:10-11):

- Resilient zone, a better zone that surpasses the comfort or homeostatic zone. The individual becomes greater than previously.
- Comfort zone. Returning to the previous state before disruptions. An indication that the individual has not learned from experiences and can again experience similar events with the same intensity.
- Reintegration with loss. Dysfunctional, becoming victims of experiences by never recovering fully from disruptions. The individual's life tends to be empty, with loss of hope and enthusiasm.

Johnson (1999:227) and Kumpfer (1999:211) argue in line with Boyd and Eckert (2002:9-10) when they reiterate that an individual is in equilibrium when not affected by stressors, and when exposed to stressful demands disequilibrium sets in, initiating resilient reintegration.

Kumpfer's Resilience Process Model (Figure 2.2(b)) illustrates the outcome of the resilient reintegration process as follows:

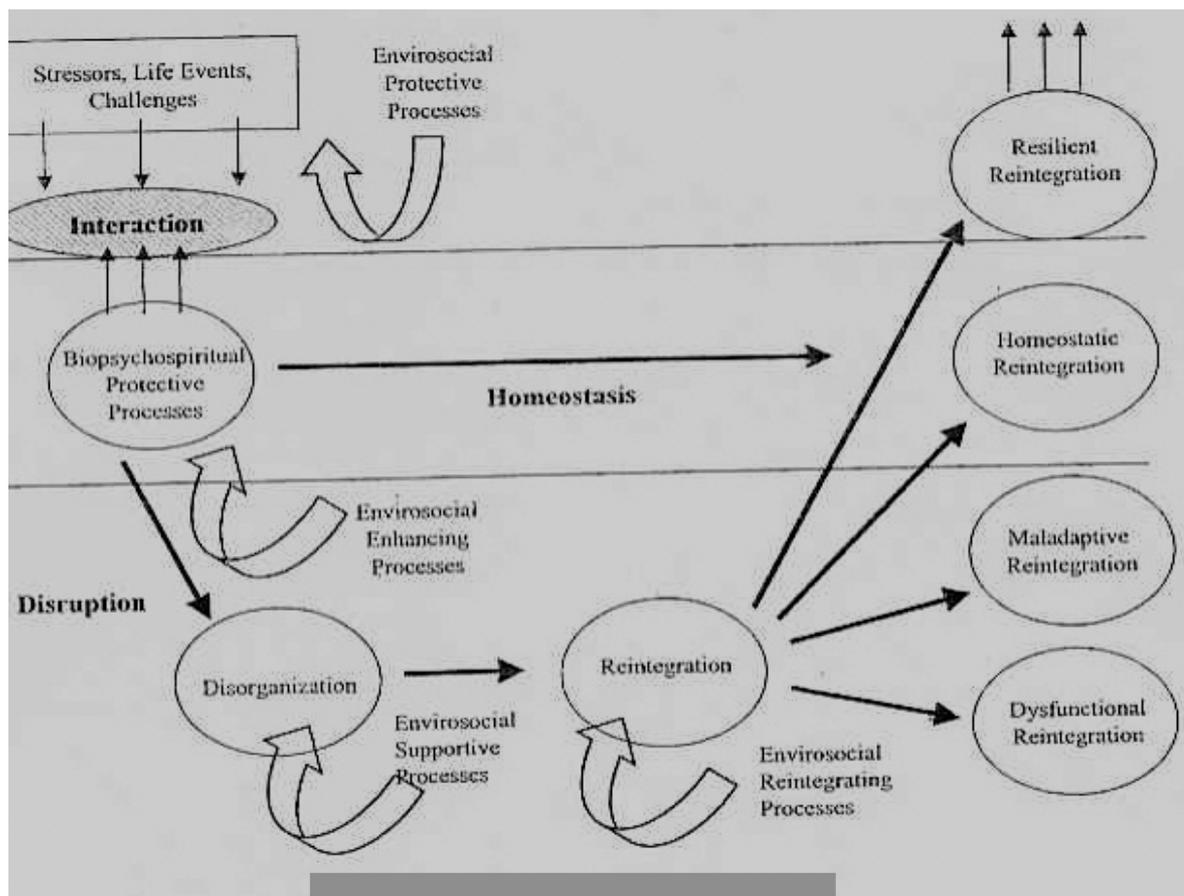
- Resilient reintegration occurs when the individual has achieved a higher state of resilience and strength.
- Homeostatic reintegration occurs when the individual maintains the same state of resilience as before the introduction of stressors or challenges.
- Maladaptive reintegration occurs when exposure to stressors and challenges results in the individual maintaining a lower state of reintegration. The homeostasis process has thus not been fully achieved.
- Dysfunctional reintegration occurs when exposure to stressors, demands and challenges results in a major reduction in positive reintegration. There is a decline towards negativism.

According to Boyd and Eckert (2002:9-10), resilience reintegration is not an easy process because of the instinct for self-renewal, the comfort in preserving what is already known and one is comfortable with; this leads to a comfort zone or homeostatic state as the most preferred state to return to after disruptions by stressors or demands in the environment. Resilience reintegration is characterised by:

- Self-organisation and transformation because it elevates the individual to a higher level than previously; their discussion indicates that the individual who reintegrates to this level becomes '*greater by learning, developing, gaining deeper insight, understanding, and becoming stronger, more knowing and resilient*' (Boyd & Eckert 2002:9). Resilient reintegration enables individuals to become richer and stronger after experiencing major stressors in their lives and to learn and grow through experiences
- Optimism and hope; a choice to learn and grow from experience. The ability to cope with stressors depends on the individual's coping skills; some learners have developed positive coping skills while others manifest negative coping strategies. Some learners may withdraw, lash out or seek comfort in others. Individuals who have developed coping skills are able to

overcome stressors and bounce back, but some individuals struggle with coping, they employ negative coping strategies and are unable to bounce back from stressful experiences. Johnson (1999:226-227) further supports Kumpfer's model by affirming that the transactional process between the individual and the environment 'creates an atmosphere for resilience to occur'. Resilience is a personal negotiation through the risk and protective factors available to the individual. When the individual perceives things to be normal or OK in the environment (internally and externally), the *status quo* is not disturbed; the individual is in a state of equilibrium or homeostasis. The introduction of stressors will set the resilience process in motion, causing the individual to move between stages. The transaction between the individual and the environment makes resilience to occur.

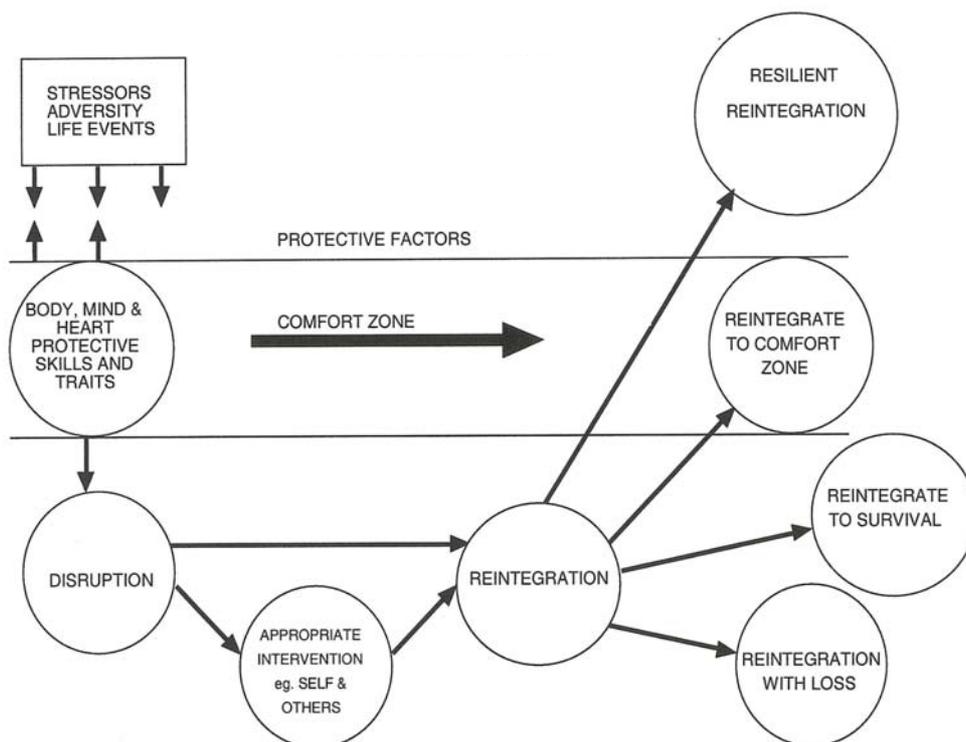
Figure 2.2(a): The Resilience Process Model of Karol Kumpfer (1999:123)



2.2.3 NON-RESILIENCE

The resilience and non-resilience status of the learner is greatly influenced by external and internal factors and suggests the individual's response to risk factors (Winfield 1994:37). The absence of protective factors and the intensity of stressors, demands and challenges expose any learner to non-resilient characteristics. Resilient learners use their strengths and assets to overcome the challenges, stressors and demands they are exposed to in the environment, while non-resilient learners are unaware and unable to utilise their strengths and talents fully, and they struggle to cope. According to Thomsen (2002:2), resilience is solution focused and non-resilience is problem focused.

Figure 2.2(b): The Resilience Process Model of Boyd and Eckert (2002:10)



Thomsen (2000:vii) further reiterates that non-resilience is a focus on the deficiencies, not on the strengths of those learners who are unable to produce desired behavioural and academic outcomes.

The Resilience Process Model Figures 2.2 (a&b) illustrates the non-resilience process just like resilience, occurring after adversities. The models Figures 2.2 (a&b) demonstrate how the internal and external protective factors sometimes balance the stressors and enable the individual to experience life and development as stable and predictable, a comfort or homeostatic zone. However, sometimes disorganization occurs when the available protective factors are not able to balance the stressors resulting in disruptions, chaos and turbulences in the life or development of the individual. The appropriate and normal responses will be to fight to preserve the comfortable and predictable state, the comfort zone. Necessary interventions from the individual and the social systems are required to help the individual to bounce back and to regain the comfort zone, hence, the reintegration process that helps to resolve the crisis and to re-establish and preserve the comfort zone. It is not every individual who bounces back to the comfort zone or homeostatic zone, as illustrated in Figures 2.2 (a&b), some individuals fail to recover fully from stressors, they might choose to view themselves as victims and assume negativism and employ unhealthy and antisocial coping strategies. Such individuals have reintegrated to maladaptive and dysfunctional stages, they are the non-resilient individuals who require intervention (care and support, life-skills, prosocial bonding, opportunities, meaningful participation, clear structures and expectations), to exit the below comfort zone (Thomsen 2002:3). Non-resilience can be equated to a downward spiral from which the individual might never recover (Winfield 1994:41).

In view of Kumpfer's Resilience Framework Figure 2.1 and Resilience Process Models Figures 2.2 (a&b), one can conclude that resilience occurs after the individual has overcome stressors by drawing on available resources in their environment coupled with their internal personal characteristics to cope and overcome adversities or stressors. The resilient individual is able to cope and to reintegrate to his or her homeostatic zone after adversity where they view their lives as normal and OK. However, if the individual is unable to return to the homeostasis zone, he or she develops unhealthy coping strategies and displays non-resilience. According to Benard (2004:7), individuals who are doing poorly for example, struggling with chronic conflicts, violence, low self-esteem, delinquency and substance abuse (demonstrate serious behaviour and academic problems), are

non-resilient. In my view, the essence of non-resilience is the occurrence of chronic problems and stressors, serious coping problems, lack of resolve and poor problem solving skills, poor and unhealthy interactional and interdependent relations between the individual and the social systems, insufficient protective factors and under-utilised personal strengths. Every individual has talents and strengths, but non-resilient learners are unable to recognise their strengths. In fact, they need motivation, encouragement, support and nurturance from their environment (protective factors) to help them recognise their assets and develop resilience characteristics. Non-resilient learners need to be empowered and to be helped to find their own resilience. Absence of coping strategies results in non-resilient learners' inability to recognise and draw on the available protective factors in their environment.

According to Winfield (1994:37), resilience is not a fixed attribute, it is a dynamic concept and the protective factors modify the response to stressors or risk factors. Winfield (1994:38) further indicates that '*labelling individuals resilient and non-resilient can make one easily overlook the significance of the concepts because due to circumstances of the events, an individual can be resilient at certain critical moments and non-resilient at others.*' Benard (2004:7) also maintains that research proved that adolescents who demonstrated non-resilience developed into healthy adults who are resilient.

2.2.4 CONCLUSION

In consolidation of the resilience model used in the study and my own understanding of resilience, exposure to stressors in the environment disturbs the normal equilibrium of the individual, forcing the individual to act in order to re-establish the equilibrium by overcoming the stressor through positive adaptation and coping or to succumb to stressors by crumbling and showing social maladaptation. Stressors in relation to the township middle-adolescent can include negative peer pressure or rejection, poverty, parental death or illness or rejection, neighbourhood violence, academic problems and relationship problems. Socially maladaptive behaviour in middle-adolescents can include delinquency, withdrawal and problem behaviours, but it is important to consider that personal strengths

(social competence, problem solving, autonomy, sense of purpose) and protective environmental factors are essential for individuals to cope with stressors and develop resilience. Werner and Smith (1992:9) mention that shyness can be a protective factor against delinquency for boys. It can mean that withdrawal and shyness might expose the learner to torment, rejection and bullying by 'popular' and violent learners, yet it can protect the learner from negative peer pressure and promote development of a sense of control and challenge for the ostracised learner.

The care-giving environment (Figure 2.1) includes risk and protective factors. These factors interact with the internal characteristics of the individual and thus contribute to the development of resilience and non-resilience of the individual. The continuous interaction between the individual's internal resilience characteristics and the environment enable the resilience process to develop. Benard (2004:13-38) speaks of resilient personal strengths that aid the development of resilience. These resilient personal strengths are considered as:

- Dynamic personality traits which transcend gender and culture.
- Contextual assets that can be deficits if not well balanced.
- Strength that individuals can use for survival when driven by intrinsic motivation to meet basic psychological needs.

The resilient personal strengths develop in individuals when families, schools and communities create opportunities for them. The personal strengths are (Benard 2004:13):

- Social competence: responsiveness, communication, empathy, caring, compassion, altruism and forgiveness.
- Problem solving: planning, flexibility, resourcefulness, critical thinking and insight.
- Autonomy: positive identity, internal locus of control, initiative, self-efficacy, mastery, adaptive distancing, resistance, self-awareness, mindfulness and humour.

- Sense of purpose: goal oriented achievement motivation, educational aspirations, special interests, creativity, imagination, optimism, hope, faith, spirituality and sense of meaning.

2.3 ADOLESCENCE

2.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Literature on adolescent development mentions that the onset of adolescence is a critical period of biological and physiological changes, characterised by accelerated growth and development (Carr-Gregg & Shale 2002; Takanishi 1993; Mwamwenda 1996; Adams & Berzonsky 2003; Balk 1995; Burt 2002:137; and Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi 2000:537). According to Erikson (1980:94), the developing adolescent experiences physiological and physical maturity and works towards consolidating his/her social roles; the adolescent tends to be curious about life and is preoccupied with social perceptions. The search for continuity, sameness and ego-identity (the consistent recognition and accomplishment of achievements), is the role of an adolescent (Erikson 1980:94). Erikson (1980:95) further maintains that when the adolescent is deprived of the opportunity to develop and integrate ego-identity he/she tends to resist '*with the astonishing strength encountered in criminals who are suddenly forced to defend their lives.*' The ego-identity can refer to identity achievement and the frustration thereof identity diffusion, which might lead to delinquency.

Most adolescents in order to deal with identity diffusion might tend to over identify, become clannish, intolerant and exclude those viewed as different (in/out groups) which tends to be a defence against identity confusion (Erikson 1980:97).

The adolescent is experiencing changes both internally and externally. The internal changes include biological and physiological changes that are age related. External changes include environmental demands and expectations that family and society place on them during this time of cognitive development and maturation.

Adolescents are expected to cope with these internal and external changes and to adapt to their new roles in society and the family. Crockett and Crouter (1995:6)

maintain that families, schools, peer groups and communities are essential in helping shape the opportunities available to developing adolescents, as well as buffering the risks they are exposed to. They are able to achieve this through the activities and programs they encourage and the norms and values they promote in the respective environments.

The Grade 8 and 9 middle-adolescent learners in a township school are second language English speakers, with most coming from family background where English is not used in their respective homes. Such learners tend to communicate in English only in class or with peers. The school as a western form or tradition of institutionalising education imparts western values. The South African school culture and context is not different, it enforces western Eurocentric values that are often in contrast with the individual learner's cultural values and customs. Such practices become more evident during the traditional schooling seasons, when learners attend circumcision schools instead of their academic schools, leading to backlog or even failure in their academic work.

2.3.2 ADOLESCENCE AS A DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE

Carr-Gregg and Shale (2002:1-2; 32-56) mention that adolescence comes in three stages, each stage accompanied by a big question that the adolescent has to struggle with. The three stages and their big questions are:

- Early adolescence: 'Am I normal?'
- Middle-adolescence: 'Who am I?'
- Late adolescence: 'What is my place in the world?'

The developmental challenges and explorations of the middle-adolescent phase are confirmed in child development literature (Carr-Gregg & Shale 2002; Takanishi 1993; Mwamwenda 1996; Adams & Berzonsky 2003; Balk 1995). Carr-Gregg and Shale (2002:1-2; 32-56) understand the middle-adolescents as 'explorers' who need to find answers to the question 'Who am I?' on their own. They appear to reject adult control and support in favour for their friends, while evidently knowing that they need the support, nurturance and unconditional acceptance from their care-giving

environment. In their search for identity, they want to know what their purpose in life is, what they are capable of achieving, what their future prospects are, whether they can form and maintain relationships and whether they can gain the respect of others. They also struggle with their emotional development, and with how they think others see them. It is extremely important for educators to equip them with information about their developmental changes to prevent traumatic experiences during these changes.

Carr-Gregg and Shale (2002:32-53) indicate the following behaviours characteristic of middle-adolescent learners:

- Friends are considered more important than parents; the desire to belong in their peer group is greater. Parents need to avoid alienating themselves from their middle-adolescent child because they object to their choice of friends; instead, they can use indirect influence to support them.
- Search for identity; it is like a roller coaster ride with appearances that seems to change dramatically occasionally. The search for identity is considered the most important task of adolescence. Some adolescents struggle finding an identity, it seems like putting on different masks to find the one that fits and playing with different identities is normal (Carr-Gregg & Shale 2002:34). The search for identity might lead the adolescent to align with groups in order to fit-in and belong. Parents need to find time to spend with their adolescents and focus on making them happy; not to allow fashion to destroy the relationship.
- Rejecting adult control and support. In their search for identity, they tend to reject adult control and support. The temperament of the adolescent and the reactions of caregivers to moments of conflict will determine the degree of bumpiness of the middle-adolescent stage. Positive communication will help caregivers deal with the rejection and challenges from their middle-adolescents.

- Possible rebellious behaviour and communication breakdown. Some middle-adolescents might shut out and push caregivers away, or communicate less, their behaviour patterns fluctuate. Caregivers need to allow the adolescent opportunity to develop independence but maintain communication with them.
- Risk-taking behaviour. In their striving to develop and define their identity the middle-adolescents might be involved in risk-taking behaviour to experiment in their world. Carr-Gregg and Shale (2002:44), mention that low risk behaviour like 'sport activities, music, volunteering and creative activities' are necessary for developing identity, self-esteem, emotional independence from their caregivers and creating meaningful relations with their peers.
- Growing need for a guide or mentor. Middle-adolescents need a caring and supportive person to provide security and stability. Such a person can be helpful in preventing risk-taking behaviour and encouraging feelings of self-worth and efficacy in the adolescent.

According to Takanishi (1993:5), adolescence is regarded as a period that offers the opportunity to prevent damaging outcomes and assist young people towards a promising future. With the guidance of a caring adult, the adolescent can negotiate pathways to a healthy adulthood. In the township environment, early and middle-adolescents tend to continue the tradition of their families by performing specific roles expected of them or seen to encourage group identity and ethnicity.

Circumcision is one of the experiences adolescents undertake.

According to Mwamwenda (1996:415), a handful of African ethnic groups accept circumcision as part of their culture. Certain South African ethnic groups including the Bapedi group regard adolescents as young adults and circumcision of the adolescent male or female child signifies their entry into adulthood and serves as an instrument of socialization (Mwamwenda 1996:402). According to Mwamwenda (1996:402), circumcision takes place during late adolescence, between the ages of 17-21 years. However, today adolescents of 12 years are circumcised. Most

families, due to Christianity, have moved away from the traditional circumcision school practices (especially female circumcision, which they regard as a heathen practice). Instead, they send their male children for circumcision by medical doctors. Families and communities, who adhere to the traditional circumcision practices (Christians and non-Christian members, in urban or rural areas), require their adolescents to undergo traditional circumcision practices.

Circumcised individuals are required to behave and function according to their newly acquired adult status. Such demands result from the belief that adolescents have acquired skills during the initiation ceremonies to function as responsible citizens, community and family members. In rural areas, which are governed by the chief or king, circumcised individuals have more status in terms of tribal responsibilities, which is more evident during celebration ceremonies. The status of the circumcised adolescent and adult is elevated above that of the uncircumcised individual; even the traditional wedding attire, duties and practices differ between circumcised and uncircumcised adolescents and adults. In such communities, there is enormous pressure to follow the traditional circumcision practices. The hospital circumcision is considered inferior and can lead to exclusion by peers (Mwamwenda 1996:418). The mystery and secrecy behind tribal female circumcision have created a tradition of sisterhood and comradeship among circumcised community members. Although there are speculations of what female circumcision entails, the circumcised community fails to affirm or deny speculations, and one has to undergo circumcision to find out.

2.3.3 ADOLESCENCE AND IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Marcia *et al.* (1993:46), explain that the development of identity is influenced by various interrelated variables including:

- Identification with parents before and during adolescence.
- Parenting styles.
- Social expectations about identity choices from family, peers and school.
- Exposure to identity alternatives.
- Availability of successful role models.

- Appropriate foundation for coping with identity formation.

According to Marcia *et al.* (1993:3-10), the reinforcement of identity formation marks the end of childhood and the beginning of adulthood. Identity formation involves the integration of childhood skills and beliefs into a coherent whole providing each adolescent with both a sense of continuity with the past and a direction for the future. Identity formation certainly allows all individuals a central position within themselves where experiences and actions can be referred and related to. It is essential to recognise that, according to Erikson's psychosocial stages of development, the successful resolution of each stage is based on the successful resolution of previous stages (Erikson 1980:94). Marcia *et al.* (1993:3-10) identify three aspects of identity formation:

- The structural aspect, which refers to the consequences that identity formation has on the individual's psychodynamic balances. This includes the importance of strengthening the individual's personality aspects that are essential for making judgement, delaying gratification and achieving self-efficacy.
- The phenomenological aspect, which refers to the individual's experiences of having achieved identity formation and the particular style of identity formation that has been achieved. Each individual becomes aware of his/her basic characteristics and position in the environment in terms of identity formation.

Individuals with conferred (given) identity and constructed (self-initiated and self-directed) identity maintain different identity statuses. Conferred identity implies lack of a sense of self; it is a continuous fulfilment of tasks given to one by 'others' (childhood caretakers). The future of an individual with conferred identity is just a fulfilment of other people's expectations. Such individuals have little control of their future they have identity foreclosure. Individuals can also be in transition, from conferred to constructed identity. They have an identity moratorium. Constructed identity includes striving towards achieving inner coherence and a central sense of

self-worth with better future prospects. Individuals with constructed identity have reached identity achievement.

- The behavioural aspect, which refers to observable behaviours that indicate the presence or absence of identity structures. This aspect reflects the identity formation styles that people can see in the answer to the question, 'How does identity manifest itself in behaviour?' This aspect of identity formation relates to *late adolescence*. It concerns the commitment of choosing an occupation or an ideology in life and making commitments about the future. A need for commitment is essential, for soon the late adolescent learner will be leaving his/her family in search of employment and further studies.

According to Balk (1995:23-24; 132-133), identity formation in adolescence is a stage where adolescents deal with the crisis of forming their own identity. They look for imaginative guidance in both peers and adults, while trusting and hoping to find guidance and focus on some goals and resistance to fight impractical ideas. Adolescents in their search for identity are attracted to ideas; they develop interests in peer approval and are eager to belong to a moral order identifying what is good and what is evil. In their search for unique identity, adolescents will also try new appearances, commitments and relationships. Such choices can either produce strengths of individuality or leave the adolescent weak and immature, for the adolescent still has to discover that to develop a clear sense of personal identity is a life-long process.

According to Shucksmith, Hendry and Glendinning (1995:254), parental warmth, support, inductive discipline, non-punitive sanctioning and consistency in child caring are associated with positive development and outcomes; parent-child relationship and interactions are characterised by parental acceptance and control. Dekovic and Meeus (1997:164-165) mention that parent-child interaction that promotes support, nurturance and acceptance is related to social competence, positive peer relations and satisfaction and positive self-esteem in adolescents. Meeus *et al.* (2002:93), concur when they mention that a good parent-adolescent relationship fosters positive identity development and secure adolescents are more

achievement oriented and inclined to be autonomous and to engage in identity exploration and alternatives. Shucksmith *et al.* (1995:254) maintain that some factors within the family including parenting arrangements are responsible for most problems in adolescence. Most parent-child interaction characteristics needed for achieving positive identity relates to resilience characteristics. Nurturing and developing resilience in individuals requires the same commitment and positive interaction between caregivers, the environmental protective factors and the individual resilience factors. The development of identity in adolescence does not start in middle-adolescence but continues from early to late adolescence (Meeus *et al.* 1999:422).

According to Meeus *et al.* (1999:423), identity development occurs in a progressive transition, from identity diffusion to foreclosure or moratorium and from moratorium to achievement, and adolescents always have to pass the moratorium to reach identity achievement. Marcia *et al.* (1993:46) indicate that an early and middle-adolescent learner is more likely to be in an identity foreclosure and diffusion status because of parental influences and parenting styles. Balk (1995:23-24; 132-133) summarises Marcia's identity statuses, as described below:

- Identity diffusion occurs when adolescents make no commitments, they just drift through life. Identity diffusion occurs after a crisis where, instead of making a meaningful commitment, the individual renounces the task as irresolvable. Identity diffusion is mostly associated with adolescents where lack of commitment in identity formation has been modelled. Identity diffusion occurs mostly in adolescents from families with permissive and neglecting parenting styles. Such adolescents lack effective role models (from their homes) and the development of goals, values and beliefs are not consistently encouraged (Marcia *et al.* 1993:47). Shucksmith *et al.* (1995:254) indicate that permissive parents simply accept the behaviours and attitude of children as appropriate while neglectful parents exercise low levels of control and demonstrate low levels of acceptance. Shucksmith *et al.* (1995:255) further maintain that neglectful parents encourage autonomy at an early age which serves as a risk for peer pressure. Controlling parents exert too much power on the adolescent, risking identity formation and

exploration while coercive parents actually encourage peer pressure, low self-esteem and low confidence and they give low support to the adolescent.

- Identity foreclosure occurs when adolescents have accepted the values espoused by others, especially parents, without any sense of personal struggle or choice. Individuals with identity foreclosure do have commitments. However, the stability of their commitments will be influenced by their life events. Identity foreclosure is mostly associated with individuals who strongly identify with their caregivers. Identity foreclosure occurs also in adolescents from families with authoritarian parenting styles, homogenous communities with strongly established traditions and friends with similar backgrounds, similar future directions/ lack of wider variety of life-styles and belief systems (Marcia *et al.* 1993:47).
- Identity moratorium occurs when adolescents are searching for persuasive answers to questions about personal and communal existence. The search enables them to grapple with unresolved questions. The moratorium should be supported since it allows the adolescent to gain a fulfilled identity by experiencing the possible life roles without the pressure of fulfilling any of the roles; there is expressed desire to inform changes in one's life.
- Identity achievement occurs when adolescents coming from the moratorium period of struggle, have reached meaningful closure in matters. They have found personally satisfying answers to their questions. Adolescents who have achieved identities are characterised as confident, independent, with a sense of autonomy and willingness to form intimacy with peers. Individuals with identity achievement have commitments, but the stability of their commitments will also be affected by their life events. Shucksmith *et al.* (1995:254) maintain that authoritative parents combine support and concern in their parenting, setting firm limits, demonstrating acceptance and encouraging healthy parent-child interaction, autonomy and high self-esteem in adolescents.

2.4 THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

2.4.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979:5-10), the ecological environment influences the developing learner by directly affecting his/her psychological growth through the complex interconnected systems that extend far beyond his/her immediate situation. In order to function effectively, the developing learner relies on the interconnections, communications and participations between the microsystems like homes, schools and the communities, which he/she has relationships with. The developing learner who actively participates in all the mentioned microsystems demonstrates the continuity that exists among the settings and the relations of events between settings. This emphasises the importance of different roles to be played by the learner.

Adolescent learners need help in learning how to transform stresses and challenges into experiences that will enhance their strength and active engagement in their environment. As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, adolescents need support and unconditional acceptance from their caregivers (Carr-Gregg & Shale 2002:42-43; Joseph 1994:7-11). The adolescent needs an adult role model to provide examples of how to persevere, have patience, recognise challenges of life and enjoy meeting challenges. Takanishi (1993:viii) explains that effective development of adolescents is affected by the provision of information, development of skills and motivation by social institutions such as schools, churches and community recreational centres. Adolescents' choice of developmental routes is based on their personal characteristics as well as the forces emanating from their environment.

According to Crockett and Crouter (1995:5-8), adolescents' individual characteristics, such as temperament, biological predisposition to specific types of stressors, intelligence, coping style and social skills influence the way in which they engage their environment, face challenges and gain experience. The individual characteristics also affect how adolescents respond to challenges in their social

environment and the decisions they make. It is essential to recognise that decisions made by the adolescent learner need to be understood in relation to:

- Personal characteristics.
- Care-giving environment.
- Selection of activities.
- Relationships.
- Skills and experiences together with opportunities and obstacles experienced in the course of development.

2.4.2 THE SCHOOL AS A SOCIAL CONTEXT

2.4.2.1 Introduction

Takanishi (1993:1) mentions that the adolescent, just like any other human being, needs to —

- experience secure relationships,
- become a competent individual who can cope with the demands of everyday life, and
- believe in a promising future, work, family and citizenship and to be a valued member of a group that provides mutual caring relationships.

Most of the desires and needs of adolescents can only be realised if the community and families can provide them with education that will help them to make informed decisions about their future. The provision of academic support from a variety of sources such as homes, communities and schools is needed to provide the adolescent with opportunities for academic achievement. The school as an institution of learning should motivate, empower and encourage learners to perform to the best of their abilities. An inviting school provides a safe environment for learners to experience, discover and test their knowledge and to realize their talents in a safe, secure and supportive environment where learning and mistakes are encouraged in the spirit of active participation. Teachers as secondary educators

should have the interest of their learners at heart and are responsible to help them become the best they can be.

According to Takanishi (1993:viii), at school, learners perform to the best of their abilities in a class that is enjoyable (which serves as a protective factor), regardless of their intellectual abilities (Krovetz 1999:10). However, on an individual level, the success at school is related to competence and self-efficacy (which are protective factors (Joseph 1994:8-10; 28-33)). The teachers, by making learning more enjoyable motivate learners to learn independently. Schools can provide adolescent learners with curriculum activities that give personal meaning and answers to the most alarming questions, which relate to physiological and behavioural changes in their bodies and lives e.g. life skills and sexual education.

2.4.2.2 The South African township school and community

South African secondary township schools are situated in black urban areas and because of their demographic location, they cater for black learners from different cultural, language and socio economic groups. Integration along racial lines is not realised in township schools and residential areas. The transformation in education pertains to measures taken to address the crisis that the education department is confronted with. In township schools it will include (Davidoff & Lazarus 1997:4-7, Harber 2001:41-42, 61-64):

- Poorly qualified teachers.
- High failure rates of learners.
- Poorly resourced schools.
- Lack of career guidance facilities and bridging programmes for learners.
- Extensive need for teacher training and empowerment to enable and encourage better teaching and learning methods.
- Adapting and implementing a curriculum to include all learners with their various needs

The education department is addressing educational problems in township schools and the culture of teaching and learning is encouraged.

The ever-growing influx of residents to township areas, especially to the informal settlements, affects the resources of township schools. The schools tend to cater for mostly economically disadvantaged learners. This puts more pressure on school resources because parents cannot afford high school fees; which means the school governing body, in order to address high teacher: learner ratios and to offer extracurricular activities that can be of benefit to learners, cannot employ extra teachers. Informal settlements mostly result from lack of adequate housing facilities and high rates of unemployment. Learners from informal settlements are mostly deprived of quality family life, they lack personal space and privacy, have no room to study, mostly cannot afford the luxury of exposure to media in the form of either television or books and lack safety and security (Slabbert, Malan, Marais, Olivier & Riordan 1994:43).

According to Harber (2001:66-67), success of the school is not solely associated with wealth and a high level of resources, because most schools are successful despite limited resources. Davidoff and Lazarus (1997:4) also agree when they mention that 'most teachers have managed to achieve remarkable success in terms of fostering a real love for learning and by being extremely innovative with almost no resources'. This demonstrates that even with limited resources township schools can manage to achieve success in promoting healthy development of learners. The teachers in township schools need to be innovative and work from an asset-based approach to be able to achieve better educational outcomes for their learners. The advantage of township teachers is that most of them have been raised in township environments, live there, and are able to understand and empathise with their learners. Most teachers believe in their learners and communities and are willing to help learners to achieve and realise their potential. Parents are also encouraged to participate in school development. However, teachers understand if parents are not actively participating in the development and running of the school due to work commitments, ignorance and lack of interest.

Curricular activities are essential for the future of the learners, especially when the form of assessment in schools is mostly tests and exams. Learners need to be offered subject choices according to their interest and aptitudes. Life Orientation helps to advise on subject choice and about the hormonal changes happening in

the adolescents; the school's role is highly essential in this area. It is possible that most adolescents will not receive sexual education from their primary educators and it becomes the responsibility of the school to include sexual education in their curricular activities to help adolescents to understand and accept the changes they are going through and to have knowledge of responsible sexual behaviour in their intimate relationships. The Life Orientation Programme aims to prepare learners for the responsibilities and promises of life. It serves to inform and educate learners about life skills, quality of life and issues that are central to their developmental phase, daily hassles, experiences, current social, and health concerns.

There is also the ecological transition of the Grade 8 middle-adolescent, who has to change schools, from primary to secondary school and the expected change in the roles of the learner. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979:6), a change in roles also requires a change in behaviours, thinking and feelings of the developing learner. Secondary school is strongly associated with exposure to life-threatening substances like drugs and to risk-prone activities, which further make adolescence a particularly difficult time. It also becomes an environment where learners are required to fend for themselves and to learn survival skills. At secondary school, the middle-adolescent learner is expected to have problem solving skills in order to survive peer pressure and fulfil role expectations.

2.4.2.3 The township adolescent (learner)

In South Africa, the role of the black adolescent at secondary school has shifted from that of a militant youth with the aim of liberating the black race to that of facing the challenges of developing into a responsible citizen in a democratic society. According to Slabbert *et al.* (1994:10), during the apartheid era, black township adolescents were on the centre stage of political transformation. The political heroes of today are among the youths who participated and even lost their lives during the political struggle between domination and resistance. During this period, the black township adolescent was mostly portrayed as a member of a stone-throwing, unruly, ill-disciplined and faceless mob (Slabbert *et al.* 1994:15). Harber (2001:68) further mentions that most South African schools have been affected by violence and some children are also raised in violent environments, thus making

violence an acceptable way of life. Perpetuation of violence is also reproduced in schools, e.g. corporal punishment which encourages antisocial aggression, vandalism and tends to perpetuate the cycle of violence (Harber 2001:170). Today, in a democratic South Africa the township adolescent have to find different means to affirm themselves in the middle of the crisis in our country, including the integration and transformation especially in the political, social, educational and economic factors of our country.

According to Early and Vonk (2001:15), educational and academic competence is related to risk and protective factors. Township life exposes most learners to risk factors including:

- Poverty, which is a risk factor for poor academic achievements.
- Violence, which is a risk factor for developing aggressive behaviour and coercive interpersonal styles.

However, if teachers utilize the resources available in the Education Department (Psychological Services, Health Services and Social Work Services) learners from poor families and communities can be helped to improve their academic competence and perform to the best of their abilities. Teacher commitment and determination can improve and change the lives of learners from deprived and violent environments. Even though limited opportunities place children at risk for a number of difficulties, including school failure and delinquency, children who perceive the opportunity to succeed educationally are more likely to achieve positive goals and resist antisocial behaviour.

According to Thomsen (2002:17), to build resilient individuals requires building caring and supportive relationships with them and focusing on their care-giving environments that is, home, school and community. The care-giving environment has to provide individual learners with care and support, the opportunity to have high expectations and to contribute in meaningful ways. Learners who are offered the opportunity to contribute meaningfully in their environments are confident that adults believe in their abilities and view them as important, capable and necessary participants in their environments.

The township secondary schools that promote resilience ensure safety for their learners by promoting a culture of teaching and learning, with emphasis on academic competence and excellence, encouraging the learners to develop a sense of purpose, autonomy, and efficacy and promote a sense of belonging.

2.5 OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

2.5.1 INTRODUCTION

Kumpfer (1999:182) indicates that most researchers view resilience as a transaction of internal and external variables that are capable of affecting life adaptation and positive outcomes in high-risk children.

2.5.1.1 Non-resilience

Werner and Smith (1992:48; 69; 83) consider non-resilient children as those who developed serious learning and behaviour problems that sometimes required institutionalisation, while children who were able to cope in their environment were regarded as resilient. High emphasis was placed on competence and coping with problems and development into competent and autonomous individuals who 'worked well, played well, loved well and expected well' (Werner & Smith 1992:3). Resilient individuals were not unusually gifted or with outstanding scholastic aptitude, but were found to be responsible, achievement oriented, had a need for structure, were empathetic, socially mature, sensitive and had a source of support (Werner & Smith 1992:89-97). Joseph (1994:25-33) considers resilience as the bouncing back from a stressful situation instead of wallowing in misery. The altruistic characteristic of resilient individuals and the essence of developing the resilient personality in children are emphasised.

However, Johnson (1999:228-229) poses important questions about the transaction process of resilience, which he answers by referring back to Kumpfer's Resilience Model, which he admits recognises resilience and what it could be if its significant meaning is considered. The questions Johnson (1999:228) asks when defining

resilience bring forth the complexity of concept and these proved relevant during the designing of the questionnaire. The questions are: 'what if' —

- resilience is invisible,
- it is something you feel and cannot describe,
- it is something that happened but you cannot see, and
- it is something that warms your thoughts but there is no language to share it.

The questionnaire that aims to identify resilient and non-resilient learners tries to reduce resilience to observable behaviours. Resilient individuals are considered to have a 'hardy personality' because they possess adaptive characteristics namely, a sense of control, challenge and commitment (Joseph 1994:30; Kaplan 1999:20; and Haggerty *et al.* 1996:12). These characteristics empower the individual to be resilient, competent and to cope (Brooks & Goldstein 2001:1). Kumpfer's Resilience Framework (Figure 2.1) illustrates internal resilience characteristics and environmental factors, which are essential for resilience in individuals. Krovetz (1999:7-10) also considers resilient individuals to have social competence, problem solving skills, autonomy and sense of purpose that help the individual to bounce back from stressful demands in interaction with the caring environment, positive expectations and participation provided in the care-giving environment.

Most resilience characteristics are interrelated and interdependent, making grouping and definition of concepts essential. Similar characteristics have been packed together to enable proper differentiation of questions and operationalisation of concepts. Individual questions and the background of resilience characteristics that motivated the design of the questions will be discussed in each question of the Resilience and Learning Behaviour Scales. Resilience factors that have been covered in the questionnaires are:

- Commitment; the discussion of commitment includes perseverance and motivation.
- Future aspirations, which cover sense of purpose.
- Problem solving, which includes sense of challenge.
- Role models.

- Self-awareness, which covers self-confidence.
- Sense of control, which covers independence.
- Support, which covers relationships, family and social adeptness.

2.5.1.2 Resilience factors

The subjective and objective definition of concepts has been considered in the design of the questionnaire based on resilience factors. Seven factors have been considered in the process of designing the questionnaire, extracted from resilience characteristics mentioned in Chapter 1, par 1.1. The design of both Resilience and Behaviour Scales is based on the seven resilience factors illustrated in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: The Resilience Factors

Resilience Factors	Definitions	Other related factors
Commitment (Joseph 1994: 32-33; 38-39; 196-197) (Kumpfer 1999:20,200)	Find value and meaning in what one is doing. See reason and purpose in existence. Goal oriented (having goals and direction). Achievement motivated. Set achievable and realistic goals. Goals are motivators. Show effort to succeed - `not just giving up. See meaning behind suffering. Persistence – tolerate frustrations (commitment motivates perseverance). Learn when to give-up unattainable goals or goals that stretch available resources for other goals (flexible in planning). Sticking with it (persistence is the key to achieving goals). Determined, creative, street smart. Motivated. Active involvement and taking responsibility in own learning experiences. Invest time and effort in learning activities. Attempt to discover own talents to ensure accomplishment. Value self and learning activities. Have knowledge of needs, interests and goals. Know own strengths and weaknesses. Exercise freedom of choice and control to match abilities and task requirements. Establish achievable	Perseverance Motivation

Resilience Factors	Definitions	Other related factors
	goals.	
<p>Future aspirations (Thomsen 2002:16)</p>	<p>To be optimistic, have goal and direction.</p> <p>To have achievement motivation, educational aspirations, special interests, imagination, hope, creativity, coherence and a sense of meaning.</p> <p>To harbour a belief that life has meaning and one has a place and role to play in the universe.</p> <p>To believe in a positive future (in spite of current stressor) and something bigger than self.</p> <p>A feeling of being valuable.</p> <p>Having an existential meaning in life and belief in own survival to accomplish a mission.</p> <p>To develop a mission for one's life (create a perceived purpose for own life, survival and suffering).</p>	<p>Sense of purpose (Kumpfer 1999:198)</p> <p>(Benard 2004:28-35).</p>
<p>Problem solving (Thomsen 2002:25-26)</p>	<p>See life as a challenge and make decisions.</p> <p>Awareness of problems:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Problems include practical personal situations e.g. access to lunch money. 2. Moral and interpersonal issues e.g. keeping rules, telling the truth, managing conflict with others, resists negative peer pressure. 'Social perspective taking': seeing the problem from someone else's point of view. 3. Consequential thinking: thinking of consequences of choosing a particular alternative. <p>Solution focused, being aware of effective actions and focusing on them (focus on what is going right not wrong).</p> <p>Ability to consider or think of, what went wrong, possible solutions, steps to solve problem and consequences to alternative behaviour.</p> <p>Have an open mind (think beyond the negative).</p> <p>Regard problem as a challenge not a threat.</p> <p>See the positive aspect of change and beyond the negative situation.</p> <p>Flexible thinking (see situation from different perspective, generate alternatives).</p> <p>Hold realistic expectations about effort and time needed to solve the problem. Know which problem needs <u>emotion-focused coping</u>: emotional adaptation to a situation; and <u>problem-focused coping</u>: problem can be solved.</p> <p>Coping skills, (is being a creative problem solver, flexible thinking).</p>	<p>Challenge (Joseph 1994:31-32; 37, 196, 232-239)</p>

Resilience Factors	Definitions	Other related factors
	<p>Managing, surviving, seeing life as an opportunity to learn and grow. Seeing change and adversity as manageable.</p> <p>Seeing problem as an opportunity and learning from failure as a success.</p>	
<p>Role models (Joseph 1994:22-23; 42)</p>	<p>External structures that promote internal structures, teaching children self-control, clear expectations and sense of responsibility (structure to model).</p> <p>Showing nurturance and unconditional love is good role modelling – it builds sense of trust.</p> <p>Take responsibility and show (teach) by example. Sensitive to other people. Recognise and take care of own needs. Set realistic goals and expectations.</p>	
<p>Self-awareness (Joseph 1994:256-258)</p>	<p>Good knowledge and judgement about self.</p> <p>Recognising own feelings and understanding how feelings influence behaviour.</p> <p>Awareness and acceptance of personal strengths and weaknesses (using strength to compensate for weaknesses).</p> <p>Acceptance of self and others. Liking self.</p> <p>Tolerance towards others (appreciate individual differences).</p> <p>Accepting and valuing own differences in relation to others.</p> <p>Descriptive evaluation of self (self-concept).</p> <p>Self-confidence (trust in own abilities and judgement).</p> <p>Persistence, sticking to goals, self-motivated, responsible, taking charge of life (proactive) and refusing to give-up.</p> <p>Acknowledging talents.</p> <p>Growing from own mistakes.</p>	<p>Self-confidence</p>
<p>Sense of control (Joseph 1994:31-32; 36; 195-196; 239-243)</p>	<p>Accepting responsibility for own actions and consequences to own behaviour. Influencing behaviour (controlling behaviour).</p> <p>Taking charge of situation, proactive approach to problem solving. Independent and active engagement in reaching a solution.</p> <p>Self-reliant but skilful to get appropriate help from others.</p> <p>Internal locus of control.</p> <p>Responsible individual (taking charge of oneself and seeking solutions to problems: chores promote a sense of responsibility by giving the opportunity to be accountable. Independent.</p> <p>Self-control: ability to make a better choice. Delay of gratification. Reflective responses. Impulse control</p>	<p>Independence</p>

Resilience Factors	Definitions	Other related factors
	<p>(thinking before acting). Resisting temptation. Low frustration level. Give-up or persevere? Dealing with anger and frustration. Using stop, think, evaluate and act technique of self-control and dealing with a problem situation.</p> <p>Independence: Autonomous, self-directed. (Avoiding negative peer pressure and participating in goal-directed activities). Hopefulness, optimism. Intrinsic motivation, self-management and inner control. Confidence, assertiveness, responsibility, self-discipline and leadership skills.</p>	
<p>Support Thomsen (2002:4-7; 23; 30)</p> <p>Joseph (1994:20)</p>	<p>Building supportive and caring relationships.</p> <p>Relationships (fulfilling ties that provide stability, nurturing and love). Paying compliments, noticing and making effort to connect.</p> <p>Unconditional positive regard. Encouragement, nurturance, positive recognition, rewards, and prosocial bonding.</p> <p>Sense of belonging.</p> <p>Pleasant and positive. Able to 'read others'. Showing interest in others, willing to meet others halfway. Being helpful, courteous and kind. Endeared to others.</p>	<p>Family</p> <p>Relationship</p> <p>Socially adept</p>

2.5.1.3 The Resilience Scale and the Learning Behaviour Scale

The Resilience Scale (Appendix A) was designed using the resilience factors presented in Figure 2.3. The items aim to represent the resilience factors in a behavioural format, and the formulation of each item is supported by the literature review. The Learning Behaviour Scale (Appendix B) was also designed using the same resilience factors and literature, and items were designed around the Resilience Scale although varied.

Figure 2.4: The Resilience Scale

Resilience factor	Items	Motivation for item formulation
Commitment	I do not give up trying (Question 17)	The effort to reach goals, having the reason to continue and finding meaning in what one is doing is a characteristic of resilience; a committed individual never gives up (Joseph 1994:32).
	I take part actively in class (Question 10)	The individual's motivation and effort to do well at school with the belief that events in their lives are mostly determined by their efforts, Benard (2004:32). Being active not passive appears to be a powerful tool of coping from the first year of life (Werner & Smith 1982:57).
	Nothing will ever keep me down (Question 20)	Joseph (1994:32) mentions that 'in times of adversity or task difficulty a goal oriented perspective will motivate a person to persevere'.
	I work hard at school (Question 2)	To have intrinsic motivation, direction, persistence, determination and intention is a motivation for optimal functioning, and achievement motivation is a key factor influencing behaviour (Benard 2004:29).
Problem solving	When I have a problem, I try to solve it (Question 3)	A proactive approach to problem solving, not waiting for others to do things for them (Joseph 1994:28).
	I always look at different ways to solve a problem (Question 5)	Think flexibly; 'the ability to see a situation from different perspectives and generate different solutions for problems' (Joseph 1994:31).
	I learn from my mistakes (Question 13)	The ability to learn and grow through experiences offers the individual optimistic hope (Boyd & Eckert 2001:8). Resilient children view mistakes as opportunities for learning (Brooks & Goldstein 2001:13).
Support (Giving and maintaining supportive relationships)	I feel sorry when I have hurt others (Question 19)	A socially adept learner knows how to take the perspective of another, show empathy, social sensitivity, awareness and the ability to read and get along with others, (Joseph 1994:19-20).
	I like helping other children at school (Question 11)	Being 'other oriented', helpful, ('required helpfulness'), courteous and kind helps to boosting the sense of self-worth, and is a characteristic of resilient children (Joseph:1994:35).
	My friends know they can trust me (Question 8)	A relationship that makes an individual to feel valued, respected and known to peers even adults (Krovetz 1999:vii; Thomsen 2002:37).

Resilience factor	Items	Motivation for item formulation
	I am able to see when someone is happy (Question 7)	The ability to read feelings from non-verbal cues helps facilitate relationships, and to form the basis of morality, compassion and forgiveness; empathy is the fundamental people skill (Benard 2004:15).
Support (Having and using supportive relationships)	My family accepts me the way I am (Question 1)	'Acceptance is rooted in unconditional love and sets the environment for a resilient mindset'; accepted children feel secure to reach-out to others and to seek support and solve their problems' (Brooks & Goldstein 2001:110).
	There is always someone to help me (Question 24)	Resilient children are socially skilful, well liked and able to solicit support and help from others when they need it; they establish support with at least one caregiver in their lives (Joseph:1994:29, 35). Ability to search for love by connecting and attracting the attention of available adults (Benard 2004:15).
	I get along with other children (Question 12)	Giving support to others, the socially adept learner expresses interest in what others are doing, compromises when experiencing conflict of interests, is polite and always lending a helping hand and offers enjoyable company (Joseph 1994:20).
	I feel better after talking about my problems with people whom I love (Question 21)	According to Werner and Smith (1982:98-99), resilient youths felt 'the support and counsel from friends and parent figures helped a lot', and the talks with significant others made them feel better especially after punishment or when sad.
Role model	I have good role models (Question 25)	Children imitate what they see; they learn by example. To encourage resilient behaviour in children, role models need to, e.g., take responsibility, confront their problems directly, accept themselves, communicate sensitively with others and recognise and care for their own needs as well as others (Joseph 1994:22-23; 122-123)
Future aspirations	I believe I can have a bright future (Question 23)	Belief in a positive future in spite of current stressors, in something bigger than what one is (self); an existential meaning in life and in own survival in order to accomplish a mission (Kumpfer 1999:198).
Sense of Control	I like to learn about new things (Question 4)	Self-reliant and skilful to get appropriate help from others; a responsible individual who is able to take charge of him/herself and to seek solutions to problems (Joseph 1994:31-3; 36).
	I like to be in control of things (Question 9)	According to Brooks and Goldstein (2001:137), resilient individuals believe they are masters of their own destiny and perceive success to be rooted in their efforts and abilities.

Resilience factor	Items	Motivation for item formulation
Self-awareness	If I try hard I know I will succeed (Question 14)	To persevere with a task that proves to be difficult at first, for what appears to be a huge challenge at one time may not be like that in the future; a perception that success is rooted in effort and ability (Brooks & Goldstein 2001:137; 168-169).
	When I believe that I am right I am not afraid to show it (Question 6)	Benard (2004:23) mentions that 'a belief that one can accomplish what he/she wants to accomplish is the most important ingredient and the recipe for success'.
	I believe that I have talents (Question 16)	'Islands of competence', areas of strength children possess need to be promoted to improve their self-esteem and communicate their strengths because true self-worth, hope and resilience are based on success in important areas of their lives (Brooks & Goldstein 2001:13).
	I like to celebrate when I get things right (Question 18)	Resilience and self-worth are enhanced when children are provided with the opportunity to shine and taste success including making a positive difference in their world (Brooks and Goldstein 2001:14).
	I have successfully survived bad events in my life (Question 22)	Resilient individuals are able to distance themselves from situations causing pain, they understand they did not create them and cannot fix them; however they can cope with them and emerge stronger (Thomsen 2002:28).
	If people can know how I really am inside, they will love me (Question 15)	According to Werner and Smith (1982:91), resilient individuals have a good personality and are well liked by others.

- **The Learning Behaviour Scale**

The formulation of the Learning Behaviour Scale followed the same motivation and resilience factors as the Resilience Scale. The Learning Behaviour scale is presented in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5: The Learning Behaviour Scale

Resilience factor	Items	Motivation for item formulation
Commitment	The learner performs beyond what is expected, i.e. extends him or herself. (Question 3)	Developing a sense of accomplishment and pride, a reservoir of emotional strength to help face and master routine and stressful events (Brooks & Goldstein 2001:135).
	The learner participates actively in class. (Question 1)	Engaged activity, a sustained cooperative learning and a mutually empowering participation between educator and student and student and student, each engaging with another and the environment; an authentic and active engagement which is a key to resilience education (Brown <i>et al.</i> 2001:40-41).
	The learner is NOT performing to his/her full potential. (Question 11)	'The individual's motivation and effort to do well at school with the belief that events in their lives are mostly determined by their efforts' (Benard 2004:32).
	The learner lacks motivation. (Question 16)	Resilient individuals are able to persevere and function against the odds; they need to tolerate a certain degree of frustration in the process of pursuing goals (Joseph 1994:30, 39). Intrinsic motivation drives the process of human development, resilience and adaptation (Benard 2004:38).
	The learner CANNOT be trusted by his peers. (Question 17)	The relationship of trust includes being valued, respected and known and enables the learner to feel welcomed and safe (Krovetz 1999:vii).
	The learner is afraid to attempt new things. (Question 9)	The ability to feel free and volitional in one's actions and to be fully willing to perform and embrace the activities with a sense of commitment and interest (Benard 2004:20).
	The learner likes to succeed. (Question 14)	"The experience of success is a powerful component of a resilient mindset and each accomplishment reinforces future efforts and achievement" (Brooks & Goldstein 2001:136).
	The learner has some guts (Question 20)	'Children require hope and courage to follow their goals and to develop inner strength and resilience necessary to succeed despite adversities' (Brooks and Goldstein 2001:289).
Sense of Control	The learner is able to utilise support provided to him/ her. (Question 5)	Joseph 1994:35 maintains that resilient learners are socially skilful, well liked and able to solicit support and help from other when needed.
	The learner does the work required independently. (Question 6)	Resilient learners take a proactive approach to problem solving, requiring them to be self-reliant and independent and able to get appropriate help when needed (Joseph 1994:28).

Resilience factor	Items	Motivation for item formulation
	The learner likes to be in control of things. (Question 8)	Resilient individuals take charge of themselves and they actively seek out solutions to problems (Joseph 1994:35).
Problem solving	The learner uses different strategies to reach a solution. (Question 10)	Coping skills are essential for psychological resilience and problem-focused coping include using different strategies to control the course and outcome of a problem (Joseph 1994:36-37).
	The learner is afraid to explore new opportunities (Question 13)	Flexibility is the ability to see alternatives, to change course and not to be stuck; it is a critical life skill and one of the foci of conflict resolution programs (Benard 2004:18).
Support (Giving and maintaining supportive relationships)	The learner has NO adult support. (Question 4)	Children need the support and encouragement of adults to develop natural aptitudes and interests (Joseph 1994:34).
	The learner gets support from home. (Question 12)	Children need the support and encouragement of adults to develop their natural aptitudes and interests. Adults provide children with feedback about the worth of their skill (Joseph 1994:34).
Support (Having and using supportive relationships)	The learner is UNABLE to work well with other learners. (Question 7)	Resilient individuals are well liked, they are socially skilful and able to solicit support and help from others when needed; they have a positive disposition and a smooth social disposition (Joseph 1994:35).
Role model	The learner chooses positive role models (Question 2)	Nurturance, structure and good role models promote resilience in children. 'The unconditional love of a nurturing adult, who become important role model for the child, helps the child to develop a basic sense of trust' (Joseph 1994:42).
	The learner has a positive influence on others. (Question 18)	Resilient individuals are able to see their misfortunes as an opportunity to grow and to contribute to the society and to be a source of support to others (Joseph 1994:26-27).
Future aspirations	The learner lacks future aspirations. (Question 15)	"The resilient child is oriented towards the future; he/she is living ahead, with hope" (Brown <i>et al.</i> 2001:12).
	The learner shows potential for a bright future (Question 19)	An orientation towards a bright future pushes individuals to healthy outcomes despite adversity; a positive and strong future focus has been identified with academic success, a positive self-identity and fewer health-risk behaviours (Benard 2004:28).

CHAPTER 3

EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATIONS: PROCESS, FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the requirements for the empirical research, the sample, the research procedure in developing the questionnaires for middle-adolescent Grade 8 and 9 learners and teachers, the findings and the interpretation of results.

3.2 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of the study is to generate a reliable way of identifying resilient and non-resilient middle-adolescent learners in Grade 8 and 9 at a township secondary school, ultimately to support the development of resilience under various stressful circumstances. The research also aims to understand the school's role in creating a positive educational environment to identify, encourage and nurture resilience in all learners.

3.3 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

A multi-method (mixed-method) approach was used applying a quantitative followed by a qualitative data collection and analysis procedure in the form of a self-report questionnaire (Resilience Scale), Learning Behaviour Scale (for teachers) and in-depth interviews. The purpose of the triangulation method in research is to converge, corroborate and establish correspondence of results (Darlington & Scott 2002:121). The mixed-method approach would, hopefully, help to determine the credibility of the Resilience Scale questionnaire and the dependability of the teacher's Resilience Learning Behaviour Scale (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 1999:61-64).

The Resilience Scale questionnaire for learners aimed to help identify a group of possibly resilient and non-resilient learners. The Learning Behaviour Scale for curricular teachers aimed to help determine the ability of teachers to identify the learner's resilient and non-resilient (academic and social) behaviours. In-depth interviews helped to identify themes of resilience and non-resilience and to evaluate the credibility and dependability of the Resilience and Learning Behaviour Scales in identifying resilient and non-resilient learners.

3.4 METHODOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS

3.4.1 QUESTIONNAIRES

The following guidelines were adhered to when designing the learner and teacher questionnaires (Peterson 2000:20-21; Babbie & Mouton 2002:237-239; Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000:260-261; and Terre Blanche & Durrheim 1999:294-297):

- Items relating to activities, events and characteristics particular to learners were asked to ensure that learners have sufficient educational and general knowledge to answer the question; this is achieved by asking items relevant and applicable to their experiences.
- Items that are clear, relevant and unambiguous were used in the questionnaire. To encourage understanding, negative items were avoided, questions were kept short, simple, and direct and words familiar to the learners were used.

3.4.2 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

In-depth interviews were preferred to facilitate flexibility in data collection with regard to the areas explored, the direction of the discussions and the ability to clarify the meaning of questions and the answers provided (Darlington & Scott 2002:49). Themes similar to the learner's questionnaire were used to determine the learner's understanding and interpretation of the questionnaire.

3.5 THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH PROCESS

3.5.1 THE SAMPLE

3.5.1.1 The school

A township secondary school in Mamelodi was selected as per convenience, but also because it consists of a diverse composition of township learners, from feeder areas with a diverse socio-economic status. The school offers two vernacular languages, Tsonga and Sepedi, which required the translation of the Resilience Scale from English into the two languages. A school with a consistent good academic performance (measured by matriculation results) for at least three years in succession was essential in demonstrating a good culture of teaching and learning. The academic performance record of the school shows improvement for the past three years in terms of the overall matric pass rate as indicated below (information provided by the principal of the school): 2001:50, 8%; 2002:58, 4% and 2003:76, 3%.

3.5.1.2 The learners

The Grade 8 and 9 learners of the school were targeted for the research, since they are within the middle-adolescent age range (14-16 years). The total number of Grade 8 and 9 learners in the school was more than 400. The participants were 190 Grade 8 and 9 learners; the limited learner participation (<50%) and uneven gender distribution (34% boys, 66% girls), could point towards a limitation of the study. The learners' participation was voluntary. Letters were attached to the questionnaire to ensure an ethical procedure was followed and to inform learners about the confidential nature and no-harm procedure of the research. A summary of the sample data is given in Table 3.1.

The distribution patterns according to residential area and age were not analysed because residential and age details of 45 Grade 9 learners could not be established (the school has no records of learner's personal details and the relevant learners had not returned to school by early January 2004).

Table 3.1: Summary of the sample data

		Number of learners	% of learners
Gender	Boys	64	34
	Girls	126	66
Total		190	100
Grade	8	99	52
	9	91	48
Total		190	100

3.5.1.3 The teachers

The curricular teachers for the Grade 8 and 9 learners were requested to complete the Learning Behaviour Scale for the twelve learners selected for interviews. The teachers had no knowledge of the learner's self-evaluation scores of the Resilience Scale. The Learning Behaviour Scale required the teachers to evaluate the behaviours of the learners (academic and social) blindly and confidentially.

3.5.2 RESEARCH TOOLS

3.5.2.1 Resilience Scale

A five-point Likert Scale was used, with declarative statements and the selection of categories in respect of resilience based on prior research questionnaires, with words that can be easily understood by township school learners (Peterson 2000:70-75 and Del Siegle 2003). A twenty five-item Resilience Scale (Appendix A) was developed to address the essential criteria of resilience with mostly two questions or more representing one criterion. The questions used include factors supporting resilience according to literature as explained in par. 2.5.1, Figure 2.3.

According to Peterson (2000:65), a rating scale of five to nine points works well in most research situations and the number of points influences the size of the correlation coefficient. A five-point scale includes a neutral response, to avoid

forcing learners to disregard indifferent responses to either agree or disagree. A scale consisting of five or more points increases the item's variance.

3.5.2.2 Learning Behaviour Scale

A twenty-item Learning Behaviour Scale (Appendix B) in the form of a five-point Likert-type Scale was developed to address the essential criteria of resilience, again with mostly two questions covering one criterion. The Learning Behaviour Scale is in English and a few questions were designed in the negative to measure the consistency and dependability of the teacher's answers, to encourage objectivity and discourage adherence to a particular response style (Terre Blanche *et al.* 1999:294).

3.5.2.3 In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with twelve learners, in three groups of four according to their Resilience Scale scores, that is, highest, lowest and those grouped most closely around the mean. Each group of learners consisted of two males and two females. A tape recorder was used to avoid interrupting the interview process and to enable attendance to relational aspects of the interview (Darlington & Scott 2002:59). The interviews were conducted in North Sotho and translated to English, the reliability of the transcription was checked by reading the translated interview while listening to the recording (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 1999:132).

Interviews also help to communicate the person's perception about the past, present and future experiences (Darlington & Scott 2002:50). The interviews thus enabled and encouraged the learners to talk about events in their past and present, and their future aspirations, depicting resilience and non-resilience themes and patterns. In using open-ended questions and probing for clarity, in-depth interviewing allows for an authentic understanding of the respondent's beliefs and experiences (Silverman 1993:10). Interview themes were based on the learner's Resilience Scale but the structure was flexible to enable probing, to explore the meaning of questions and answers, and to negotiate understanding (Ritchie & Lewis 2003:141; and Darlington & Scott 2002:49). Thematic analysis of interviews

provided data to compare with the teachers and learner's questionnaires, and to verify the credibility of the questionnaires.

3.5.3 ADMINISTRATION OF RESEARCH TOOLS

3.5.3.1 Pilot study

The Learner's questionnaire (Resilience Scale) was designed in English and initially consisted of fifty items, which were piloted to a group of eight Grade 8 and 9 learners. A separate township secondary school was used for the pilot study. The pilot testing of the questionnaire helped in identifying the following:

- Errors in the questionnaire (format).
- Overlapping questions and reading comprehension difficulties – some questions were written on a level beyond that of the Grade 8 and 9 township learners.
- Culturally insensitive and misunderstood items.

Possible problems concern clarity and readability of the Resilience Scale. The learners were asked to comment on the questionnaire and their comments led to the revision and reworking of the Resilience Scale. The time taken to complete the questions was checked and adapted to ± 30 minutes (Litwin 1995:60; Cohen *et al.* 2000:260-261 and Terre Blanche & Durrheim 1999:198-199).

3.5.3.2 Data collection

(1) Resilience Scale

Access to learners for research was granted after completion of curricular activities, at the end of October before the November 2003 examinations. The expected number of participants, the total of all Grade 8 and 9 learners in the school exceeded 400. However, only 190 Grade 8 and 9 learners participated in the study, which had to be conducted after school-hours. Four Grade 11 learners were recruited and trained to help with the supervision of learners and to ensure that personal details were filled in properly.

(2) In-depth interviews

Twelve learners were selected for interviews according to their scores on the Resilience scale. Four learners from the top score were selected, a boy and a girl from each of Grade 8 and 9; from the sample of 190 only four participants awarded themselves full scores on all the items (125). Four learners were selected from the median point (questionnaires were arranged from the highest score to the lowest and the median point was calculated by counting from both ends towards the middle, selecting two learners from both sides), that is, a boy and a girl from each of Grade 8 and 9. The learners with a median score were randomly selected since seven learners awarded themselves a score of 112 and nine learners awarded themselves a score of 111. Finally, four learners were chosen from the lowest scores. The lowest self-evaluation score in the sample is 78, followed by 82 and 86. Learners were randomly selected from the sets of 82 and 86, to meet the criteria of a boy and a girl from each of Grade 8 and 9. Some interviews were conducted in December after the final examinations, during school holidays, and others in early January when schools re-opened. All of the twelve learners selected were interviewed. The school and the teacher's centre were used as interview venues. Table 3.2 gives a summary of the self-evaluation scores and the ranking of scores. Letters of the alphabet are used to represent ranking position and scores with the same percentage are ranked equally. A learner number was allocated randomly for statistical analysis and has no relevance to the evaluation scores

Table 3.2: Resilience Scale scores and the rank order of the 12 interviewees

		Resilient				Median status				Non-resilient			
Learner Number		184	185	186	189	011	012	150	188	009	010	187	190
Resilience Scale score	/125	125	125	125	125	112	112	111	111	86	86	82	78
	%	100	100	100	100	89	89	88	88	68	68	65	62
Learner Rank order		A	A	A	A	E	E	G	G	I	I	K	L
Grade		8	9	8	9	8	9	9	8	9	8	8	9

(3) Learning Behaviour Scale

Curricular teachers of the twelve learners selected for the interviews, were informed about the study and requested to evaluate the twelve learners. The teachers were only able to participate in January 2004, when schools reopened. Eight teachers

participated in the study; some evaluated more than one learner and others evaluated only one.

3.5.4 DATA ANALYSIS

3.5.4.1 Introduction

According to Johnson (1999:226), resilience is a complex construct and it is hard to measure and grasp '*depending upon where you live, who you are and what intrinsic and extrinsic opportunity structures are available to you, resilience becomes a personal negotiation through life.*' Boyd and Eckert (2002:5) maintain that resilience is not a fixed state, nobody is always resilient or non-resilient, and everybody is vulnerable at one stage or another. Waller (2001:6) also indicates that resilience is not static, that the individual can demonstrate resilience to some adversities and vulnerability to others. Benard (2004:9) points out that resilience is normative, and notes that research indicates that some individuals who developed serious coping problems earlier in their lives turned to lead normal adult lives.

The complexities of adversities and vulnerability include the possibility of an individual being exposed to multiple risk factors, which poses greater threat for maladaptive development (social and intellectual development) compared to exposure to a single risk factor. Sometimes, risk factors link together to form a risk chain, e.g. poverty might coincide with unemployment and single parenthood (Waller 2001:6-7). The same variance could be expected in the results. In analysis of data, the following procedures were undertaken:

- A comparison of the Resilience Scale scores between Grade 8 and 9 participants, using Scheffé's pairwise comparison method.
- A comparison of the Resilience Scale scores between girls and boys in the sample (Grade 8 and 9 girls and Grade 8 and 9 boys), using Duncan's multiple range method.
- Item Analysis and Factor Analysis, (5 and 1 Factor analysis).

- A comparison between the point selection per item by the twelve interviewed participants and the curricular teachers who evaluated them on the Learning Behaviour Scale.

Firstly, the analysis of the self-evaluation results of the Resilience Scale will be presented, and then the results obtained from the Learning Behaviour Scale of teachers, and finally the findings, which emerged from the interviews.

3.5.4.2 Resilience Scale: Results and findings

(1) Grade comparison

Scheffé's method of pairwise comparison was used to determine which specific means differ from each other at the 0.05 level of significance (Steyn, Smit, Du Toit & Strasheim 2003:518). Table 3.3 shows that there is no significant difference between the means of the Grade 8 and 9 participants on the Resilience Scale. Means with the same alphabetic letter (A and A) are not significantly different.

Table 3.3: Scheffé's pairwise comparison for Grade 8 and 9 Resilience Scale scores: Grade distribution

Number of learners	Grade	Mean difference	Scheffé grouping
99	8	4.37616	A
91	9	4.44527	A
190	TOTAL		

(2) Gender comparison

The Duncan's multiple range test was used to determine the differences among the means in gender comparison. According to Duncan's test, mean differences are joined by the same letter if judged not significantly different (Freund & Littell 1981:59).

Table 3.4 shows that there is a significant difference between the mean difference of girls (4.50603) and boys (4.21875) on the Resilient Scale. The Duncan grouping of A and B indicate a significant difference. The difference between the scores of

girls and boys may have been influenced by the uneven sample distribution. There are 66% girls and 34% boys in the sample, suggesting that more girls might have been willing or able to stay after school to participate in the study, perhaps thereby contributing to some bias towards resilience as shown among the girls.

Table 3.4: Duncan’s Multiple Range Test of participants’ average: Gender comparison

Number of learners	Gender	Mean difference	Duncan grouping
126	Girls	4.50603	A
64	Boys	4.21875	B
190	TOTAL		

(3) Item analysis

Iteman (tm) for 32-bit Windows, Version 3.6, a conventional item and test analysis program, was used for item analysis. Item analysis was performed to determine items that are ‘good’ or ‘bad’ and the correlation of items with the point selection total.

In item analysis, items, which correlate highly with the total score, are selected and considered to load on the general factor (Kline 1994:127). The item is selected as ‘good’ if 20-80% of the sample obtain a high correlation with the total score (Kline 1994:127). Item correlation of more than 0.3 is assumed to measure what most items are presumed to measure in this study (as suggested by statistician). The sample indicates the tendency of the participants to select the high score (points) as the desirable score, and since only items with total scores are selected for factor analysis, all items were selected for factor analysis (Kline 1994:127).

Table 3.5: Item Analysis

Learner’s questionnaire: Item analysis (Alpha for all variables 0.811)				% of learners per point selection				
Item number	Item mean	Item variance	Item-scale correlation	1	2	3	4	5
1	4.816	0.424	.36	2	1	1	7	89

Learner's questionnaire: Item analysis (Alpha for all variables 0.811)				% of learners per point selection				
Item number	Item mean	Item variance	Item-scale correlation	1	2	3	4	5
2	4.463	0.712	.36	2	2	9	25	63
3	4.389	0.964	.33	4	2	8	24	62
4	4.721	0.485	.32	2	1	3	14	81
5	4.105	1.052	.50	4	4	15	34	44
6	4.332	0.906	.50	2	3	15	21	59
7	4.426	1.002	.35	4	1	9	18	67
8	4.263	1.289	.41	6	4	9	22	60
9	4.126	1.626	.37	9	3	14	15	59
10	4.279	1.085	.42	4	3	11	25	57
11	4.232	1.199	.52	4	4	13	21	57
12	4.300	1.031	.48	4	2	13	24	58
13	4.342	1.078	.50	4	4	8	23	62
14	4.695	0.538	.39	1	2	5	11	81
15	4.532	0.775	.46	3	1	7	18	71
16	4.632	0.633	.40	2	2	6	14	77
17	4.400	0.966	.57	4	2	8	23	63
18	4.421	0.823	.33	2	4	8	24	63
19	4.305	1.054	.41	4	1	15	21	59
20	4.137	1.413	.50	8	2	13	25	53
21	4.479	0.944	.51	4	1	6	19	69
22	4.126	1.121	.42	4	5	14	30	47
23	4.726	0.588	.35	3	0	4	9	84
24	4.505	0.860	.43	3	2	8	16	71
25	4.479	1.060	.44	5	2	7	14	73

Table 3.5 indicates the percentage of learners and the point they selected per item. According to Kline (1994:127), item analysis usually gives similar results as factor analysis, but can be ineffective if there are correlated factors, because it can select items loading on both and thus yield unsatisfactory results. Resilience factors are interrelated and it is presumed that participants might not be able to differentiate between items explaining similar factors

(4) Factor analysis

BMDP-4M Statistical Software was used for factor analysis. Exploratory factor analysis was done to identify and examine the relationship between the variables and the number of factors needed to explain the variables; to interpret the factors and to determine the amount of factor loading for each variable (Pett, Lackey & Sullivan 2003:3-4). Initially, seven factors that represented the characteristics of resilience were identified through literature research, which led to the development of the Resilience Scale (Tables 2.3 and 2.4). Two factors, Role Model and Future Aspirations, have one item each in the Resilience Scale, compared to the other five. The items for the factors Role Model and Future Aspirations loaded fairly strongly on factor 1 during factor analysis, thus resulting in five factors instead, as shown in Table 3.6. Even with a five-factor analysis, some items loaded more weakly on the factors. The five factors are listed below. The detailed explanation of the factors was presented in Figure 2.3, par 2.5.1.

- Factor 1: Sense of control
- Factor 2: Support
- Factor 3: Problem solving
- Factor 4: Self-awareness
- Factor 5: Commitment

In factor analysis, a factor loading of 0.3 (rotated factor loading) or more is regarded as significant with a sample of at least 100 subjects and it indicates that 9 percent of the variance is accounted for by the factor, which is large enough to indicate a salient loading (Pett *et al.* 2003:121; and Kline 1994:52-53). A negative loading suggests that a given variable is measuring a different factor and not the given one and a zero loading suggests no relationship between the given variable and other variables loading on the factor (Pett *et al.* 2003:194).

Table 3.6 indicates mostly weak loadings of less than 0.3, indicating that the fit of variables on the five factors is inadequate (Pett *et al.* 2003:121).

Table 3.6: Factor Analysis (five factors)

Variance	Factor1 Rotated loading	Factor 2 Rotated loading	Factor 3 Rotated loading	Factor 4 Rotated loading	Factor 5 Rotated loading	Eigenvalues of unaltered correlation matrix
1	-0.115	0.557*	0.019	0.062	-0.020	4.68452
2	0.143	-0.001	-0.050	0.252	0.252	1.63590
3	-0.008	0.032	0.086	0.274	-0.056	1.53605
4	0.273	-0.003	0.049	0.020	0.037	1.45419
5	0.466*	-0.133	0.045	0.191	0.096	1.33097
6	0.169	0.092	0.022	0.319*	0.247	1.25096
7	-0.030	0.405*	-0.023	0.033	0.097	1.20721
8	0.394*	0.204	-0.076	0.078	-0.376	1.13493
9	0.127	0.083	0.112	0.032	0.231	1.04446
10	-0.172	-0.145	0.099	0.795*	0.132	0.993560
11	0.156	0.154	0.007	0.365*	0.013	0.889576
12	0.038	0.402*	0.129	0.057	0.021	0.848634
13	0.113	0.276	0.367*	-0.008	-0.002	0.770599
14	0.078	0.242	0.246	0.043	-0.064	0.734788
15	-0.006	-0.116	1.002*	0.071	-0.028	0.720895
16	0.065	0.460	-0.085	-0.098	0.618*	0.651080
17	0.271	0.232	0.071	0.062	0.457*	0.628740
18	0.013	0.079	-0.028	0.355*	-0.089	0.561984
19	0.373*	0.058	0.038	-0.037	-0.025	0.524863
20	0.230	0.122	0.137	0.165	-0.057	0.465430
21	0.642*	-0.129	0.082	0.026	0.107	0.435062
22	0.065	0.272	0.115	0.024	0.114	0.430243
23	0.509*	-0.057	-0.015	-0.056	0.033	0.407425
24	0.116	0.278	-0.104	0.263	-0.111	0.348290
25	0.462*	0.250	-0.028	0.002	-0.362	0.309639

Table 3.6 indicates that Variables 5, 8, 19, 21, 23, 25 load fairly strongly on Factor 1; Variables 1, 12, 7 fairly strongly on Factor 2; Variables 13, 15 load fairly strongly on Factor 3; Variables 6, 10, 11, 18 load fairly strongly on Factor 4; Variables 17, 16 load fairly strongly on Factor 5. Variables 2, 3, 4, 9, 14, 20, 22, 24 have weak

loadings of less than 0.3 on all factors. The poor fit of variables might relate to gender biases and relevance of questions to respondents because respondents might not have had the experience of such behaviours (Pett *et al.* 2003:173). The sample has more girls than boys as illustrated in Table 3.4. The items with a poor fit are relevant to the study and it is for this reason that items with loadings of less than 0.3 were not eliminated in the factor analysis at this point and they require further examination (Kline 1994:173). The results of Table 3.6 dispute the presence of five factors. Consequently, a single-factor analysis was done, as summarised in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7: Factor Analysis (one factor)

Learner's questionnaire: Factor analysis (Cronbach's Alpha for all variables 0.8128)		
Variables	Rotated Factor loading	Communality values
1	0.316	0.0999
2	0.334	0.1113
3	0.245	0.0599
4	0.282	0.0796
5	0.453	0.2056
6	0.500	0.2501
7	0.297	0.0882
8	0.334	0.1116
9	0.298	0.0886
10	0.368	0.1354
11	0.481	0.2314
12	0.440	0.1940
13	0.471	0.2220
14	0.376	0.1417
15	0.443	0.1963
16	0.397	0.1574
17	0.579	0.3347
18	0.270	0.0729
19	0.358	0.1280
20	0.439	0.1929
21	0.496	0.2464
22	0.358	0.1284
23	0.326	0.1065
24	0.357	0.1274
25	0.391	0.1531

Figure 3.7 indicates that most variables load fairly well on one factor. However, Variables 3, 4, 7, 9, 18 have a weak loading of less than 0.3; the weak loading of Variables 3 and 4 is consistent in both Factor Analyses (five and one factor analysis). Variables with weak loadings in this study indicate that they measure a different factor, not resilience. The one factor in the analysis is regarded as Resilience because the initial seven (reduced to five in Table 3.3) identified factors are characteristics of resilience. The communality values indicate the variance in items that is explained by the factors (the proportion of variance each item has in common with other items), and they can range from 0 to 1.00. The communality of 1.00 would indicate that all of the variance in an item is explained by the factor, and the communality of 0, would indicate that none of the variance is explained by the factor; communalities are not used to choose factors (Pett *et al.* 2003:88).

3.5.4.3 Learning Behaviour Scale: Results and findings

The analysis of the variance between the twelve interviewees' scores (self-evaluation scores) and teacher's evaluation scores on those twelve learners indicate a significant difference, as specified in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8 Comparison between the point allocations of the 12 learners interviewed and curricular teachers

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum point	Maximum point
Learner ' self evaluation	4.2666667	0.7287016	3	5
Teacher ' evaluation	3.4375000	0.5274833	2	4

Table 3.8 indicates that the minimum point the learners allocated to themselves is a score of 3 and the maximum point of 5 on the Resilience Scale. The teachers allocated a minimum point of 2 (a score of 2) and a maximum point of 4 (a score of 4) on the Learning Behaviour Scale. The variance between the learner's scores on the Resilience Scale and the teacher's scores on the Learning Behaviour Scale would appear to be influenced by the point allocation.

Table 3.9 repeats the data contained in Table 3.2 as well as presenting the teachers' scores, to indicate the disparity between the learners' and the teachers' scores. The learners' self-evaluation scores are clustered and well defined into three groups, resilient, undefined status (median) and non-resilient (100%, 80⁺% and 60⁺%); however, the teachers' scores are dispersed over the range of 84-47 (2-80⁺%, 5-70⁺%, 2-60⁺%, 2-50⁺% and 1-40⁺%). The discrepancy in the evaluation scores could relate to point allocation as explained in Table 3.8; the teachers' highest ranking is 84% as compared to the learners' 100% and the lowest is 47% as compared to the learners' 62%.

There is lack of consistency and relationship between the learner rank order and the teacher rank order. The inconstancy could relate to the teacher's perception and objective evaluation of the learner's behavioural and academic performances, which can also be influenced by the learner's academic performance in the relevant teacher's subject. The Learning Behaviour Scale unlike the Resilience Scale had no numbers 1-5 to indicate point allocation. The teachers due to their professional nature and knowledge of assessment are required to allocate scores based on the overall performance of the learners' school related behaviour. However, the teacher might lack knowledge of the learners' coping skill and behaviour in the home and community environment. The learners, however, might give a holistic view of their coping skills and behavioural performances across context.

Table 3.9: Comparison and the rank order of the twelve interviewees and the teacher's evaluation

		Resilient				In-between				Non-resilient			
Learner Number		184	185	186	189	011	012	150	188	009	010	187	190
Resilience Scale score	/125	125	125	125	125	112	112	111	111	86	86	82	78
	%	100	100	100	100	89	89	88	88	68	68	65	62
Learner Rank order		A	A	A	A	E	E	G	G	I	I	K	L
Learning Behaviour Scale score: /100: %		73	67	84	75	73	75	58	80	47	59	62	77
Teacher Rank order		F	H	A	D	F	D	K	B	L	J	I	C
Grade		8	9	8	9	8	9	9	8	9	8	8	9

3.5.4.4 Interviews: Results and findings

Analysis of the interviews will help to consider whether the selected learners' statements reflect the scores registered in their self-evaluation and/or the teachers' evaluation regarding resilience. The interpretation of the interviews and the classification of learners as resilient and non-resilient will be based on their personal transactions across contexts. Kumpfer and Boyd and Eckert's Resilience Process Models (Figure 2.2, a&b) are used to evaluate the resilience status of the learners.

In determining the resilience status of the participants, it is important to distinguish the working definition of resilience in this research. Kaplan (1999:19) mentions that resilience can be aligned to the outcome of having survived in the face of adversity or can fundamentally relate to more or less desirable outcomes. Kaplan (1999:19) further reiterates that resilience can be highly variable because outcomes are defined by risk factors that are also variable. The questions to consider are (Kaplan 1999:19-20):

- Should resilience be defined in terms of the nature of the outcome in response to stress? OR
- Is resilience the qualities possessed by individuals that enable them to have good outcomes? OR
- Is resilience having achieved benign outcomes in the face of adversity?

In this study, resilience will be aligned with the presence of desirable outcomes and the absence of undesirable outcomes; it relates to 'how effectiveness in the environment is achieved, sustained or recovered despite adversity' (Kaplan 1999:20). Resilient individuals will be considered to have a hardy personality, because hardy individuals are likely to employ adaptive coping strategies and not maladaptive responses like denial or behavioural avoidance; hardiness is characterised by (Kaplan 1999:20-21):

- Commitment: belief in the importance and value of oneself, experiences or activities.

- Control: the belief that life events are predictable and consequences of one's actions.
- Challenge: the belief that change is normal and represents a positive rather than a threatening circumstance.

Resilience and non-resilience status of the participants will be considered across context (school, home and community environment) as portrayed in the interview analysis and the Resilience Scale. The resilience portrayed across contexts will be addressed as general resilience, which indicates that the learner is considered to be resilient. Again, the resilience and non-resilience status will be considered in the school context. The resilient individuals in a school context will include individuals who are adaptive and good citizens in the school and are making it (academically and behaviourally) despite their stressors (Rolf 1999:7). The non-resilient individuals in the school context will include individuals who are not experiencing success and competence at school and portray behavioural and academic problems; this view is adapted because I assume that some participants and teachers might have employed a similar frame of reference. However, the Resilience Scale and the Learning Behaviour Scale purposed to identify resilience across contexts, which required the teachers to have good background knowledge of the interviewees.

The twelve interviews¹ will be briefly discussed and results will be compared with the learners' self-evaluation (Resilience Scale) and teachers' evaluation (Learning Behaviour Scale) scores. Firstly, a narrative description of six interviews, two in each group, will be presented followed by a tabulation of the remaining six interviews. The narrative description of the interviews serves as an example of the analysis and interpretation carried out on the twelve interviews.

3.5.4.5 Narrative analysis of six interviews

(1) Learner No: 185

The learner is the first of two children. Her mother was retrenched from a security company and the father works at a food chain store. She considers herself to be

¹ See Appendix C for the transcript of one interview. Transcripts of other interviews are available on request.

competent with a well-structured support system (financial and emotional), empathetic, sharing, socially adept, confident, having a sense of control and she views her care-giving environment as supportive both at home and school. She experiences success and competence at school, is motivated to perform better and has future aspirations. She has good relations with her teachers and her perception of her teachers motivates her to perform better in class. She views her school environment as inviting and accommodative. She has confidence in her teachers. Her perception of her teachers includes: *'...They make sure you understand, after teaching they always want us to ask questions, if we did not understand. When I have not done my homework or classwork and I explain to them, they understand. They give me a second chance they do not just hit you.'* The learner shows admiration and bonding with her favourite teacher who is her mentor: *'I like him. When I came to this school, everybody told me he was very strict and that he hits learners...this year I was scared when I entered his class... he told us we should be free in his class and he made jokes sometimes...now, I can sit and talk to him like he is my friend.'*

The teacher's sense of humour and warm temperament enabled the learner to develop confidence and trust in their relationship. Her academic success motivates her to persevere and to demonstrate commitment in achieving better grades, she perceives herself to be among the top achievers: *'No, I don't think I worked as hard as I should. There are learners in my class who are good/ perfect. Sometimes in class those who got higher marks, their names are read and we have to clap hands in congratulating them. So if you don't get a clap of hands it's a sign that you have to pull your socks.'* The learner admits that she regularly get an applause from the class for her excellent performances. She shows assertiveness and confidence in class and actively participates in her education and learning: *'In class I don't give up, because if I do they will make me to be afraid of participating. I take my chances with what I think is right, the teacher will tell me if I am right or wrong.'*

At home, she admires her aunt, who offers her unconditional support, empathy and acceptance. She sees her aunt as a source of strength, a role model, the adult person who has always been there for her and has confidence in her guidance; she regards her as the only person she can trust with any secret.

'My aunt, I tell her everything...she is sharp, she does not shout at me and she always speaks nicely with me. When I tell her my problems, she will explain the problem to my mother... If I really do not want my mother to know, I will ask my aunt not to tell her and she will not.'

At home, she has empathy for her mother and humility to her cousins, she acts maturely, responsibly, independently, socially adeptly and wants to protect them from distress, criticism and disappointments. *'I also like to protect my mother from sad news, especially if I know they will make her feel sad. I sometimes stop people from telling her bad or sad news; ... when she has no money she gets frustrated, stressed and she starts shouting at us ... Sometimes when it is bad, I go to my aunt and ask for help; she helps us ... My paternal grandmother likes telling my cousins who left school, some are my age that I am going to be a doctor and I am not naughty like them. That does not make me happy. I will ask her not to speak that way with my cousins because they start to hate me and feel jealous about me. My granny uses me to hurt them and I don't like being used like that. Sometimes I will encourage my cousins to return to school and they will tell me I like acting smart and speaking like an adult while I am just a child.'*

The learner admires and trusts her aunt for modelling problem solving skills, instilling religious values and the advice she gave her when she experienced a major problem of intimidation and coercion, in the train to her Saturday lessons. *'At the train platform there was this hawker selling in and outside the train, he intimidated and forced me to date him and threatened to throw me outside the moving train ... I was scared of going to classes, I came up with excuses to my parents, telling them there were no classes, sometimes, I pretended to go to classes but went to my grandmother's house instead ... I decided to tell my aunt about the hawker and his threats. My aunt listened and asked me to pray with her and she said I must also pray and go back to my classes and if the boy can threaten me again I must just tell him to go ahead and throw me outside the window. I was scared and wondered if that was the right thing to do or say ... I told him to leave me alone and that I was not interested in intimate relationships. He just walked away, without any opposition, and I never saw him again.'* The aunt helps the learner with homework too: *'I call her on weekends/Saturdays and ask her about my*

homework. She is perfect. ... I take the book to my aunt and she will explain to me ... summarise the work for me and ask me questions to ensure that I understand the book.' The learner is aware of her strengths and weakness and knows when to seek help if she is not coping with her problems. She demonstrated responsibility and self-control when taking charge of the intimidation problem by skilfully seeking help and solution to the problem. However, she appears to depend highly on her aunt's counsel without developing autonomous problem solving skills.

However, in some situations she demonstrates some lack of responsibility, consistency, structure, discipline, commitment and sense of control with her homework. The learner's best friend also offers her support, models responsible and independent behaviour with regard to schoolwork, and encourages her to maintain a structure, and consistency. However, the learner regards herself as untrustworthy in her relationship with her friend: *'When she asks me to do things, I sometimes do not do them, especially homework. When she asks me if I have done my homework or classwork, I would say yes and when Sir asks about homework, she would then find out that I lied to her ... She will be angry with me, especially if she had volunteered to help me.'* The learner indicated that she lies to her friend to avoid her nagging and confrontations and to procrastinate: *'I lie to her because I am scared she will shout at me, she does that often.'* She sometimes perceives her chores to interfere with her schoolwork: *'Sometimes I clean the house, make supper and then do my homework. If I have lots of homework, I start with the most difficult work and the easy ones I will decide to do in class... but sometimes in class I feel tired or lazy, I just talk with my friend and if she asks me about homework or classwork I will lie ... She blames me for not being honest and when the teacher gives me a second chance, she will help me with the work.'*

She feels responsible and considerate of those less fortunate than her in her community and takes initiative to help alleviate their situation. When she believes in what she does, nothing deters her, she shows commitment and determination to achieve her goals; she is assertive: *'I like helping those who are less fortunate than me. I sometimes give my old clothes to those who need them more than me; there are such children in my area. My friends sometimes criticise me for that, but I do it anyway.'* Table 3.10 summarises the resilience status of Learner 185.

Table 3.10: Learner No: 185 – Resilience status data

Learner No.	Age	Area	Gender	Grade	Resilience Scale score / Rank	Learning Behaviour Scale score \ Rank	Resilience Status concluded from interview: (General: G; School: S)	Risk factors inferred from interview	Protective factors inferred from interview
185	15	Township	Female	9	A	H	Resilient: G Resilient: S	Unemployment, poverty, anxiety in heterosexual interactions, concern over parents, poor study habits and time management. Unsafe environment.	Support (aunt, friend, teachers, and family). Resourcefulness . Academic success.
					100%	67%			

Conclusion

The learner enjoys the unconditional support and acceptance of her aunt, the relationship has helped her develop confidence, trust, sense of control, flexible problem solving skills, proactive approach to life, future aspirations and responsibility in her care-giving environment. She successfully established supportive relations with teachers and peers. At school she experiences success in her academic activities and relations with the teachers and peers. In her community she demonstrates responsibility, compassion, assertiveness, and proactive approach to living and sharing with those less fortunate than her. She is empathetic in her relationships and has a strong need to protect those she loves, e.g. her mother. She has managed to use the protective factors in her environment to solve problems and overcome some stressors in her life. The learner currently considers her life as OK. The learner sometimes lacks independent problem solving skills, and her relationship with her aunt might encourage dependence, which might affect her identity development (identity foreclosure). The learner is coping well in her care-giving environment because of the unconditional love, support and her ability to seek support and assistance when required from her social systems. She experiences her life as stable and predictable and she is confident of her ability to manage stressors in her environment. In her self-evaluation she regarded herself as having achieved the highest state of resilience, resilience reintegration. The learner does demonstrate some measure of independence and creativity in her problem solving skills, responsibility, and commitment to her academic achievement, although she sometimes ignores her homework and lies about it. Her

relationship with her aunt is based on trust and might demonstrate dependency. However, the learner has demonstrated some flexible problem solving skills, initiative and independent decision making in her school, home and community environment. The interview analysis indicates she has reintegrated to resilience in line with her self-evaluation; she is thus resilient.

(2) Learner No: 189

The interview was conducted in early January 2004 and the learner is now in Grade 10. The discussion on class participation is based on his Grade 9 year, that is 2003, but he always refers to himself as a Grade 10 learner. The learner lives with his paternal grandmother, his parents never married. His mother stays with her husband (the stepfather and their two children, his half brother and sister). His father is a police officer, he is also married and he lives with his wife and two children (the learner's other half brother and sister). The learner stays with his paternal grandmother because his mother lost her job and his father was willing to take care of him.

The learner enjoyed his leadership role in class last year (2003); he demonstrated confidence, commitment, success, and flexible problem solving skills, planning, self-efficacy, autonomy and a sense of control in his task and role in his school environment. However, he tends to withdraw from challenges and to find easy solutions to his problems; without finding a solution, a recurrence of the problem might result with similar stressful effects and poor coping. The learner uses emotionally focused coping mechanism and lacks flexible and creative problem solving skill.

When confronted with academic stressors, he tends to lack perseverance and intrinsic motivation. He is inclined to give up easily when confronted with challenges and tends to blame others for his failure to achieve success. He has an external locus of control. His perceptions of the teachers influence his commitment and performance in his subjects at school. The learner requires respect, commitment, competence, guidance, authority and a stable structure from teachers and adults in his care-giving environment.

'I was a class monitor, it was nice and I enjoyed my role. The class was well organised and we respected the teachers and they enjoyed teaching us. If the class was unruly and we could not manage it well, we would go ask the principal for help, sometimes they gambled in class ... The only teacher we felt uncomfortable with, we were scared of him, was the Maths teacher. He never respected us; swore at us when he was teaching. I gave up on Maths ... If you go to him, he will accuse you of not listening to him in class, so there was no use. I just did not go. When we fail, they blame us and yet, the problem is with the teachers. I liked Accounting the most, because I understand it ... The teacher is one person who knows how to teach, he speaks to learners with respect. He has been teaching me Accounting since Grade 8. I failed Grade 8.'

The learner is aware of his mistakes and demonstrates regret for his impulsive act that delayed his academic career. He regards his actions as stupid, he has learned from his mistakes: *'... I was stupid, I went to circumcision school; without my family's permission. It lasted long and by the time I came back it was late in the year- September and I could not catch up with my studies. I tried but my year mark was very low and I failed the exams.'* The learner experiences the chronic stress of being a grade behind and has a strong need to experience success in his academic performance and his greatest concern is to complete matric. The relationship with his best friend is affected by his failing, they barely see each other: *'We rarely see each other at school. So I spend more time here at school with the ones in Grade 10. Sometimes we even leave each other when we go home, this is affecting our friendship. It also happens at home, we don't see each other as often as we used to. But he is my best friend.'*

The learner takes pride in his cultural practices; however, he is struggling to establish his identity. His choice of a lengthy circumcision session resulted in him failing at school; he regrets the delay in his academic career but maintains that the practice was necessary. The learner regards his father as his role model, and earnestly yearns to be traditionally adopted by him, a process that seems lengthy and complicated: *'I absconded to circumcision school, it lasted long (June-September) and by the time I came back it was late in the year and I could not catch up with my studies. I tried but my year mark was very low, and I failed the exams ...*

it is also traditionally expected of me to go ... I failed and now I am one Grade behind, I would have been in Grade 11 now.'

The learner's perception of his school subjects is influenced by the teacher's attitude. He lacks motivation, perseverance and commitment to succeed; he questions teaching and learning methods used and the lack of adaptation of the curriculum: *'It is the teacher's ... If it were not for their attitude and teaching styles, I would have enjoyed the subjects. They shout at us, and I asked myself why I should be stuck with a subject when the teacher is unfriendly and uncooperative, I do not take that subject.'* The learner's choice of a learning area is not based on aptitude and interest, but on the teacher's teaching method and attitude; he demonstrates lack of planning, responsibility, future aspirations and commitment to his learning, he is impulsive. In his search for identity, the learner is still struggling with cultural demands and expectations. *'... I am using my stepfather's surname... I want to change my surname to my father's ... My father wants me to change but my mother wants my father to follow tradition in changing my surname ... My dad said he will do that but I do not know when. He has to do that this year because I need to take my I.D. and to open a savings account ... I feel like I am being held behind by their lack of action. I could have found a part-time job by now but since I have no I.D., I cannot do anything.'*

The learner regards his grandmother as the adult person who has always been there for him and recognises the support that some teachers offer him at school. *'... Here at school there are teachers I trust, if I encounter any problems I go to them and they help me. If I feel, I am losing control I approach them and they will assist me ... My grandmother does a lot for me, more than my parents do, since 1996 when my mother was retrenched until today...'*

The learner's greatest fear is peer coercion and scheming that could destroy his freedom. *'... Friends can be dangerous if they get you involved in bad things. Life is unpredictable. I can be accused of something I did not do and end up in jail; conspiracy against you can ruin your life... If I need money, I will rather gamble; play some dice but not on the school grounds, because I can get into trouble and even be expelled. I will gamble in my area and when I get my I.D., I will go look for*

part-time jobs to make some money. Table 3.11 summarises the resilience status of Learner 189.

Table 3.11: Learner No: 189 – Resilience status data

Learner No.	Age	Area	Gender	Grade	Resilience Scale score/Rank	Learning Behaviour Scale score/Rank	Resilience Status concluded from interview: (General: G; School: S)	Risk factors inferred from interview	Protective factors inferred from interview
189	17	Township	Male	9	A	D	Resilient: G Resilient: S	Illegitimacy, poor stepparent relations, migration, academic problems, unemployment (aunt and mother), cultural demands (circumcision versus school demands) and need to belong, (establish identity). Risk-taking behaviours (gambling).	Support (father, granny, aunt, teachers and family friend), leadership role.
					100%	75%			

Conclusion

The learner seeks to establish his identity and worries about his academic progress and delays; however, he receives support from his family and teachers. The learner regards his life as stressful and his future as uncertain with regard to difficult subjects and teachers' inability to teach well, and his parent's inability to offer him a stable identity and sense of belonging. The learner gives-up quite easily, he somewhat lacks perseverance and commitment in overcoming academic challenges and demands and he is inclined to make impulsive decisions to solve a problem. His lack of patience and perseverance influences his attitude to face stressors with some despair, resentment and a victim's mentality. He tends to be somewhat pessimistic in his interaction with others, e.g. teachers perceived to have bad temperament and peers perceived to be dangerous. However, his impulsive and pessimistic academic attitude might relate to his awareness of his strength and weaknesses and the need to exercise freedom of choice and control to match his abilities with the task requirements in order to establish achievable goals. The learner might also demonstrate consequential thinking in his subject choice to avoid failure and to promote problem focused coping.

The learner shows some independence in wanting to shape his future and some determination in establishing his identity. He is confident he will achieve his goals, which are to pass matric, and change his surname, have a job, bank account and an I.D. It appears, there are a few hassles he has to overcome in his home and school environment, e.g. subject choice and adoption process and the pending work prospect. The learner has future plans and he has hopes for success. He however, tends to take risks, as adolescents do, e.g. gambling to get money. He is aware of his strengths and weaknesses, he takes initiative and he believes with the necessary support, he will achieve his dreams. He knows what he wants (has goals) and he is willing to achieve his goals.

He is also able to solicit support from some teachers he perceives to have a good temperament. In his role as a class monitor, he was to some extent, allowed the opportunity to demonstrate responsibility in managing the class duties and control, to act independently in enforcing class rules and discipline and to maintain structure, consistency and routine in class. The school responsibilities enabled the learner to experience some support from teachers and learners and a chance to develop confidence and flexible problem solving skills. He is able to overcome stressors in his environment. He works hard to keep things normal in his life and to avoid destructions and he solicits people in his care-giving environment to maintain the same state of balance in his life. The interview analysis indicates that he has reintegrated to resilience in line with his self-evaluation. He is thus resilient.

(3) Learner No: 150

The learner's parents are divorced, and his mother works at a butcher shop as a cashier. He is the third child and has four sisters; the youngest sister stays in Pietersburg (now Polokwane) with an aunt. According to the learner, after the divorce (1994), his mother moved in with his maternal grandmother, his uncles and cousins into a four roomed house with a tin-house at the back for the boys. His mother's RDP house is almost ready and they will be moving to the house soon. The learner's father has no contact with the children, except for the occasional phone call when the learner requests financial assistance, which he ignores. The learner indicates that his father has a building warehouse.

The learner presented himself as a reserved, polite and neatly dressed young man, with a tie. He is the only boy I observed wearing a tie at school. His dress code appears to be important to him. When asked about whether the tie was part of uniform he indicated the school has a tie but the one he was wearing is not school uniform. *'I like wearing a tie, I wear it all the time, it makes me appear neat and smartly dressed.'* The learner demonstrated the ability to prioritise and plan and a commitment to succeed, he rescheduled the interview time to attend optional extra lesson in Maths. He is aware of his strengths and weaknesses and is taking initiative to manage the problem: *'Can I start after 30 minutes, I need to attend Maths revision, I struggle with Maths in class.'*

The learner regards his grandmother who is concerned about them as his role model. *'... My grandmother takes cares of us and supports us. We have been living with her since 1994 ...'* The learner indicates that his family offers him unconditional acceptance and support although they suspect that he smokes marijuana: *'I share a room with my cousins; a back room, they occasionally smoke dagga and when I go to the main house my uncle, mother and granny accuse me of smoking dagga, because of the smell on my clothes. I tried to explain to them that I do not smoke dagga, but they do not believe me. My cousins also would not smoke outside, they are older and I am helpless, I cannot control them.'* The learner values the trust of his family and appears helpless to resolve the suspicions about taking drugs; he is sometimes despondent and sometimes experiences lack of success and control in his problem resolutions. He has no alternative solution to the problem about drugs and he needs their unconditional trust, he is actually problem focused.

The learner indicates commitment, sense of control, independence and responsibility with his schoolwork: *In class, if I did not understand I would ask the teacher, he/she would explain the work ... at home my uncle helps me with homework.'* He demonstrates maturity, confidence and internal locus of control about his performance and participation in class: *'The work was all right, it just needed one to complete it. Some learners were not doing their work, but I tried to complete my work ... if one was committed, the work would be defined as easy but difficult if one avoids doing it.'* The learner is aware of his strength and weakness.

He views the teacher as an authority in curricular activities and trusts their knowledge, support and guidance in settling curricular issues: *I will go to the teacher to find out if it is right or wrong ... I will go to the teacher to make certain.* However, with non-curricular peer disputes and discussions, he is able to dissociate himself and remain uncommitted, such issues tend to be left unresolved due to lack of a source of support and factual proof. *I will not bother about people I do not know, that so and so is embezzling funds, that and that ... even the same person we will be talking about will not tell us the truth ... I do not worry about those, I just ignore the arguments. I do not entertain that.*

The learner regards his school, peers and some teachers as supportive, especially after academic problems he experienced at another school. He, however, experiences some teachers as violent and aggressive (giving corporal punishment), he regards such teachers to lack teaching skills. *... Maths is not my favourite subject, the teacher hits us, but Agriculture and HSS are my favourite, the teachers are sharp ... I failed Grade 8 and my mother moved me to this school, here the work is not hard, at my previous school, I struggled with English.* The experience of success helps to motivate him to persevere academically although he has no career aspiration: *I just want to help my mother, build her a house and maybe I will be lucky and get a good job.* The learner has empathy and a sense of responsibility towards his mother; in this regard he has positive future goals. The learner is able to distance himself from his father's actions (lack of financial and emotional support) and wants to be different by assuming responsibility for his family. He sees life as an opportunity to learn and grow.

The learner has no regular chores at home, and he pursues his talents daily after school, which might affect his academic commitments: *After school I play soccer with my friends ... sometimes I join them late because I have to run errands for my grandmother ... I do my homework at school, besides we always have group work and we complete work in class.*

The stressful effects of the divorce and the estrangement from his father are cushioned by the support of his family. His grandmother has modelled care and

support, which he values in his life. Table 3.12 summarises the resilience status of Learner 150.

Table 3.12: Learner 150 – Resilience status data

Learner No.	Age	Area	Gender	Grade	Resilience Scale score/ Rank	Learning Behaviour Scale score/ Rank	Resilience Status concluded from interview: (General: G; School: S)	Risk factors inferred from interview	Protective factors inferred from interview
150	16	Township	Male	9	G	K	Comfort zone: G Comfort zone: S	Divorce, parental rejection (father), poverty, overcrowding (grandmother's place), academic problems (failed Grade 8), Corporal punishment (school), separation from siblings (sister)	Talents (soccer and sprinting). Family support
					88%	58%			

Conclusion

The learner has empathy for his mother and feels responsible for her comfort. His future plans include providing for her, a selfless act of love. His talent for soccer provides him with some structure and helps him experience success, competence, responsibility and commitment to his group. The nurturance and unconditional acceptance his grandmother instilled in him, helps him in setting his own values and morals. The learner sees himself as resourceful and indispensable to his grandmother and mother. He is confident that he will be able to bring joy to the two women in his life. He is able to distance himself from his father by committing to helping his mother; he does not display a victim's attitude. He is able to identify and utilise the protective factors from his family and community to help him deal with stressors in his life.

At school he is confident about his academic performance and perceives some teachers as supportive. He has intrinsic motivation and commitment to succeed in his academic work. The teacher views him as non-resilient, which is not in accordance with the Resilience Scale score or the interview data. Learner 150 is coping in his social systems, he does not demonstrate serious learning and

behaviour problems although he appears to be older for his grade and has failed before. The learner is optimistic and has future goals. He feels the need to succeed at school and he sees beyond the negative situation in his care-giving environment. The learner is however, despondent about his social interactions with peers, he appears to lack assertiveness and self-efficacy, he lacks the power to convince and he leaves some issues unresolved. Such a passive attitude might impact on his future interactions when he would be required to defend his stance or he might see no reason to argue especially when all parties lack facts. He regards his life as OK and things seem to be going fine with his mothers' new house and his academic progress. His major concern is the father's rejection and the separation from his siblings due to financial problems. He demonstrates patience, takes initiative and shows perseverance in establishing relations with his father, even when his father frustrates his initiatives he is not deterred from his course to involve him in his upbringing. The learner has reintegrated to comfort zone. He was harsh and critical in his self- evaluation he overlooked some of his abilities, strengths, flexible problem solving skills and initiatives in influencing positive change in his life. He sees himself as a reliable and responsible young man who intends to influence positive change in his family's life. His mission is to alleviate the suffering of his mother. He is in a comfort zone and he regards his life as comfortable.

(4) Learner No: 188

The learner is the only child; she lives with her maternal grandmother, aunts and her aunts' children (cousins: traditionally called sisters). Her mother was never married, her father is married, and he stays down her street. Her mother died when she was 10 years (three years ago). According to the learner, her father is not contributing financially to her upbringing. Her 17-year-old sister (cousin), who is also orphaned, is her confidant and offers her unconditional support and acceptance. Both girls are still young and dependent on the adults in their lives. The use of plural 'we' instead of singular 'I' in her conversation is common in North Sotho speakers and does not specifically indicate an external locus of control but a common way of speech.

The learner sometimes demonstrates lack of commitment in her school environment. The learner's perception of the teachers' attitude seems to influence

her subject interest and commitment. Her interest in 'free periods' at school may demonstrate her love for play and fun and the lack of delay in gratification of needs. She criticises the teaching and learning methods and the lack of curriculum adaptation to accommodate her needs.

'... I do not understand Maths when they teach us, I only understand during corrections and by then it is already too late; we will be moving on to the next new things. I am always a step behind and they do not give us free periods so I do not enjoy Maths.' The learner indicates her concerns and a need for a solution to her academic problems and extra time to understand her classwork. *'I do not like HSS, the teacher is bad, he is always mad at us. I get angry quickly and I do not enjoy the subject ... teachers get angry if we do not do classwork or homework, and when we get wrong answers and do not understand the work ... I like Sepedi, my class teacher teaches it, and we get lots of free periods. She is patient with us, she gives us classwork or homework for example on Monday and she will only want it back on Thursday. When we do corrections, she is not always serious. She has a sense of humour.'* The teacher with a good temperament is regarded as good and her subject is well liked by the learner. The learner perceives the teacher with a sense of humour as supportive.

The learner indicates lack of confidence, assertiveness and active involvement in class, which, she feels, might influence the teachers' perception of her academic performance. However, she indicates her perseverance, responsibility and consistency in completing her schoolwork, even without comprehension. The learner consistently indicates her need for extra time in order to understand her school work: *'I am shy, even when I know the answer I do not raise my hand, teachers might say I am not bright ... If the teacher points to me, I do answer, but if he/she expects me to raise my hand, I will not ... I always do my homework, even if I do not understand I just write I will get wrong answers and do corrections. During corrections, they will explain to me and I will understand.'* However, according to the teachers' evaluation scale the learner is ranked B, which indicates the teacher regards her as an OK learner. The learner seems to have a modest and even a harsh criticism and judgement of her abilities.

The learner experiences success in her extra-curricular activities and a sense of belonging in her community, where she demonstrates competence, commitment, and a sense of control and self-awareness: *'I am good at athletics at school. In our section of the community we have a good netball team that I play for. We practice after school and sometimes during weekends. We won lots of medals. I also do gymnastics in our community.'*

The learner has received emotional support and nurturance from her sister since the death of her mother, which motivates her to develop problem solving skills and future aspirations: *'... I used to tell my mother when I was hurting and she always gave me advice and support, she understood me ... When I lost her my heart was very sore; I was hurting. Nevertheless, my sister stepped in, she told me about how life can get tough sometimes and that made me feel better sometimes ... I share a lot of problems with her. She understands me ... She also lost her mother. She told me about the pain she had to go through after the death of her mother and how she dealt with the pain ... She said I will feel the pain and it will take time but one day I will be able to accept the loss and live with the pain. The pain is slowly going away but it still hurts, some days more than the others but some days I forget ... It varies with the mood I am in, when I am really hurting my sister is always there to comfort me.'* The learner demonstrates strength, optimism, and sense of control, trust in her relationships and maturity in her outlook on life. She is able to use the protective factors in her environment to help her overcome challenges and demands in her life.

The learner is, however, disappointed with her father's lack of interest and commitment to her. The learner needs her father to play a responsible, mature and supportive role in her life. She regards her father as the person who always disappoints her: *'To get anything from him I struggle. Most of the time I just get tired and I walk away. I become impatient, angry and stubborn with him because he is never willing to help me and he always accuses me of being impatient and stubborn.'* She is aware that her father seems to neglect his duties to her and she struggles in convincing him about his role in her life.

The learner stays in a dangerous neighbourhood, and her love for sport and involvement in community activities indicates her need to participate in building a better habitable community for herself. ... *Our street is dangerous. Gangsters fight a lot and they carry guns ... we do not walk the streets at night, we have to be home by 21H00, but before 20H00 it is a bit safe although one takes chances.*' Table 3.13 summarises the resilience status of Learner 188.

Table 3.13: Learner No: 188 – Resilience status data

Learner No.	Age	Area	Gender	Grade	Resilience Scale score / Rank	Learning Behaviour Scale score / Rank	Resilience Status concluded from interview: (General: G; School: S)	Risk factors inferred from interview	Protective factors inferred from interview
188	13	Township	Female	8	G 88%	B 80%	Resilient: G Comfort zone: S	Death (mother), conflict relations (father), poverty (unemployed granny), Corporal punishment (school). Violent neighbourhood.	Support (family, friends). Sense of humour, sports (community). Awards (sports).

Conclusion

The learner has experienced trauma in her life. She is coping with the loss of her mother and the unconditional support and nurturance she receives from her family is helping her overcome the traumatic experience she suffered. Her sense of humour and talents also help her establish good social relations in her social systems. The learner knows her strengths and weaknesses, at school she is confident that she sometimes requires extra time, effort and commitment from the teachers to enable her to experience success in what she regards as difficult subjects.

However, she demonstrates competence, commitment and a sense of control in her extracurricular activities (sport) and she knows how to identify supportive structures in her environment. The learner is still dealing with her mother's death without psychological assistance; the sister is the most important source of emotional and psychological support. She perceives all her problems as manageable with time; she has a positive outlook on life, she is not aware of any major stressors in her life

and her sense of humour helps her perceive other stressors as minor obstacles that can be laughed off with her friends. The learner demonstrates strength, confidence and commitment to succeed in her community activities. She experiences success and sense of control with her extracurricular activities. She is modest and has a harsh criticism of herself. The learner has reintegrated to resilience, although her self-evaluation on the Resilience Scale places her at the median.

(5) Learner No: 009

The learner is the youngest of seven children. Her sister died and left two children orphaned. Her mother died and her maternal aunt then raised her. Her brothers and sisters are independent and some have their own families.

The learner perceives her current problems and home environment as too stressful and difficult to resolve. However, she still demonstrates motivation, perseverance, commitment, competence and flexibility in problem solving. She is constantly looking for support in her care-giving environment and she perceives herself to be managing crises all the time, where the successful resolution of one problem is followed by the emergence of another. The learner sees herself as fighting a losing battle with no one to support her. She sees education as her only hope and she strives to work hard and complete her Grade 12; her interest in Science subjects is fuelled by the teacher's motivation that success in the area will secure her a bright future and financial assistance.

Currently the main stressor is what she perceives as her aunt's motives and determination to destroy her educational career. She feels she has to win and fight hard to remain at school and to find financial and emotional support from a family member or to convince the department of social services to accommodate and educate her. *'... Just now my aunt does not want me to attend school (crying). She says she cannot afford to educate me ... my sister (the 6th child) and me, have a different father from the first five siblings ... They (her brothers) do not want to educate or even financially provide for me, they say I am not their father's child ... I try to plead with them for help, they do not want to listen to me. My aunt has just told me to leave her house ... If I can make even a small mistake she never*

understands, she told me to pack my clothes and leave and I tried to apologise, she would not listen. I have to leave by today.'

The learner is assertive and proactive in her approach to stressors in her care-giving environment. She is resourceful and problem focused: *'I did approach the teachers and they advised me to go to the social worker's offices. I went and the social worker told me that I should come with my aunt. My aunt refused, she said the social workers would remove me from home.'* She sees every problem as a challenge. She is patient and perseveres until she reaches her goals, she demonstrates commitment and determination to her course: *'Last year I had no school shoes. I went to my eldest brother to ask for him to buy me shoes, and he refused to help me. The other brother (3rd child) told me I am not his father's child so we are not related. I went from one to the other until one of my brothers bought me shoes and a shirt, the skirt I got as a gift from one learner when I was in Grade 8 ... When I was in Grade 8, I did not have a good school shirt; I had a small tight fitting shirt and learners used to mock/tease me; one teacher gave me two school shirts ...'*

The learner has future aspirations and dreams, she is aware of her strengths and is motivated to use her strengths in Maths and Science to create a brighter future for herself. *'Our teacher told us that Science subjects are needed the most in our country, they are important and if one can be in school, college or university long enough and graduate in Science subjects there is a possibility of a bright future. I like Science and besides I understand it.'* The learner has strict structure and chores that she performs at home. She is able to plan how to overcome stressors in her home environment; she is self-reliant, responsible and tries to maintain control. She regards her problems as challenges, not threats, and is solution focused: *'When I get home, I clean the house and I start preparing supper. After supper, I start with my homework. If I finish late with my chores it is a problem because my aunt does not want me to study using electricity. What I do is I wake up in the morning and read or finish my homework. My aunt leaves early in the morning, around 04H00, to buy supplies for her business. She sells vegetables on the road, she is a hawker ... when she leaves I wake up and start reading, of course, she does not know that.'* The learner is assertive and able to generate

alternatives; she sees life as an opportunity to learn and grow and has a proactive approach to problem solving. She refuses to be deterred from her course of success at school, which she believes will liberate her from her current stressors: *'I remember when my aunt will force me to be absent from school. I will wait for her to leave then I will go to school, but sometimes she will leave me with my sister's children (the one who died) and I have to take them to the clinic.'* Table 3.15 gives a summary of the resilience status of Learner 009.

Table 3.14: Learner No: 009 – Resilience status data

Learner No.	Age	Area	Gender	Grade	Resilience Scale score/ Rank	Learning Behaviour Scale score /Rank	Resilience Status concluded from interview: (General: G; School: S)	Risk factors inferred from interview	Protective factors inferred from interview
009	14	Township	Female	9	I 68%	L 47%	Resilient: G Resilient: S	Parental death (mother), death (sibling), poverty, unemployment, pregnancy (sibling), rejection (sibling rejection, peer rejection and family rejection)	Academic competence, supportive friends, dreams. Self-confidence.

Conclusion

The learner feels she is not coping with continuous stressors in her home environment. She is consistently fighting for support (academic and emotional), unconditional acceptance, stability and structure at home; her greatest strength is her self-efficacy and perseverance. She faces every problem with the determination to resolve it, nothing seems too big to tackle and she demonstrates independence and responsibility. However, she perceives some of her efforts as unsuccessful and incompetent and her future as uncertain. During the interview, the learner gave an indication of her coping skills and her flexibility in problem solving, her perseverance in the use of different strategies, commitment in finding solution to her problems, intrinsic motivation, social skills in choosing supportive friends, independence, sense of responsibility, dreams for a better future, assertiveness and academic competence.

The learner's greatest concern is to find unconditional support, a secure and stable environment for development, but in this she is experiencing failure. Currently she feels she has no place to stay, no chance of completing secondary education and no one to listen to her and help her in her pursuit of what she feels is her right for survival. She feels she has exhausted all the possibilities and is willing to accept abuse from her home environment and to demonstrate passive resistance, in order to secure a chance to complete her secondary education.

The learner is presently using a different strategy to achieve her objectives even though it requires her to be submissive and allow the abuse to continue, she feels she has to do that for her survival. Her life history indicates resilience and the current stressors have threatened and demoralized her, but she is strategically looking for support. The learner is resilient. Her self-evaluation of non-resilience reflects her current stressors and emotional instability and she seems oblivious of her consistent success in dealing with daily problems in her life. The teacher's evaluation of non-resilience is not a true reflection of her success in overcoming the stressors in her life. The interview results indicate reintegration to resilience, she is highly resourceful, intelligent, proactive, has self-efficacy, is independent and flexible in her approach to problems.

(6) Learner No: 187

The learner stays at an informal settlement called Phase 2. The family moved to Mamelodi so that the mother can be closer to her work, and to queue for the government subsidised house. The mother is a domestic worker and she stays at her place of employment. The learner stays with his elder sister and two younger siblings. They are a family of four children. The learner demonstrates commitment and success in his part-time job. The learner works for a local businessman, who owns a liquor tavern. His job includes packing beers into the fridge for sale from 16h00-17h00 and gardening from 17h00-18h00. Unlike the school environment where he experiences peer and academic problems, in his job-environment, the learner demonstrates a sense of control, responsible and independent behaviour and confidence in his abilities and he has clear future aspirations. He shows structure and a sense of purpose, he is able to learn new skills and delay the

gratification of needs. The employer trusts his abilities and that gives him a sense of competence.

The following extracts from his interview indicate his sense of competence, planning, responsibility, independence and control in his work environment. ‘... *When I get home from school, I clean the house, prepare late lunch... Then I leave for work, I first carry beer bottles to the pub and sell; from 17h00-18h00 I go work in the garden.*’ The learner shows pride in his job performance and joy in how he acquired the job. He is able to see the positive aspect of change and think beyond the negative situation, he sees the alternative to the present situation (flexible problem solving skills): ‘*I was selling vegetables for someone, and the man approached me. He told me he was looking for someone who can help him in his business ... he trained me how to do the job. He only showed me once ... I am not happy with the money he pays me R30 a week, it is too little but I decided to stay and work. Maybe one day I will be lucky and find a job with more money. I also think the job helps me because I learned something, a skill that will help me in the future.*’ The learner further demonstrates the importance of his work by indicating the security it offers him from delinquency: ‘... *the work helps me avoid stealing. It keeps me busy and helps me forget what I am being told, that if I do not steal and smoke I am a fool.*’ He demonstrates maturity, independence and a sense of responsibility with his wages ‘... *the present job is better than the vegetables one because if I did not sell anything I was not paid. Now I get paid all the time ... I use R10.00 for lunch money sometimes, when my mother comes home I give her R10.00 for transport and R5.00 I can use for bread at home or borrow someone and the other R5.00 I save.*’

However, the competence, success, sense of control, self-efficacy and commitment he demonstrates in his part-time job, is lacking in his school environment. The school environment offers him challenges that are not easy to overcome. The learner demonstrates a lack of flexibility, rigidity, poor study and coping skills in his school environment. ‘... *After failing the tests I will go read again and make a quiz, then I will drill the work to see if I know it. I normally set my own questions and use that to study and with the next exams, June I passed ... I will not give-up, I will read section by section one by one 3-4 times until I get it right; then I will do the whole*

work again with the book closed until I get it right.' The learner shows persistence and commitment to the task yet he fails to generate alternatives. He is problem focused but he is not aware of effective actions to overcome the problem. When asked about seeking teacher support in subjects he experienced as difficult, like Maths, he demonstrated external locus of control: *'... Maths ... you encounter X and Y's and the teacher does not make certain that one understands, he moves to new things immediately then I get confused ... I used to go ask him so did others and he will set an easy test for us so that we can pass the subject. We get a second chance ... sometimes the teacher will say that we do not study and listen in class and we are going to fail.'* He demonstrates a need for extra time to understand and seems to see the teacher as unsupportive sometimes.

In his social environment, with his peers (those that bully him), the learner demonstrates helplessness and passive resistance: *'... when I have lunch money they want it to go buy los-draw. They force and beat me, they are stronger and I just let them take my money.'* The intimidation and bullying seems to be consistent and chronic. *'... it does not matter to them, they do that everyday whether you have money or not.'* When the learner was asked to define himself, however, he indicated a positive view of himself: *'I am someone who does not bother others, I avoid conflicts and fights. I respect teachers and I do not tell them about those who bother me. I just keep quiet and endure the suffering knowing that the person will get what he/she deserves.'* When asked about the teachers' perceptions of him he indicated a negative view: *'Sometimes they take me as a bad/sleg child but I am not ... well sometimes I get to be playful and disruptive in class.'*

The learner is religious. When asked if his peers or other people sometimes hurt him, he replied that they sometimes do. *'Yes, I get hurt but I endure the pain. I believe God will help me ... I survive through prayer, I go to church to pray and I refuse to be pressured into doing something I do not want.'* The learner demonstrates self-awareness, sense of control and independence, the criticism he gets through peer rejection makes him want to strongly resist peer pressure. When asked about major problems in his life, he appeared to be unaware of any specific one; he views his life as constantly marked by traumatic events and no particular incident could be viewed as a major stressor. *'I cannot think of any. I have*

challenges. Like peer pressure when someone is smoking something and they want to force you to smoke with them, whatever they are smoking and they tell you that church/Christianity is nothing and how can I pray to someone I can't see?

Friends provide him with emotional support, *When I am sad I will not speak with them, I just keep quiet and they will ask me what is wrong. I will tell them what happened ... When they beat me at home, I can be sad at school, sometimes my sister beats me. She beats me when I did not do my chores that day.* However, he admits that he is not able to see when his friends are not happy. At home the learner regards his sister, mother and aunt as sources of support; for homework, he relies on his unemployed sister. His mother attends to major problems: *When she knows I have a major problems she will come home to help.* His aunt provides him with emotional support and intercedes for him: *I tell her when I have problems with bullies and she will go with me to see the parents of those children and to tell them to stop bullying me.* Table 3.14 gives a summary of the resilience status of Learner 187.

Table 3.15: Learner No: 187 – Resilience status data

Learner No.	Age	Area	Gender	Grade	Resilience Scale score / Rank	Learning Behaviour Scale score / Rank	Resilience Status concluded from interview: (General: G; School: S)	Risk factors inferred from interview	Protective factors inferred from interview
187	17	Informal settlement	Male	8	K 65%	I 62%	Resilient: G Survival zone: S	Poverty, single parenting, unemployment, peer rejection (bullies), academic problems, punitive measures (school and home: corporal punishment), conduct problems	Talent, dreams, religion, employment,

Conclusion

The learner is not coping well in his school environment; he experiences academic problems, success and competence is not achieved, although he shows commitment and perseverance to his studies. He views himself as a victim in his peer interactions and lacks flexibility in his peer conflict resolution and problem

solving skills. He recognises no form of support (academic and emotional) in his school environment. The learner lacks good study skills and he is not flexible in adapting his study method to achieve success at school.

However, in his work environment he experiences competence, success, and a sense of control. He demonstrates independence, maturity, good planning skills and responsibility in his home and work environment. He shows commitment and maintains structure in his work environment. He has future plans and he has managed to resist peer pressure. He demonstrates good entrepreneurial skills, dreams and demonstrates the ability to adapt and grow with experience. His comfort in his environment is threatened by the planned migration to a rural area, where the prospect of finding a job is reduced. The learner realises that the planned migration will destroy his chance of employment, however, he is flexible in his problem solving, he thinks of opening a tuck shop. The learner fights to survive and to maintain his predictable life.

The learner's self-evaluation is not in accordance with his interview, as he perceives himself as non-resilient. The learner has identified protective factors in his care-giving environment and has utilised them to overcome obstacles and encourage healthy development. He is street smart, he uses his job to 'hide' from delinquency and to pave a future for himself. He is willing to earn small wages in order to gain experience for his future plans. He is able to manage his time and follows a strict procedure daily and he employs good planning skills. He is committed to perform his schoolwork diligently, do chores at home and meet work commitments daily. He is optimistic about his future, proactive and has independently found assurance in religion for himself and his younger brother. He has reintegrated to resilience. It appears the learner does not seem to view his job success as an accomplishment nor his survival techniques as resilience; he rather seems to consider his academic pressures as an indication of non-resilience.

3.5.4.6 Tabulation and analysis of the remaining six interviews

Table 3.16 gives the tabulated interview analysis of the remaining six participants.

Table 3.16: Tabulation and analysis of the six interviews

Learner No.	Age	Area: Township=1 informal=2	Gender: Boy =1 Girl=2	Grade	Resilience Scale score % / Rank	Learning Behaviour Scale score % / Rank	Resilience Status concluded from interview	Risk factors inferred from interview	Protective factors inferred from interview	Resilience and non-resilience: inferred from interview
184	13	2	2	8	100 — A	73 — F	Resilient: G Resilient: S	Unemployment poverty, traumatic experience (sister's burn accident; violent death of friend: murder)	Support (teachers, family, peers, friends, church); Religion, academic success	The learner comes from a family of five, and she is the third child. Learner 184, experiences unconditional acceptance, nurturance and support from her family. She has enjoyed the academic and emotional support of her teachers since primary education. She is able to attract the positive attention of peers and teachers. She considers her school as inviting and her teachers as being committed to their work. She regards her happiest moment in life as being the day one of her primary school teachers threw her a birthday party (the first party she ever had) to also celebrate her excellent performance in her academic studies. She considers herself as being academically gifted since she experiences success with her academic work. Learner 184 attributes her success to her perseverance, good planning and commitment to her studies; she has a sense of control in her school environment. She is confident, assertive and has a good temperament. She sees a solution to every problem; she is socially adept and demonstrates maturity and good problem solving skills. When confronted with peer problems she indicates an internal locus of control and flexibility in her problems solving skills. She is able to use the protective factors in her environment to help her deal with the stressors in her life. Her religious beliefs provide her with a sense of hope and meaning and help her to transcend beyond the immediate stressors. She has a positive outlook on life. She has a high regard for her sister, who helps her with homework. She remembers her most painful moments as being the time when her father was retrenched, her sister's severe burns and the violent death of her sister's friend. She has reintegrated to resilience , which correlates, with her self-evaluation.
186	14	1	1	8	100 — A	84 — A	Comfort zone: G Resilient: S	Maths problems, peer rejection and pressure (bullies), drugs, Dangerous neighbourhood (bullied), unruly class behaviour (disruption of class). Corporal punishment	Talents (drama, drawing, soccer, cricket), support (family, friends, teachers).	The learner is the first of three children. His father has a son from a previous relationship, who just completed his Grade 12 at the same school as the learner (2003). His grandmother (maternal) raised him; he moved in with his parents in 2000. The learner experiences success, competence and a sense of control at school. He sees himself as being talented in Technical drawing and Arts and Culture. He received awards in both subjects and teachers have praised him for his outstanding performances. However, he struggles with Maths despite his commitment and perseverance in his work. The learner perceives the teachers as supportive and motivating, he however admits that his disruptive behaviour in his English class has influenced the teacher to perceive him as unruly. Lerner 186 views himself and his friends as victims of the bullies, since primary; he is pessimistic, helpless and has no sense of control with regard to peer rejection. He feels his parents, brother and teachers are unable to protect him from the peer abuse and rejection, and he feels helpless and pessimistic. He lacks coping skills and manifests avoidance in this regard. He blames some teachers for being inconsistent in enforcing the rules and maintaining consistent structure at school; he regards such teachers as supportive of the criminal behaviour and contributing to the unsafe school environment. The learner lacks coping strategies, but his friends are a source of comfort and support and they help to neutralise the stressors. The learner has future aspirations and is optimistic about his future and choice of role model Nelson Mandela that helps him to persevere in adversity and to hope for a better future. The learner has reintegrated to comfort zone . The teachers' evaluation placed him in the highest group, A which might correlate with his own self-evaluation, however, the interview indicates a comfort zone.

Learner No.	Age	Area:	Township=1 informal=2	Gender: Boy =1 Girl=2	Grade	Resilience Scale score % / Rank	Learning Behaviour Scale score % / Rank	Resilience Status concluded from interview	Risk factors inferred from interview	Protective factors inferred from interview	Resilience and non-resilience: inferred from interview
011	14	1	1	1	8	89 — E	73 — F	Comfort zone: G Comfort zone: S	Corporal punishment (school), family discord (parental conflicts and fights),	Emotional support (aunt, friends, girl friend), talents (gardening) corporal punishment .	The learner is the second of four children; his elder sister is in Grade 10 (2004), at the same school as him. He describes himself as honest, respectful of others, trustworthy, talented (gardening and soccer), and responsible with a sense of control in his life. He has daily chores, which he diligently performs. He considers his life as structured, meaningful and sees himself as resourceful and able to plan effectively and solve most of his problems. He knows his strengths and weaknesses and is committed to improve his academic performances by attending extra classes. He regards his group of friends to consist of honest and respectful children who never lie or make weird excuses. The learner places more value on love and unconditional acceptance which his family and friends offer him. He considers his aunt to be the adult person who has always been there for him and his role model. Learner 011 regards his major problems to be his parents' constant fights. However, he regards his aunt's intermediary role as essential and influential in enforcing 'temporary' stability and continuity in his family relations. He is able to identify protective factors in his environment. He indicated that last year (2003) he experienced problems with Maths. He has future aspirations. The learner regards some teachers to have a poor judgement and to discriminate against learners. The relationship with his aunt and friends helps him to feel nurtured and loved. He finds autonomy and success in his gardening, and appears to have control and good flexible problem solving skills in his academic areas. He is able to distance himself from his parents' abusive relationship. The learner has no indication of academic and behaviour problems. He has reintegrated to a comfort zone , which correlates with his self-evaluation score
012	18	1	2	2	9	89 — E	75 — D	Survival zone: G Survival zone: S	Academic problems, poverty, unemployment, single parenting, alcohol abuse (mother), lack of stable residence, rejection by family, emotional abuse (mother).	Religious believes, support (sister, friends, priest)	The learner is the second of two children. Her sister works at the government printing and supports the family financially, she is proud of her sister. Her mother is an alcoholic and she lost her job, as a nursing sister. They stay at her maternal grandmother's house and she indicates that her aunts and uncles continuously taunt them to leave the house and go find a place of their own. The learner is angry with her mother. She maintains that she lacks responsibility and concern to the needs of her family. At school, she indicates that she failed twice and is not experiencing success with her academic studies. However, she is motivated and perseveres to do her best all the time. She is street smart and assertive. She maintains that she prefers to have male friends instead of females because females can be spiteful and derogatory in their gossips. She is religious and dedicated to complete her confirmation class this year (2004). She regards her sister as her role model and maintains that she has no future career plans. The learner indicates she has no talents; which could indicated lack of awareness with regard to some of her abilities, which could be clouded by her academic and emotional problems. The learner is pessimistic about her life and feels like a victim in her home environment. She is assertive and defensive, and has internal locus of control, she does not blame the teacher for her academic problems but her lack of aptitude for the relevant subjects. She experiences academic and behaviour problems (anger, aggression) and lacks planning and flexible problem solving skills and feels she has no control in her life. The learner is not coping academically and behaviourally, she struggles and experiences no success, and she is old for her grade. The learner has reintegrated to survival , she is non-resilient, and her self-evaluation score is inconsistent with her interview results.

Learner No.	Age	Area:	Township=1 informal=2	Gender: Boy =1 Girl=2	Grade	Resilience Scale score % / Rank	Learning Behaviour Scale score % / Rank	Resilience Status concluded from interview	Risk factors inferred from interview	Protective factors inferred from interview	Resilience and non-resilience: inferred from interview
010	15	1	2	8	68 I	59 J	Comfort zone: G Comfort zone: S	Death (2 aunts), single-parent. Unemployment, poverty. Corporal punishment (school).	Talents (braid hair for money), support (family, teachers, friends)	Learner 010 is the first child of two girls; her younger sister is 10 years. Her mother is unemployed and they survive by her grandmother's pension money, sometimes her uncle helps with the groceries. The learner stays at her grandmother's house. Two of her aunts died leaving three children between them. One of her sisters (her aunt's orphaned child), who is 19 years, goes to the same school as the learner and is in Grade 10 (2004). She maintains that her performance and attitude toward her subjects were influenced by the teacher's temperament and attitude towards her; she disliked teachers who hit her and their subjects. She feels confident and competent with her academic work, she experiences success and she considers the work easy, because she works hard. The learner has talents that help her experience success and social recognition. She plays netball for her community team and braids and plaits hair (an entrepreneur skill) and uses the money to buy herself clothes and for school lunch. Her future aspiration is to open a hair salon after matric. She is confident, assertive, and demonstrates resourcefulness, commitment, perseverance and has a sense of control in her care giving environment. She sometimes appears to be nonchalant and arrogant in her peer relations. She considers her sister to be her source of emotional support and the school for providing extra support in academic activities and exonerating her from paying school fees. She learns from her mistakes and is flexible in her problem solving skill. She The learner's self-evaluation is inconsistent with her interview; she regards herself as non-resilient. The learner does not demonstrate behavioural and academic problems. She is a resilient child and has reintegrated to comfort zone.	
190	17	1	1	9	62 L	77 C	Survival zone: G Survival zone: S	Death: parental (both) and siblings (2), poverty, academic problems, corporal punishment (school), truancy, peer-rejection	Family support, talents, academic problems,	Learner 190 is the only surviving child of three children; he indicates that his parents died while he was young. He stays with his maternal aunt who is a domestic worker and his nephew (his sister's orphan), who is in primary school (10 years). He indicates that he does his homework alone most of the time and only asks a neighbour for help if he is struggling. It appears that the teacher's attitude influences his perception and performance in some subjects and he experiences teachers with a good temperament as good and supportive. He dislikes subjects offered by teachers who use corporal punishment. He also assumes that teachers he likes regard him as a good learner and he is regarded by those he dislikes as a problematic learner. He lacks commitment and perseverance in his schoolwork and he admits that his problems with Maths made him to be truant. He has no future aspirations, he just wants to work in an office and play computer games. At home, he is emotionally supportive and caring for his nephew; he takes responsibility for doing chores daily, which gives him structure and commitment and a sense of control. He regards his grandmother as the adult person who has always been supportive to him. He is not able to identify protective factors from his environment and to use them for support. The learner is proud of his swimming talent that he learned on his own, which helped him experience success and indicates some perseverance, sense of control, and commitment. He demonstrates academic problems and he lacks good problem solving skills. However, he appears to be coping in his home-environment, and he experiences some sense of control at home. His relationship with his friend is not offering him a sense of support. He is surviving in his environment and doing the best he can to get by. He did not bounce back after the stressors he experienced in his life. He is non-resilient which correlates with his self-evaluation. He has reintegrated to survival zone.	

3.5.4.7 Summary

Table 3.17 gives a synopsis of the twelve learners' self-evaluation, teachers' evaluation and the resilience status according to the interviews. The resilience status concluded from the interviews is discussed according to two contexts: the school context (S) as it is assumed that most learner might have restricted their self-evaluation to school related behaviour and to the general social systems (G) referred to in the interview, that is the community, home and school environment. Table 3.17 further indicates that both resilience and non-resilience occur in two stages. Resilience includes resilient reintegration and comfort or homeostatic zone and both stages indicate bouncing back. Non-resilience also occurs in two stages, the survival and the dysfunctional stages were the dysfunctional stage indicates the lowest state of non-resilience. According to the Resilience Process Model, Figure 2.2 (a&b) and the Resilience Scale scores, the cut-off score for resilience could be at least 88%, which is the lowest score in the median zone. However, the interview results indicate differently.

Table 3.17 indicates that the cut-off score for resilience derived from interviews is 65%, which is the second lowest score in the non-resilient zone concluded from the Resilience Scale. Table 3.17 further indicates that the Learning Behaviour Scale failed to identify resilient and non-resilient learners. The Learning Behaviour Scale of the teachers did not correlate with the Resilience Scale and the interviews. The Resilience Scale also failed to identify resilient and non-resilient learner because it does not fully correlate with the interview results. In the resilient group, three learners achieved resilient reintegration in all contexts. However, one learner achieved resilient reintegration in the school context and was found to be generally in the comfort zone. Two of the four learners in the median zone were found to have reintegrated to comfort zone in all the contexts, one learner reintegrated to comfort zone in the school context and to resilience generally. However, one learner was found to be non-resilient in all contexts, Learner 012, reintegrated to survival zone. It appears that the school context had an influence in the self-evaluation of the learners, since the learners found to be resilient in the two groups (resilient and undefined status) indicate the resilience status that fully correlates with the school context.

		RESILIENT						UNDEFINED STATUS				NON-RESILIENT			
		184	185	186	189	011	012	015	188	009	010	187	190		
Learner No.		125	100	125	125	112	112	111	111	86	86	82	78		
Resilience Scale Scores	Raw Score /125	100	100	100	100	89	89	88	88	68	68	65	62		
	%	A	A	A	A	E	E	G	G	I	I	K	L		
Learner Rank Order		73	67	84	75	73	75	58	80	47	59	62	77		
Learning Behaviour Scale / 100	%	F	H	A	D	F	D	K	B	L	J	I	C		
Teacher Rank order		13	15	14	17	14	18	16	13	15	15	17	17		
Age		8	9	8	9	8	9	9	8	9	8	8	9		
Grade		2	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1		
Gender: Boy=1 / Girl=2		2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1		
Area: Township=1 / Informal=2		G	G	S	G				G	G					
Interviews: Resilience Process Model Figures 2.2 (a-b)	Resilient reintegration	S	S	S	S				G	S		G			
Context: General (G) School (S)	Homeostatic/ Comfort			G		S		G	S		G	S			
	Maladaptive/ Survival						G						G		
	Dysfunctional						S						S		

However, learners in the non-resilient group were not well identified by the Resilience Scale. Three of the learners were found to be resilient, which indicates that the cut-off score for resilience should be 65%, although Learner 012 (89%) falls out completely of this range. Learner 009 was found to have reintegrated to resilience in all context, which is higher than all learners in the undefined status group and Learner 186 in the resilient group. While the resilience status of Learners 010 and 187 relate to those of resilient learners in the undefined status.

Learner 190 was however found to be non-resilient and his non-resilience status relates to that of Learner 012 in the undefined status.

3.5.4.8 Conclusion

To determine the resilience status of the learners from the interviews proved to be a challenge since The Resilience Process Models (Figure 2.2 a&b) do not specifically illustrate the presence of non-resilience. The model however, indicates the less resilient individuals as having maladaptive reintegration (reintegration to survival) and dysfunctional reintegration (reintegration with loss). The model further, illustrates reintegration to resilience, the highest state that surpasses the homeostatic or comfort zone, and which is a stage reached after disruptions when the individual develops e.g. more insight, understanding, social competence, and problem solving skills, autonomy, and a sense of purpose, positive identity, altruism, responsibility and self-control, individuals who display a hardy personality (Werner & Smith 1982 83-93; Benard 2004:7-14; Joseph 1994:25-33; and Boyd & Eckert 2002:2-11). The homeostatic or comfort zone is characterised by healthy development and coping without serious behaviour and intellectual problems, and with personal strengths that allow the individual to interact effectively within the social system, which relates to resilience, (Werner & Smith 1992:56-57; 1982:48-49).

In establishing the resilience and non-resilience status of participants, the interaction between the internal personal factors, the stressors, risk factors and the protective factors in the care-giving environment were regarded to have implications in determining the behavioural outcome of the individual. The resilience and non-resilience were found to have direct or indirect effect on the behavioural outcome when stress is constant. However, when stress is variable, the resilience and non-resilience is found to moderate the relationship between the stressor and the behavioural outcome (Kaplan 1999:28). The interviews indicate that resilient individuals, who were exposed to multiple risk factors in their environment, demonstrated more resilient characteristics that helped them to overcome stressors and to achieve positive outcomes, e.g. Learners 009, 189, 188, 184, 185, 187 demonstrated general resilience. Learner 009 appeared to gain additional

protective and coping skills than prior to every stressor she is exposed to (Kaplan 1999:25-27). However, learners who were exposed to constant stressors, their behavioural outcome in managing the stressors did not demonstrate gaining of additional protective and coping skills but sometimes an indication of poor coping skills. Learner 186 struggled with bullies for two successive years and struggles to overcome the problem and maintain healthy development in his peer relations.

The learners who reintegrated to resilience, mostly experienced multiple risk factors and demonstrated independence, responsibility, assertiveness, sense of control, self-efficacy, planning and resourcefulness in their problem solving. Most participants knew what they needed and how to acquire it and viewed their problems as challenges that they have to overcome. The non-resilient learners were considered to experience behavioural and academic problems. They were not assertive in their environment, they gave-up easily, had external locus of control, lacked flexibility and planning in their problem solving, dependent on others for solutions, had no sense of control and lacked alternative solutions to their problems (were not proactive) and experienced little success in their lives. They were not successful in identifying most protective factors available in their social system.

The variability in the nature of resilience can be attributed, among others, to the variable risk factors participants are exposed to. Kaplan (1999:26) further explains this fact by stating that the nature of resilience is bound to be highly variable since the definition of resilience is tied to the nature of the risks, and these are variable. Most of the township learners are exposed to multiple stressors, which are mostly interconnected e.g. single parenthood, unemployment, poverty, and death of significant other, which relates to the difficulty of establishing their resilience status using the Resilience Scale and the Learning Behaviour Scale. The risks the learners are exposed to are variable and thus the nature of their resilience is bound to be variable. Regarding the classification of risk factors, it is important to note that the researcher made an informed decision since there is no criterion to determine variables as risk factors or a measure relating to the behavioural outcome (Kaplan 1999:28).

The Resilient Scale did not reliably identify resilient and non-resilient learners, it did not successfully agree with the interview results. Table 3.17 indicates that with regard to the resilience status of the twelve participants, ten were found to be resilient and two to be non-resilient. Interviews were found to be the most reliable research tool to identify the resilience and non-resilience status of the participants.

The Learning Behaviour Scale, however, failed to identify resilient and non-resilient learners, which might be attributed to contextual analysis by teachers. Teachers viewed learners from the academic related behaviour, although the teachers gave some learners who regarded themselves to struggle academically a high score e.g. Learners 190, 012, 189. The curricular teachers gave an indication of poor knowledge and judgement of the learners according to the interviews. There might be a need to further establish the subjects the curricular teachers offers to the learners to determine if there is a link between the temperament of teachers and scores as perceived by the learners in their interview reports.

The Resilient Scale cannot be used to identify resilient and non-resilient learners, it needs further modification to further enable classification of scores according to the resilience status of the learner, to determine a cut-off score between resilience and non-resilience in order to ensure reliable identification of resilient and non-resilient learners. However, there could also be a possibility that resilient and non-resilient learners in a township secondary school cannot as yet be identified using a Resilient Scale due to their variable risk factors. Interviews can be used to fully identify resilient and non-resilient learners in a township school.

In conclusion resilience can be summarised by the words of Kaplan (1999:27):

‘Resilience comprises those who have bounced back and continue to rebound from high risks and vulnerabilities. They frequently begin life as frail, weak and ailing infants and children; despite the fragility, they gradually develop a seemingly impeccable resolve ‘not to be broken’ and demonstrate an extraordinary degree of persistence in their continuous struggles with adversity. In the service of survival, they can display a high degree of creativity, which tends to be inner-directed and agonisingly expressed.

Their capacity to transform intolerable reality through fantasies is of high order, and at its best, gains the lasting attention of the world. Their creative activity relieves their overwhelming sense of vulnerability, but as it abates, they become susceptible to breakdown. It is a life long struggle by often very miserable people, but society benefits from it.'

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CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains a summary and the conclusions of the study and the recommendations of the researcher. The recommendations address the possible improvements of the Resilience Scale and possible strategies for further research needed in the field of resilience.

4.2 SUMMARY

The aim of the research was to generate a way of identifying resilient and non-resilient middle-adolescent learners in Grade 8 and 9, in a township secondary school, in order to support the development of resilience under various stressful circumstances. The main concern being to nurture resilience and to provide support and utilise protective factors to the adolescent in spite of the risk factors in the township and informal settlement schools and communities.

Theoretical frameworks on resilience, the developmental context and middle-adolescence was explored and two questionnaires were developed (one for the learners and one for their educators) using the literature reviews and the theoretical frameworks. The developmental stage of middle-adolescence with its physiological, behavioural and biological changes, the role expectations and demands in the various systems of development, the coping strategies employed by the developing adolescents in their developmental environment within townships were also discussed. The psychosocial stage of middle-adolescence suggests a complex and dynamic phase the individual is experiencing, the role demands and expectations from all systems in the care giving environment. The continuous interaction and the perceived protective and risk factors between all the systems in the township

conditions and the importance of the provision of support and opportunities in building resilience in middle-adolescence were discussed.

The development of the Resilience Scale was followed by a pilot survey to help identify possible problems and improve clarity and readability of the Resilience Scale and the comments given led to a revision and reworking of the scale. The learners' self-awareness proved to be essential in determining the resilient and non-resilient learners. The conversion of questions into operational behavioural statements to ensure clarity and functionality also proved essential for self-evaluation and judgement.

Chapter Three reported the empirical research procedure, the collection of data, processing of data and the interpretation and evaluation of the results. The study intended to identify resilient and non-resilient middle-adolescent learners using self-reports, teacher evaluation and interviews. It was observed that the structure of the Resilience Scale, the school administrative procedure, and time allocated for the research, had an effect on the sample of the study.

The analysis of interviews based on the life-experiences of adolescents, incorporated the perceived role demands, environmental stressors, protective factors, coping strategies, and the interaction between the adolescents and various sub-systems in their developmental environment. The life-stories incorporated the social systems (family, community and school) in the adolescent's care-giving environment, their interactions, interrelatedness and continuous effect and influence on the individual and the perceived risk and protective factors in shaping the development of the middle-adolescent. The interviews also demonstrated the importance of the social systems in influencing the future of the adolescent through his or her resilience, e.g. the adolescent's enthusiasm, self-efficacy, autonomy, proactive/reactive approaches to life, independence, problem solving strategies, self-awareness, sense of control and purpose in life and the flexibility in acting their roles, their adaptive nature and identity development.

4.3 CONCLUSIONS

4.3.1 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question was formulated as follows (see par. 1.2):

By which means and criteria can resilient and non-resilient middle-adolescent learners reliably be identified in Grade 8 and 9 in a South African township school?

Table 3.17 indicates that in-depth interviews were reliable in identifying resilient and non-resilient learners in a South African township school. The table also indicates that the Resilience and the Learning Behaviour Scales were unreliable in identifying resilient and non-resilient learners.

4.3.2 THE RESILIENCE AND NON-RESILIENCE STATUS OF THE INTERVIEWEES

The resilience and non-resilience status of the adolescent in the study was demonstrated as the outcome of the reintegration process of the individual after the disruption of the homeostatic state by stressors and demands, forcing the learner to act in order to maintain the homeostatic state.

The reintegration process is the result of the individual's response to stressors in order to maintain and preserve the normal state of functioning. Sometimes the individual is unable to reintegrate to the 'OK' state. Depending on the available protective factors (internal and external), the individual might surpass the homeostatic state and become more resilient or they might not bounce back but remain stuck in the non-resilient status. The stage the adolescent reintegrates to, helps to determine the resilience status and the coping strategies of the adolescent. The adolescents who reintegrated to resilience, comfort zone and non-resilience demonstrated the following characteristics as emerged from the interviews.

(1) Reintegration to resilience and comfort zone (resilient learners)

Good problem solving skills, self-confidence, future aspirations, talents, assertiveness and responsibility. Commitment, respect, sense of humour, sense of control, intrinsic motivation, optimism, perseverance, proactive approach to life and structured chores. Prosocial bonding, patience, adaptive distancing, religious beliefs and consistency.

(2) Reintegration to non-resilience (non-resilient learners)

Pessimistic, lacks planning, sense of control, commitment and flexible problem solving skills, experience little success and demonstrate academic problems and behaviour problems.

The study illustrated two stages of resilience, the homeostatic or comfort zone and the resilient stage. The comfort zone relates to a state where individuals are functioning normally and are able to cope in their environment; it is the most preferred state of functioning. However, after stressful experiences some individuals reintegrate to a state higher than the comfort zone, by becoming 'someone greater' than before through learning, developing, gaining deeper insight and understanding making the individual stronger, more knowing, loving and resilient (Boyd & Eckert 2002:10). This state makes the individual richer and stronger after experiencing stressors, e.g. Learner 009. The higher state of resilience demonstrates more maturity, altruism, flexible coping strategies, adaptive and responsive personal skills, critical and creative problem-solving skills, optimism and purposeful thinking. These skills appear difficult for an adolescent to acquire without educational development and nurturance. However, the resilient individual is able to learn, discover and grow from challenges and to unlock the mysteries of life through suffering (Boyd & Eckert 2002:8). The care-giving environment further has a role to play in building resilience in learners, and schools have a major role to play in enabling all learners to experience success, competence, and self-confidence and to demonstrate flexible problem solving and coping skills in their curricular and extracurricular activities.

The non-resilient state is also characterised by two stages, the maladaptive or survival zone and the state of dysfunction or reintegration with a loss. The survival

zone indicates an inability to learn and grow through experience and a loss of hope and optimism, resulting in the individual choosing an empty life and assuming a victims' mentality (Boyd & Eckert 2002:10-11). Such individuals fail to manage stress but instead, they prefer to toughen their minds, bodies and spirits by combating stress in a reactive way (Boyd & Eckert 2002:11). If a reactive strategy is demonstrated, very little success is achieved in managing the stressors, individuals continue to live in an environment of stress, and their lives seem not to be 'OK' or normal again. They fail to bounce back. The dysfunctional or the reintegration with loss state is characterised by facing stressors with despair, resentment and victim's mentality and reducing the chances of bouncing back; there is a major reduction towards positive development (Boyd & Eckert 2002:8; and Kumpfer 1999:211).

4.3.3 THE MIDDLE-ADOLESCENT LEARNER

4.3.3.1 Middle-adolescence and the care giving environment

The reflective life-stories of the adolescents and the developmental stage of adolescence, made me marvel on the relationships and interactions between the adolescents and the caregivers. The adolescent's perception of adults and the different strategies they employ to cope in their care-giving environment were mostly constructive. Some adolescents experienced chronic or sudden and interconnected multiple stressors (e.g. death of parent/s and sibling/s, parental unemployment, poverty) and showed strength and commitment to succeed in their environments without any form of psychological help except the support and love of their families and friends. The ability to select mentors from their social systems to help them cope and to form support networks was observable in most of the interviewees. The majority of the interviewees demonstrated perseverance, commitment, competence and a sense of control and they refused to give in to coercion, peer-pressure, and rejection in their care-giving environment.

None of the interviewees viewed their school as ill resourced, they however criticised the curriculum structure, teaching, and assessment methods. They felt helpless and stuck with some learning areas e.g. Maths, which they experienced as

hard to comprehend, and to achieve success in. Most of the interviewees perceived the educator's attitude and temperament as a power to influence their own attitude and success in learning areas. The educators, for example, with a good sense of humour and easy temperament (approachable) were perceived to be good educators and their learning areas were more liked and understood, however educators with a difficult temperament (angry, shouting, punishing, condescending) were perceived as 'bad' educators and their learning areas were regarded as difficult e.g. Maths. Some educators were identified as good mentors and support systems by interviewees; they offered emotional, academic and even financial support to learners and made the school to be regarded as a caring and inviting environment.

The lack of flexibility and accommodation in the curriculum structure were perceived by the interviewees as a stressor and a challenge difficult to overcome. Most perceived the educator as an authority figure in control of the subject matter and capable of empowering them with the skills to help them understand and overcome academic obstacles. Some learners who experienced academic problems yet perceived themselves to possess the ability and aptitude to understand, provided they could get enough time to practice and be tutored. They based this on their ability to understand and apply knowledge, after the educator has corrected their class or homework mistakes.

Some adolescents however, lacked commitment, perseverance, flexibility in seeking solutions and motivation to succeed in their academic activities, they avoided punishment by handing in work of poor quality (without comprehension), as put simply by one learner, *'I always do my homework, even if I don't understand I just write I will get wrong answers and do corrections. During corrections they will explain to me and I will understand.'* None of the learners mentioned the high learner: teacher ratios as a barrier to learning and teachers were viewed as accommodating learners by providing extra classes to those who struggle with their work. Some learners, who struggled academically, did not view the opportunity of attending extra classes as viable; it did not appear to solve their problems and they did not use the opportunity.

Some interviewees, who were victimised and bullied by their peers regarded the school as an unsupportive and violent place, they blamed the school staff for not providing discipline, security, safety, proper supervision and control. The school was viewed as an unsafe environment where drugs were easily accessible and used without fear of punishment. The bullied interviewees blamed the lack of peer and adult support (student body) and solidarity as the drive towards intimidation, coercion and violence on learners by thugs and bullies on the school grounds and in the community.

Assertive, self-assured and proactive interviewees viewed their social interactions and peer relations as positive while submissive and reactive learners viewed some of their peers as bullies and coercive and experienced peer rejection. All learners appeared to be happy and comfortable with their choice of friends and their relationships were seen as a source of emotional support, they stuck together. Most adolescents had chores at home (structured home environments) and accepted their responsibility and the roles they were expected to play.

All the interviewees indicated that they had at least one adult or younger person who had always been there for them, either as a source of financial support or emotional support. Some interviewees perceived their caregivers as a source of financial support and their friends as sources of emotional support. This is a normal characteristic of adolescents in their search for identity and independence where friends are regarded as an important source of influence in their lives. None of the middle-adolescents disregarded the importance of the caregivers in their lives. Meeus *et al.* (2002:93-94) indicate that the relationship between the adolescent and the caregiver is essential for the development of positive identity and the same relationship is essential in supporting and nurturing resilience in children.

4.3.3.2 Middle-adolescence and the development of identity

Meeus *et al.* (1999:420; 423) maintain that identity achievement takes place in late adolescence and from early to middle-adolescence children are progressively developing from identity diffusion to identity foreclosure or moratorium, in the direction of identity achievement. The moratorium status is unstable because it is

an explorative state with unclear or no commitment, it might relate to identity crisis. The middle-adolescent can achieve a positive identity when commitment is demonstrated in their identity status, thus identity foreclosure and identity achievement. Benard (2004:21) indicates that individuals with positive identity demonstrate resilience and their behaviour is characterised by:

- Optimal psychological functioning including personal well-being and absence of anxiety.
- Goal directed activity, problem solving and social competence including a positive attitude, cooperation and helpful relationships.
- Positive self-evaluation or self-esteem.

The exploration and search for identity helps to assert the adolescents in their social environment and to become accustomed to the adult roles ahead. The coping strategies they employ in dealing with life's hassles help in affirming themselves. The protective factors (internal and external) available in their care-giving environment help in promoting positive coping strategies and maintaining their healthy development. The transactional process between the adolescent and the care-giving environment is essential in nurturing and promoting a healthy development. The resilience of the adolescent is demonstrated in the absence of serious behaviour and academic problems (delinquency that might require institutionalisation). When the adolescent is able to cope and live well with the help and support provided by the caregivers, resilience and positive identity are demonstrated.

It appears that the 'storm and stress' of the adolescent stage seem to sometimes relate to the necessary exploration phase that requires the support, nurturance and unconditional acceptance of caregivers to allow the healthy development of the adolescent. The caregivers are essential in encouraging a healthy development and promoting resilience and positive identity in middle-adolescents. The adolescent does not exist in isolation but continuously interacts with the environment.

4.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the study discussed in this section should serve as ways to improve on the future way of implementing the research process.

4.4.1 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

- The time allocated for the Resilience Scale administration, i.e. after school hours, was not conducive and accommodative of all learners. Less than 50% of the learners stayed behind for the research, even after an elaborate request by the teachers and the researcher. The school lacked a spacious room (hall) to accommodate all the learners, which resulted in the administration of the Resilience Scale taking three days to administer. The teachers requested the learners to clean the classrooms before they made the venue available for research; this also prolonged the waiting period outside the classrooms and resulted in most learners walking away.
- The format and the design of the questionnaire omitted the full personal details of the learners, the residential and contact details of the learners were not captured initially and the process delayed the interviews because learners could not be contacted. In addition, the age of 45 participants could not be established due to school administrative limitations.
- The learners selected for interviews consisted mostly of the Tsonga speaking group. Learners number 009, 010, 011, 150, 184, 185, 186, 190 are Tsonga speaking and learners 012, 188, 187, 189 are Sepedi speaking. The analysis according to ethnicity was not done, however, teacher compliance or influence may have played a role in learner participation.

4.4.2 PROBLEMS WITH THE RESILIENCE SCALE

- The items of the Resilience Scale represented descriptions of behaviour, except for items 9 and 25, which presented concepts. The presentation of items as concepts might lead to different interpretations by different

learners, which indicates a lack of clarity. The lack of clarification was evident during the interviews when some participants required clarity on the concepts role model and being in control.

- The allocation of 5-points on the Resilience Scale instead of, perhaps, using a 10-point scale with a continuous line might have influenced the tendency of learners to allocate high scores for themselves as indicated in Table 3.8. A strong tendency was noted in the particular sample for this research, to self-evaluate in the top score per item.
- The lack of negative items may have encouraged adherence to a particular response style and may have contributed to some inability to determine the consistency of the answers.

4.4.3 PROBLEMS WITH INTERVIEWS

- The venues selected for interviews caused disruptions. At school, the teacher's offices were used for interviews, and teachers continuously disrupted the interview process by coming in unannounced. The participants were not awarded the privacy they deserved at these venues. The interruptions disrupted the flow of the interview. During school days, the noise of learners also disrupted the interviews.
- The teacher centre as an alternative venue during school holidays was noisy due to a construction project although the staff disruptions were minimal. The advantage of the teacher's centre was that the staff did not know the interviewees and the participants were more relaxed when the unexpected interferences occurred.

4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

4.5.1 INTRODUCTION

The recommendations in the study should serve as guidelines to improve the Resilience Scale and to encourage the schools to nurture and build resilience in all

learners. The interview reports have helped to make clear what participants require to regard their school as supportive.

4.5.2 RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING THE RESILIENCE SCALE (FOR FURTHER STUDY)

- The One-factor analysis of variables on the Resilience Scale, indicated weak loadings of less than 0.3 on Variables 3, 4, 7, 9,18 (Table 3.7). To improve the reliability of the scale, these variables can be reformulated.
- The items need to be increased to more than 25 to allow inclusion of more detail concerning the various resilience characteristics because it has shown that participants can complete the scale in less than 30 minutes. The Resilience Scale needs to include the initial five resilience factors to demonstrate the strength of the participants, and the factors should include more than two items each.
- Negative items need to be included in the Resilience Scale to be able to determine the consistency and reliability of the participants' answers.
- The Resilience Scale needs to be refined to determine the cut-off scores clearly for participants to be considered resilient and non-resilient. The two stages of resilience and the two of non-resilience need to be clearly demonstrated.

4.5.3 THE SCHOOL

Some learners regarded the research school as supportive and some as non-supportive.

- The school as an institution of learning needs to support and nurture the healthy development of the learner, through various programs that encourage e.g. success and promote social competence, problem solving skills, autonomy, sense of purpose and intellectual efficiency. Most

participants in the study experienced success in extracurricular activities, which were not offered by the school.

- Teachers need to have an easy temperament to encourage and attract learner participation and involvement in school activities. Every learner needs to be regarded as a winner in some respect and to be motivated to perform to the best of their abilities. Most participants appreciated the teachers who were approachable and a source of support.
- Creating secure and inviting schools requires eradicating criminal activities on the school grounds and implementing a strict discipline policy. The school used a prohibited disciplinary procedure (corporal punishment) which frustrated and alienated learners from the teachers and negatively influenced the learner's performance in some learning areas e.g. Maths. The alleged free use of drugs on the school premises impacts on the poor security and discipline of the school.
- The learners with learning problems are not utilizing the available resources at the school e.g. extra classes, which are seen as necessary when one has not performed well in a test (an opportunity to be reassessed and be passed). The teachers need to identify learners who require extra help and encourage them to attend extra classes.
- The learner's choice of learning area is frequently not based on aptitude and interest. Most learners choose learning areas according to their perception of the teacher. Teachers regarded as good, that is, teaching well and encouraging success are well liked by learners and their subjects are preferred. Learners also tend to reject those areas in which they experience frustration and learning problems. This choice will affect their future and frustrate their choice of careers. Life Orientation is essential in informing learners of such choices and to encourage evaluation in terms of subject choice, interests and aptitude as a priority in career education.

- The lack of active multidisciplinary interactions in the school disadvantage learners who require the services of other institutions, and the gap between the home and school is evident, when parents are not summoned on allegations of abuse by the learner, e.g. Learner 009. The school is portrayed by some learners as not being supportive in that its approach to problems is not holistic and learners are left to struggle without the professional support they require.

4.6 FINAL REMARKS

The Resilient Scale did not successfully identify resilient and non-resilient learners in the study. The in-depth interviews were more reliable in identifying resilient and non-resilient learners. The in-depth interviews demonstrated the intensity of the stressors and the perceived performance of the learners in relation to overcoming the stressors.

The resilient learners were able to utilise the protective factors in their care-giving environment and demonstrated a hardy personality. Some learners who lived in dangerous communities functioned well in their communities by discovering ways to avoid danger and to enjoy and experience success in other activities in their communities. However, some non-resilient learners struggle to overcome chronic peer pressure and rejection, leading to learned helplessness and the development of a victim's mentality. The non-resilient learners employed negative coping strategies and experienced little success in overcoming stressors in their lives. They were unable to utilise the available protective factors in their environment.

According to Benard (1999:270), caregivers need to model resilience in order to promote resilience in adolescents and they need to acknowledge that resilience is a process not a program. It is a process of connectedness or sense of belonging, of linking individuals to interests and to life and enabling adolescents to find 'mutually caring and respectful relationships and opportunities for meaningful involvement' (Benard 1999:271). Caring is a principle of resilience since it includes (Benard 1999:274):

- Seeing the possibility in each individual; the ability to look beyond the negative words and actions of adolescents and seeing the underlying feelings of anger, pain and insecurities. Caring includes being a 'sympathetic witness', carefully listening to and believing a child's story, conveying compassion, understanding, respect and interest.
- Having high expectations can help to promote academic achievement, self-efficacy and optimism e.g. group activities because they convey to the child that he or she belongs.

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ENGLISH & TSHONGA: RESILIENCE SCALE

ENGLISH & TSHONGA

Dear LEARNER

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

Some of the sentences describe you better than others do.

Read each sentence carefully. Indicate how much you agree, by putting a cross in the box that best describes you.

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

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

Please write your name and Grade below. It is for my own use, **nobody in your school will have access to your answers.**

Thank you very much for your help.

RUTH MAMPANE

Personal Particulars:				
Learner number	V ₂₆			
Grade	V ₂₇			
Gender (boy=1, girl=2)	V ₂₈			

Sentence		True of me	Often true of me	About half true of me	A little true of me	Not at all true of me
Swivulwo		<i>Ntiyiso hi mina</i>	<i>Ntiyiso hi mina minkarhi hinkwayo</i>	<i>Ntiyiso wa xikarhi hi mina</i>	<i>Ntiyiso wuntsongo hi mina</i>	<i>Leswi nga riku ntiyiso hi mina</i>
		5	4	3	2	1
1	My family accepts me the way I am <i>Ndyangu wu mina wa ni amukela hi leswi nga swiswona</i>					
2	I work hard at school <i>Ndza tika rhato exikolweni</i>					
3	When I have a problem, I try to solve it <i>Loko ndiziri niku tikeriwa ndzi ringeta swinene hi matimba ku swi ololoxa</i>					
4	I like to learn about new things <i>Ndza tsakela ku dyondzo hi leswintswa</i>					
5	I always look at different ways to solve a problem <i>Ndzi languta hiti ndlela to hambana hambana ku ololoxa ku tikeriwa</i>					
6	When I believe that I am right I am not afraid to show it <i>Loko ndzi pfumela leswaku ndzi le ntiyisweni andzi chavi ku swi komba ni nchunche kile</i>					
7	I am able to see when someone is happy <i>Ndzi kota ku vona loko unwana arini ntsako emoyeni</i>					
8	My friends know they can trust me <i>Vanghana va mina va switiva leswaku va nga ndzi tshembha</i>					
9	I like to be in control of things <i>Ndzi rhandza ku lawula swilo</i>					
10	I take part actively in class <i>Ndzi rhandza ku endla hinkwaswo leswi endliwaka eklasini hi miqingiriki</i>					
11	I like helping other children at school <i>Ndzi rhandza ku pfuna swinene eklasini</i>					

Sentence		True of me	Often true of me	About half true of me	A little true of me	Not at all true of me
Swivulwo		<i>Ntiyiso hi mina</i>	<i>Ntiyiso hi mina minkarhi hinkwayo</i>	<i>Ntiyiso wa xikarhi hi mina</i>	<i>Ntiyiso wuntsongo hi mina</i>	<i>Leswi nga riku ntiyiso hi mina</i>
		5	4	3	2	1
12	I get along with other children <i>Ndza swi kota ku va exikarhi ka vanwana vana ndza va amukela</i>					
13	I learn from my mistakes <i>Ndzi dyondza ehenhla ka swihoro swa mina</i>					
14	If I try hard I know I will succeed <i>Ndzi swi twa leswaku loko ndzi ti karhata ndzi ta humelela</i>					
15	If people can know how I really am inside, they will love me <i>Vanhu loko va twa vundzeni bga mina hiku enta vata ndzi rhandza swinene</i>					
16	I believe that I have talents Ndza pfumela leswaku ndzuna titalenta					
17	I do not give up trying A ndzi ehavi ku ringeta					
18	I like to celebrate when I get things right <i>Ndzi rhandza ku tsaka no nkensa loko ndzi humelerile eka leswi ndzi swi endleke</i>					
19	I feel sorry when I have hurt others <i>Ndzi twa ku vava loko ndzi wise vanwana ku vava</i>					
20	Nothing will ever keep me down Ku hava lexi nga ndzi yisaka ehansi					
21	I feel better after talking about my problems with people whom I love <i>Ndzi titwa ndzi nchunchebile loko ndzi hlamusele vanwana ku tikeriwa loko ndziri na kona</i>					
22	I have successfully survived bad events in my life <i>Ndzi swikotile ku humelela eka swiphiso swo bha evutonwini bya mina</i>					
23	I believe I can have a bright future <i>Ndzi ni ku tshemba leswaku ndzi ta humelela evutonwini bya mina hi leswinene</i>					
24	There is always someone to help me <i>Ndzi ni mupfuni loyi ati karhata ka ku ndzi pfuna eka hinkwaswo</i>					

Sentence		True of me	Often true of me	About half true of me	A little true of me	Not at all true of me
Swivulwo		<i>Ntiyiso hi mina</i>	<i>Ntiyiso hi mina munkarhi hinkwayo</i>	<i>Ntiyiso wa xikarhi hi mina</i>	<i>Ntiyiso wuntsongo hi mina</i>	<i>Leswi nga riku ntiyiso hi mina</i>
		5	4	3	2	1
25	I have good role models <i>Kuni vanhu lava nga swikombisa leswinene leswi ndzi nga swi landzelaka munkarhi linkwayo</i>					

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ENGLISH & SEPEDI: RESILIENCE SCALE

Dear LEARNER

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

Some of the sentences describe you better than others do.

Read each sentence carefully. Indicate how much you agree, by putting a cross in the box that best describes you.

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

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

Please write your name and Grade below. It is for my own use, **nobody in your school will have access to your answers.**

Thank you very much for your help.

RUTH MAMPANE

Personal Particulars:				
Learner number	V 1			
Grade	V 2			
Gender (boy=1, girl=2)	V 3			

Sentence		True of me	Often true of me	About half true of me	A little true of me	Not at all true of me
Lefoko		<i>Nnete kudu-kudu</i>	<i>Nnete ga ntšhi</i>	<i>Magareng</i>	<i>Nnete ga nnyane</i>	<i>Maaka/Aowa</i>
		5	4	3	2	1
1	My family accepts me the way I am <i>Ka gae ba nkamogela ka moo ke lego ka gona</i>					
2	I work hard at school <i>Ke dira/ bereka ka maatla sekolong</i>					
3	When I have a problem, I try to solve it <i>Ge kena le mathata ke leka go a rarolla/fediša</i>					
4	I like to learn about new things <i>Ke rata go ithuta ka dilo tše diswa</i>					
5	I always look at different ways to solve a problem <i>Ka mehla ke leka go šomiša/berekiša megwa e fapanego go rarolla/fediša mathata/diproblems</i>					
6	When I believe that I am right I am not afraid to show it <i>Ge ke kgola/dumela gore ke mo nneteng ga ke tšhabe go bontšha/laetša seo</i>					
7	I am able to see when someone is happy <i>Ke kgona go bona ge motho o mongwe a thabile</i>					
8	My friends know they can trust me <i>Bagwera/ditšhomi ba ka ba a tseba gore ba ka ntshapa</i>					
9	I like to be in control of things <i>Ke rata go ba le tsebo/taolo ya dilo</i>					
10	I take part actively in class <i>Ke bontšha/ tšea karolo ka mafolofolo ka klaseng</i>					
11	I like helping other children at school <i>Ke rata go thuša bana ba bangwe mo sekolong</i>					
12	I get along with other children <i>Ke bereka/šomisana mmogo/gabotse le bana ba bangwe</i>					
13	I learn from my mistakes <i>Ke ithuta ka diphošo tšaka</i>					
14	If I try hard I know I will succeed <i>Ge ke leka ka maatla ke a tseba ke tla kgona/atlega</i>					
15	If people can know how I really am inside, they will love me <i>Ge batho ba ka tseba boteng/ka gare ga pelo ya ka. ba tla nthata</i>					

Sentence		True of me	Often true of me	About half true of me	A little true of me	Not at all true of me
Lefoko		<i>Nnete kudu-kudu</i>	<i>Nnete ga ntšhi</i>	<i>Magareng</i>	<i>Nnete ga nnyane</i>	<i>Maaka/Aowa</i>
		5	4	3	2	1
16	I believe that I have talents Ke a dumela gore ke na le bokgone/dimpho/tsebo					
17	I do not give up trying Ga ke lape go iteka					
18	I like to celebrate when I get things right <i>Ke rata go ke thabiša ge ke kgonne go dira dilo ka nnete/tshwanelo</i>					
19	I feel sorry when I have hurt others <i>Ke ya nyama/swaba ge ke kweša ba bangwe bohloko</i>					
20	Nothing will ever keep me down Go gona le seo se ka nkgatelelago fase					
21	I feel better after talking about my problems with people whom I love <i>Ke kwa bokaone/betere ge ke boletše mathata a ka le batho bao ke ba ratago</i>					
22	I have successfully survived bad events in my life <i>Ke kgonne go phema/fenya dilo tše mpe bophelong bja ka</i>					
23	I believe I can have a bright future <i>Ke a dumela gore nka ba le bokamoso/future bjo bo botse</i>					
24	There is always someone to help me <i>Ka mehla/nako tsohle go na le motho yo a ka nthušago</i>					
25	I have good role models <i>Go na le batho bao elego mehlala e mebotse go nna</i>					

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LEARNING BEHAVIOUR SCALE

Dear Teacher

I am engaged in research aimed at supporting learners when they encounter difficulties and problems in their lives.

Please look at the following checklist concerning the overall behaviour of a small number of your learners. Your objective responses will help me understand them better and to gain background information on their overall behaviour and interactions at school. Your responses will also supplement the findings of their questionnaires and my interviews with them.

Please complete them privately. In the interest of these learners please do not divulge your responses to any colleague. Your objective responses will be highly appreciated.

Your comments will remain confidential. You are welcome to clarify any response and provide more information where you think it necessary.

Thank you most kindly for your time.

RUTH MAMPANE

Personal Particulars:			
Learner number	V ₂₆		
Grade	V ₂₇		
Gender (boy=1, girl=2)	V ₂₈		

QUESTIONS		Always	Very often	Some-times	Rarely	Never
1	The learner is afraid to attempt new things					
2	The learner chooses positive role models					
3	The learner performs beyond what is expected, i.e. extends him or herself					
4	The learner has NO adult support					
5	The learner is able to utilise support provided to him / her					
6	The learner does the work required independently					
7	The learner is UNABLE to work well with other learners					
8	The learner likes to be in control of things					
9	The learner is afraid to attempt new things					
10	The learner uses different strategies to reach a solution					
11	The learner is NOT performing to his/her full potential					
12	The learner gets support from home					
13	The learner is afraid to explore new opportunities					
14	The learner likes to succeed					
15	The learner lacks future aspirations					
16	The learner lacks motivation					
17	The learner CANNOT be trusted by his peers					
18	The learner has a positive influence on others					
19	The learner shows potential for a bright future					
20	The learner has some guts					

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I selected learner No: 009 because her self-evaluation indicates non-resilience and the teacher ranked her the lowest in the group, however, the interview results ranked her among the highest as indicated in Table 3.17. The learner's identity has been protected and the name used is not her actual name.

Learner No: 009

Interview: 2004

Girl is the youngest of seven children, her mother died and she stays with her aunt. Her brothers and sisters are independent and some have their own families. The 1st born brother is a carpenter (working for a shop); the 2nd and 5th ones are not working. Girl cried when she spoke about her bad experiences. Girl's mother was the eldest with three sisters and two brothers. The aunts and uncles are all alive, but her mother and grandmother died. Girl's mother had 7 children, one died.

I: Is it nice to be the youngest in your family?

R: (*shyly smiles*) Yes.

I: What are your brothers and sisters doing?

R: They are working.

I: Are you enjoying their monies?

R: No, they don't take care of me.

I: They don't; are they just taking care of themselves?

R: Yes.

I: Tell me about your siblings.

R: My brother is a carpenter, the other two are not working -2nd & 3rd born children, and my sister is married.

I: What are parents doing?

R: My mother died.

I: I am sorry, when did she die?

R: Long time ago, I was still a baby, around 1989. My aunt raised me.

I: So you were all raised/ living with your aunt?

R: Yes.

I: Does your aunt have children?

R: Yes.

I: How many?

R: She has six children and one died.

I: Wow, your mother's family is blessed with a lot of kids. How many kids will you have when you grow up?

R: I don't want a child.

I: You don't want a child, well Girl tell me about something bad/sad that happened to you as far as you can remember.

R: They are many; just now, my aunt does not want me to attend school (*tears were running down her face*)

I: Tell me about it?

R: She says she can't afford to educate me. My brothers have a different father than my sister and I. They – my brothers, do not want to educate or even financially provide for me, they say I am not their father's child.

I: Wow, and your sister is she working?

R: She left school because she is pregnant.

I: When did she leave school?

R: This year.

I: In which Grade was she?

R: She was supposed to be in Grade 8.

I: You said your sad/ bad experiences are many, you told me your brothers and your aunt do not want to be financially responsible for you. Tell me about the others?

R: The other one is the same. If I try to plead with them for help they don't want to listen. My aunt has just told me to leave her house. If I can make even a small mistake she never understands, she told me to pack my clothes and leave and I tried to apologise she would not listen. I have to leave by today.

I: So where will you go?

R: Because it's January I am thinking I should pack my clothes and go stay with my uncle.

I: Where does your uncle stay?

R: In Mabopane.

I: What did your uncle say?

R: I have not told him yet, I want to go tell him today and ask if I can live with him.

I: What do you think he will say?

R: I don't know. But I think he will accept me because he always wanted me to stay with him and my aunt refused.

I: Does your uncle have his own family?

R: Yes.

I: This is a major problem for a child your age. So today after school you will be going to Mabopane to speak with your uncle?

R: Yes, my cousin -my aunt's child will give me money for transport; after work; she arrives home at 16h00.

I: So when she arrives she will give you money and you will go to Mabopane?

R: Yes.

I: So your main problem is your aunt.... (*She finished the sentence*):

R: My aunt and my brothers, they do not want to listen to me and educate me.

I: Tell me in your life who has always been there to give you support?

R: My other brother, the problem is he is not working now.

I: How did he offer you support.

R: He would buy me school clothes when I did not have them but currently he is not working and he can't help me.

I: Tell me here at school is there no support that they give you?

R: I did approach the teachers and they advised me to go to the social worker's offices. I went and the social worker told me that I should come with my aunt. My aunt refused to go; she said the social workers would remove me from home.

I: So your aunt refused to go see social workers because she was afraid that they will remove you from home but today she is telling you to leave?

R: Yes.

I: When did you go see social workers?

R: Last year (*which is 2003*).

I: Ok, is your aunt's house big, because she had to raise your brothers and sister and her own children?

R: It is five rooms. It is her daughter and me; she is working, her 2 sons 1 is at tertiary, and the other is not attending school, my sister's children -2nd one who died.

I: What work does your aunt do?

R: She sells food -chips, sweets.

I: You said your brother who gave you support is not working, where does he stay?

R: With my other brother at phase 5. (*An informal settlement*).

I: Where is your grandmother?

R: She died.

I: Wow, you do have a lot of bad experiences. Tell me about good experiences in your life.

R: I can't remember anything. I have another aunt at Nellmapius, I used to live with her but she always shouted at me telling me that my brothers are alive and working but they don't even think of buying me groceries or clothes. I had to walk to school bare footed -I stayed with her till Grade 6.

I: So with all these uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters none is willing to educate you. I can see you love education and you want to finish your high school.

R: They don't take care of me; last year I had no school shoes I went to my eldest brother to ask for school shoes he refused. He said he has his own family and he can't afford to help me. The 3rd born told me I am not his father's child -he has toddler now. I went from one to the other until one buys them bought me some shoes.

I: So who bought you uniform this year?

R: They did not buy me uniform; my brother bought me shoes and a shirt, and the skirt I got as a gift from one learner when I was in Grade 8.

I: You have a tough life Girl. Tell me how was school last year?

R: It was good, but when I was in Grade 8 I did not have a school shirt, I had a small school shirt and learners used to mock/tease me.

I: Other learners made fun of you because you did not have a good shirt.

R: Yes and Mrs. T. gave me two school shirts -second hand.

I: So, Mrs. T. gave you shirts and one learner also gave you a school skirt?

R: Yes, she gave me a skirt when she left school.

I: So what happens during lunch breaks do you bring lunch?

R: I don't bring money or lunch; I eat at home after school.

I: So the school has been good, except your financial problems? Who helps you with your homework?

R: My sister -my aunt's child and my brother-aunt's son, the one at tertiary.

I: Your brother, who gives him money for school?

R: My aunt gives him R20.00 when he goes to school and he shares his money with me. He gives me transport money.

I: Are you saying your aunt gives her child money for school and she refuses to give you money or buy you school uniform. So the treatment is not the same?

R: Yes, she does not treat us the same. She has a son who left school and when he ask for clothes she buys him but if I can ask for anything -school uniform, shoes, or home clothes she tells me she has no money.

I: How was your class?

R: It was all right.

I: Do you participate fully in class; raise hand when questions asked?

R: Yes. Sometimes I knew the answers sometimes I was not sure.

I: What did you do when you were unsure?

R: When the teacher is teaching and writing I will copy what's written on the board and what is said. When I get home I will ask my sister to help me. I will explain to her what the teacher said and how he explained so that she can understand and she will help me with my homework.

I: Ok, which subject did you like/dislike?

R: I liked Science the most; there wasn't one I did not like.

I: Ok, you liked them all, what made you like Science the most?

R: Our teacher told us that Science subjects are needed the most in our country and they were important and if one can be in school/college/university long enough and graduate in Science subjects, there is a possibility of a future. I like Science and besides I understand it.

I: You like Science. You said there was no subject that you did not like. If you have to look back do you think you worked hard or the work was just easy for you?

R: To me the work was easy. The only thing that was not easy was Section B for our external examination.

I: Oh, you wrote external examination for Grade 9. What do you think made Section B difficult?

R: It is things they did not teach us in class.

I: So you saw them for the first time in exam. Who was your favourite teacher?

R: I like them all they were all fine.

I: Ok, if you have a problem at school how do you solve it?

R: The problems I had with my home situation, I went to one teacher Mrs. N. who referred me to Mrs. M. and she referred me to the Social workers.

I: I see do you have any other problems here at school, with other learners?

R: No.

I: Do you have friends?

R: Yes, I have friends.

I: Tell me about your friends, what kind of people are they?

R: They are good for me because when I tell them my problems they console me, they tell me I must not worry a lot because they will stress me.

I: Hm, they are right because they can also affect your school performance and you might not be able to study better. So did you become friends here at secondary school?

R: One I have been friend with since Grade 2, and the other one we met here at school.

I: So you are three in your group, if I can ask you friends if you could be trusted what will they say?

R: I don't know if they can say they trust me.

I: If you have to think about it yourself do you think they trust you?

R: I think they do trust me.

I: If they are unhappy can you see on their faces?

R: When we have made each other sad/angry we speak about it and we forgive each other.

I: Ok, can you see if something made them feel sad and they are not happy?

R: Yes I can see that.

I: How do you see it?

R: They like talking when we are together and when they are sad you can see because they are quiet and reserved.

I: So when they do not talk as much as they usually do you can see that they are not happy. Can they also see when you are not happy?

R: Yes they can.

I: How?

R: I am quiet and sometimes I cry.

I: Tell me what do they say/do when you are like that; when you are sad.

R: They console me and advice me not to be too concerned with my problems, to avoid stress.

I: So you and your friends console each other. How do you see your future?

R: My future will be good as long as I attend school.

I: As you just said your family do not support your education, so do you feel your chances for a good future will be destroyed?

R: Yes.

I: I can see you are fighting for your future, right now you plan on pleading with your uncle to educate you or to ask your aunt to let you stay even when she does not want to hear anything about it. You also approached the Social workers about your situation. So when you have a problem you do your best to solve it.

R: I try to solve it so that I can forget about it.

I: I have also seen your patience; you mentioned if one of your brothers refused to buy you school shoes you never gave up, you went from one to the other until one of them did. So tell me here at school if you encounter a problem how do you solve it?

R: If I have a problem here at school, like some learners hurt me, I discuss it with my friends and they normally approach those learners and tell them they are not being considerate. Like when they laughed at me because I did not have a proper shirt, my friends used to approach such learners to tell them that we cannot all afford things, so they must not laugh at me.

I: How did the incident with a small shirt affect you?

R: I was very unhappy/ sad. Sometimes when I have to go to school I will think twice, knowing that they will laugh at me. But I told myself I do go to school for them, it is about my future, so I went to school and they kept laughing everyday.

I: I see, until Mrs. T intervened and gave you some shirts. Tell me how did she know that you needed some shirts?

R: She just figured it out, from the way I was dressed everyday. She gave me her child's old shirts.

I: In class how are your classmates, are you able to help each other?

R: I don't know about others but I work with my friend. When I don't understand the work I ask her and she also ask me.

I: So you and your friend help each other. Who is your role model?

R: I don't have one.

I: Is there nobody who motivates you to be like him/her one day?

R: All I want is to have a good future.

I: What do you want to be when you grow up?

R: I want to be a doctor.

I: If you work hard and pass with good results you can get a bursary and be a doctor. Who pays your school fees?

R: Last year my brother did the one who bought me shoes. The reason he paid is because he knew that my friend passed and so he decided to pay my school fees because we studied together. He just assumed that I must have also passed.

I: Do you think your family accepts you the way you are?

R: They way I see it they do not care about me – they have no concern for me, they just care about themselves and their families.

I: Tell me if you are sure about something and people argue with you / disagree what do, you do.

R: I just keep quite and leave them.

I: Ne, you don't invite a headache. Do you think you are a person who likes to be in control of a situation someone who want to take charge of things?

R: No, the only time I want to be in control is when I have cleaned the house and people just mess it, I get angry and demand that they keep it clean.

I: So you don't want people to destroy good things you made. When you have done something wrong what do you do?

R: When I know I have done someone wrong I ask for forgiveness.

I: Ok, what do you do if someone has done you wrong?

R: Sometimes I tell them that what they did was wrong and tell them not to repeat it again. But sometimes I just keep quiet.

I: Do you think you can be comfortable in helping other learners if they come to you for help here at school?

R: Yes I like that if I do know the things they are asking.

I: You said if someone wronged you, you keep quite (*I: I also tell them sometimes that what they did was wrong and they must not repeat that*). Yes and do you think you have something to learn from your mistakes?

R: Yes, I learn from my mistakes.

I: You know yourself better than I do, if people can know the real you what will they discover?

R: I don't want to think too much, I just want people to know about my school and things that affect my education, so that they can care for me.

I: I can see that troubles you a lot, but if people can get to know the real you will they love that or not?

R: They will love me.

I: What will make them love you?

R: I will keep the peace and avoid fights.

I: You love peace; you want to see your dreams coming true, and being successful. (**R: Yes**). Tell me about your talents.

R: I don't have talents. The only thing I wanted to play was soccer, but at home they were against it. I could not get time to go to the gym, so I decided to forget about it.

I: I see, your aunt refused you to play soccer, what did she want you to do?

R: Just to sit at home.

I: Ok, what is it that you are good at?

R: My schoolwork.

I: That is good you perform well and your marks are high.

R: Yes, but now that they don't tell us our percentage mark I don't know how I passed they just say pass.

I: I see, what are your chores after school?

R: When I get home I clean the house and I start preparing supper, and when we finish eating I start with my homework. If I finish late with my chores it becomes a problem because my aunt does not want me to use lights. What I do is I wake up in the morning and read or finish my homework.

I: Do you then use the lights to do your schoolwork?

R: Yes, my aunt leaves early in the morning around 04H00, to buy vegetables that she sells on the road. So when she leaves I wake up and start reading.

I: You said your brother is at tertiary school, when does he study?

R: He sometimes study at school, he can go anytime even on Saturdays to study.

I: Do you think you easily give up?

R: No I do my best to get things right.

I: I can also see that you try your best to rise above your problems; you do not allow anything to stand in your way. Tell me about other incidents when you had to try hard to overcome problems in your life.

R: I remember when my aunt will force me to be absent from school. I will wait for her to leave then I went to school, but sometimes she will leave me with my sister's children – the one who died and I had to take them to the clinic.

I: That did hurt you?

R: Yes it did because when I came to school they accused me of truancy.

I: I can only say that you have been through a lot of problems in your life and you have successfully overcome a lot of those. I think you will still fight until you get what you think is fair for you. You also think you have no role model and talents?

R: Yes, what I think is if I can be educated my future will be bright.

I: Do you have anything more that you want to share with me?

R: No.

I: Today you are going to see your uncle; if he refuses to educate you, what are you going to do?

R: I will plead with my aunt to let me stay; she will finally let me. She easily gets angry. When I went to ask my brother about the shoes she told me to be home by one, but I arrived at three. I had to walk all the way and it is far so she was angry with me when I arrived home.

I: Your brother gives you transport money to school, does he do that everyday?

R: No, if he is not going to school he does not get money and he doesn't give me money and to walk it is far, I get tired when I get home and to school.

I: Your aunt never gives you transport money?

R: Never.

I: How much does your brother give you?

R: R5. 00. Transport is R4.00 return.

I: Your sister (aunt's child) does she help you?

R: No she is still young, she told me that she can't because she is young to assume that kind of responsibility.

I: Did she not ask her mother not to expel you?

R: My aunt shouts at both of us.

I: Where does your sister work?

R: At Faerie Glen, Fruit and Vegetables shop.

I: Thank you for your cooperation Girl, I really enjoyed the time we spent together. Good-luck with your education and with the visit to your uncle today. I pray to God that your dreams can come true one day.

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