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PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CLIMATE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF A FORMER WHITE AND A BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

School climate is a determinant of academic performance, as supported by evidence in developed countries. However, there are limited studies from developing countries to test this hypothesis. The few studies that have attempted to explore this topic are often limited to educators. Studies in South Africa show this limitation, hence the motivation to explore school climate from the students' perspective. This study is focused on students' perception of school climate and how it impacts their academic lives.

Two schools from the Western Cape Province were used as case studies. They were Pinelands and Langa High Schools, institutions that are distinct in terms of their history, location, resources, demographics and academic performance.

The results of the study revealed that most students do not feel safe physically and emotionally in the school environment. In a multiracial school, the main concern is around interpersonal relationship, particularly the level of social support received from teachers; while in a black and disadvantaged school, the concerns are around institutional environment relating to the physical environment and facilities in school. Additionally, students from the privileged school had more emotional concerns, and did not believe that teachers supported them socially, while those from the disadvantaged school had physical safety concerns but believed that their teachers are supportive both academically and socially.

The study concludes with a recommendation for future studies to consider more than two schools, expand the geographical scope, employ rigorous data collection, and assess multi-stakeholder perceptions of school climate and the link it has to academic performance so as to improve reliability and generalisability of the findings.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Acronyms

NSCC	National School Climate Center
DBE	Department of Basic Education (Republic of South Africa)
CSCI	Comprehensive School Climate Inventory
CJCP	Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention
SES	Socioeconomic status
CSEE	Center for Social and Emotional Education
ECS	Education Commission of the States
EE	Equal Education
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics
NSSF	National School Safety Framework
SGB	School Governing Body
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
MEC	Member of Executive Council (of South African provincial governments)
WCDE	Western Cape Department of Education
LHS	Langa High School
PHS	Pinelands High School

Definitions

Apartheid	Translated from the Afrikaans meaning 'apartness', apartheid was the ideology that was supported by the National Party (NP) government. It called for the separate development of the different racial groups in South Africa. Apartheid was introduced in South Africa in 1948.
Model-C Schools	Former “whites only” schools during the Apartheid regime.
School fees	School fees are monies that parents pay to schools. However, parents who cannot afford to pay school fees can apply to the school governing board for conditional, partial or full exemption from paying school fees. A learner may not be excluded from attending school because of non-payment of school fees by the parent. A school also may not retain a learner’s report because the parent cannot afford to pay school fees.
Matric	In South Africa, matriculation (or matric) is a term commonly used to refer to the final year of high school.
Matric results	Matric results are the outcome of a student’s matric examination. In South Africa, for students to successfully complete high school, they need to pass this examination; the results are split into 3 levels: higher certificate; diploma; and

	bachelor's pass (previously known as an exemption).
Higher certificate pass requirements	A student must pass at least 6 out of 7 subjects; must obtain at least 40% in their home language; must obtain at least 40% in two other subjects; and must obtain at least 30% in four other subjects.
Diploma pass requirements	A student must pass at least 6 out of 7 subjects; must obtain at least 40% in their home language; must obtain at least 40% in two other subjects excluding Life Orientation; and must obtain at least 30% in the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) of the tertiary (higher education) institution.
Bachelor's pass requirements	A student must pass at least 6 out of 7 subjects; must obtain at least 40% in their home language; must obtain at least 50% in four other subjects excluding Life Orientation; must obtain at least 30% in the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) of the tertiary (higher education) institution; and must obtain at least 30% in one other subject.
Quintile system	the system by which schools in each of the 9 Provinces in South Africa are classified into five groups from the most poor to the least poor. Quintile 1 is a group of schools comprising the poorest 20% of schools, while Quintile 5 schools

	are the least poor. Schools receive money from government according to their quintiles. Quintile 1 schools receive the highest allocation per learner and those in Quintile 5 receive the lowest. The Minister of Education annually determines the national quintiles for public schools, which must be used by the MECs to identify schools that may not charge school fees. MECs must subsequently identify and publish a list of these schools in their respective provinces.
Department of Basic Education (DBE)	Education in South Africa is governed by two national departments, namely the Department of Basic Education (DBE), which is responsible for primary and secondary schools, and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), which is responsible for tertiary and vocational training. Prior to 2009, these two departments were represented in a single Department of Education. DBE deals with public schools, private schools (also referred to by the department as independent schools), early childhood development (ECD) centres, and special-needs schools. The public schools and private schools are collectively known as ordinary schools, and comprise roughly 97% of schools in South Africa
Black schools	Schools in which the majority of students are black

IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa is one of the official languages of South Africa, spoken by the Xhosa people, an ethnic group of Southern Africa found mainly in the Eastern Cape.

Declaration of authorship

I, Reitumetse Mokhele declare that this thesis: “PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CLIMATE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF A FORMER WHITE AND A BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN HIGH SCHOOL” and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research. Further, I declare:

1. I am presenting this dissertation in full fulfilment of the requirements for my degree;

2. I know the meaning of plagiarism and declare that all of the work in the dissertation, save for that which is properly acknowledged, is my own; and

3. I hereby grant the University of Cape Town free licence to reproduce for the purpose of research either the whole or any portion of the contents in any manner whatsoever of the above dissertation.

Signed: Signed by candidate

Date: 02 February 2020

1 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Education in South Africa is a system characterised by inequality, resulting from the legacies of colonialism and apartheid (Spaull & Jansen, 2019). In South Africa, there are schools in suburbs that display 'first-world' luxuries, while other schools, in disadvantaged communities (townships and rural areas), have 'third-world' resource limitations. Similar conditions are highlighted in (Kozol 2012) who points us to schools situated in the inner cities in the US which serve mostly the marginalised students and Gillborn (1990) who also highlights schools in the UK which also serve the marginalised communities.

Since the seventeenth century, under colonisation and apartheid, the provision of education was consistently unequal (Kallaway, 1984). The provision for education, in terms of funding for building and general maintenance of schools and the allocation of qualified teachers, amongst other resources, was based on racial segregation. Throughout this period of colonisation and apartheid, black schools were the least resourced, followed by coloured and Indian schools. The majority of funding and resources was allocated to "whites-only" schools.

Twenty-five years after apartheid, the challenge still persists. Schools in South Africa are still unequal and carry the burdens of the past (Spaull & Jansen 2019). Post-1994, under the new South African Schools Act of 1996, the Government made a decision to spend more on poor schools than on rich schools and to use the quintile classification as a determinate for funding in an attempt to address these gaps. In the quintile system, every year the Minister of Basic Education determines the national quintiles for public schools which must be used by the provincial MECs to identify schools that may not charge school fees. MECs must subsequently identify and publish a list of these schools in their provinces. Schools in each province are classified into five groups, from the most poor to the least poor. For example, Quintile 1 is the group of the poorest 20% of schools in each province. Quintile 2 comprises the next poorest 20% of schools, while Quintile 5 represent the least poor schools. Schools receive money from government according to their quintile. Quintile 1 schools receive the highest allocation per learner, while Quintile 5 receives the lowest.

This study looks at student' perception of school climate in their schools, with a specific focus on privileged and disadvantaged schools. The two schools sampled for this study are a complete contrast and quite fitting for what it seeks to uncover and understand. One school, Pinelands High School, is a former white school that enjoys many privileges, while the other is a disadvantaged black African school. Like all "whites-only" schools, Pinelands High School was, under the apartheid regime, one of the privileged schools in terms of educator allocation, infrastructure and funding, while Langa High School received only a quarter of what was allocated to Pinelands High School. In fact, black schools pre-1994 had the lowest allocation of resources. Priority was given and allocated to white, Indian, and coloured schools and only then would black schools be allocated some funding. The school environments of both Pinelands High and Langa High still reflect these historical inequalities in terms of academic reputation, school infrastructure, facilities and, to some extent, teacher allocation and school enrolment by race. While Pinelands High School has progressively enrolled non-white students or students of races other than white, Langa High School is still predominantly a black African school (also see Teeger, 2015).

The provision of quality basic education in South Africa is a challenge. According to Spaull (2013), looking at educational outcomes, South Africa has the worst education system of all middle-income countries. He based this on countries which participated in cross-national assessments of educational achievement. Spaull further adds that South Africa performs worse than many low-income African countries (Spaull, 2013, p. 2). Spaull & Jansen (2019), South African Schooling: The Enigma of Inequalities (Springer), also provided evidence on these claims.

Matriculation results published by the national Department of Basic Education (DBE) over the past few years suggest a healthy situation at the schools. For instance, the matric exam results for the past five years reflect an overall pass rate above 70% for all schools registered under the Department of Education. Educational researchers, however, question the accuracy of these reports (Spaull, 2013; Jansen, 2018 – personal conversation), arguing that the results are not a true reflection of the current state of education in South Africa. In light of the challenges facing South African education system, school climate – especially in the high schools across the country – is deemed a key factor in restoring quality education.

As noted by Spaull (2013), most South African students, with the exception of a wealthy minority who can afford to pay very expensive schools fees at top schools, cannot read, write and calculate at grade-appropriate levels, with large percentage of these being completely illiterate and innumerate. Spaull illustrates that, of 100 students who start school, only half will make it to matric and only 24% will qualify for university (p. 3). Spaull's study further indicates that, apart from the very expensive good schools that are consistently producing good results, South Africa has the worst education system of all middle-income countries that participate in cross-national assessments of educational achievement (Equal Education, 2014; Spaull 2013). In comparison to other low-income countries in Africa, South African schools perform worse than many.

The question that arises is how students perceive the climate in their respective schools. Do student perceptions merely reflect history? Have government attempts at restitution, such as more funding for black schools in comparison to the funding allocated for former white schools, influenced the student perceptions of school climate? Or do measures of school climate reflect a more complex reality for those who attend these two schools 25 years after apartheid?

There is a substantial literature in educational research that explains differences in academic performance, that is, the learner's ability to read, write and calculate at grade-appropriate levels. The literature attributes such differences, as evidenced in Langa High School and Pinelands High School in South Africa, to school climate – the quality and character of the school environment (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013; Cohen, 2012; The National School Climate Center, 2011). In particular, school-climate research pays attention to how those inside schools, that is, teachers, students and even parents, experience and/or perceive the school environment (Duze & Ogbah, 2013) and how these perceptions influence the overall performance of schools.

School climate is regarded as a key component and determinant of the performance of students within a school. The extant literature, from a wide range of authors, supports the assertion that school climate has an impact on school performance and students' achievement – in and outside the classroom, both academically and socially (Pickeral, 2012; Pretorius and de Villiers, 2009;

Thapa et al., 2013; Jansen & Blank, 2014; Cohen, 2012; Bradshaw et al., 2014; Duze & Ogbah, 2013; National School Climate Center, 2011; Mestry, Hendricks & Bisschoff, 2009; Borkar, 2016; Milner & Khoza, 2008; Moloi, 2010; Naicker, Grant & Pillay, 2016; Bear, Yang, Pell & Gaskins 2014). According to the National School Climate Council (2007) and National School Climate Center (2011), school climate is the outcome of the overall perceptions of the school family – that is, the perceptions of students, parents and educators in the school – and is based on their experience of school life. School climate fosters or undermines children's development, learning and achievement (The National School Climate Council, 2007).

A study of schools in southern Michigan in the United States by McEvoy & Welker (2000) revealed that school-climate factors accounted for 63% of the variation in mean school achievement between low- and high-achieving schools (p. 135). It is therefore important to create and sustain a 'positive' school climate (Duze & Ogbah, 2013) and this is the responsibility of educators, learners and the community at large. A lack of dedicated focus on improving school climate perpetuates challenges in schools around dimensions such as healthy relationships and school connectedness (Thapa et al., 2013; Cohen, 2012), and hampers efforts targeting the prevention of dropouts in schools (Cohen, 2012).

A growing body of research details some of the outcomes associated with school climate. For instance, according to Thapa et al. (2013) and the National School Climate Council (2007), school climate, either positive or negative, can affect students' self-esteem and a wide range of emotional and mental health outcomes, including psychiatric problems, both for educators and learners. It also has the ability to mitigate the negative effects of self-criticism, and is linked to levels of drug use. A positive school climate can contribute to decreased student absenteeism in middle school and high school, and lowers rates of student suspension in high school (Thapa et al., 2013).

School climate has the ability to reduce academic achievement gaps between students and schools of different socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds. According to Berkowitz et al. (2017), school climate can successfully disrupt the associations between low socioeconomic status and poor academic achievement. Thus, with a positive school climate, even schools with a background of weak socioeconomic status can attain high levels of academic achievement.

This is demonstrated in an article by Naicker et al. (2013) titled "Schools Performing against the Odds: Enablements and Constraints to School Leadership Practice". Like many of his colleagues, Cohen, Fege and Pickering (2009) agree that school climate is a concept that powerfully and effectively supports data-driven pro-social school reform and it therefore requires attention. Research, both local and international, agrees that school climate plays an important role in providing a healthy and positive atmosphere for the school family.

It is widely accepted that school climate is associated with child and youth development; effective risk prevention and health promotion efforts; student learning and academic achievement; increased student graduation rates; and teacher retention (Thapa et al, 2013; Cohen, 2012; Jansen & Blank, 2014; Vos, van der Westhuizen, Mentz, & Ellis, 2012; Vos, Ellis, van der Westhuizen, & Mentz, 2013; Seobi & Wood, 2016; Milner & Khosa 2008; Moloi, 2010). Therefore, there is growing interest in understanding school climate and how it is perceived by learners in their schools.

Berkowitz et al. (2017) present a strong case for "the need for a multiple-perspective approach in climate measurement" (p. 450). Their compelling argument is that it is important to evaluate school climate based on perspectives of the entire school community. According to Berkowitz et al. (2017), the vast majority of studies (64%) have been based solely on student climate reports, about 13% solely on teacher reports, and about 6% on a combination of student and teacher reports or student and school principal reports (p. 450). Despite research acknowledging the importance of parental school involvement and the need to include them when a school climate study is conducted, only three studies were found to have measured the perception of school climate by parents/guardians (Berkowitz et al., 2017).

Much of the research on school climate is from the perspective of the principal, as the leader of the school, and of teachers, as the workforce. In the United States, for instance, most state policies on school climate focus on what schools, school administrators and teachers should do in order to promote a positive school climate; however, few acknowledge the role of students (The National School Climate, 2011). This is the also the case in South Africa.

A significant amount of the research on South African schools has looked to the principal and teachers as the parties who make up a school (Vos et al., 2012 & 2013). Often, this has served to limit our knowledge of the school as an organisation. There are no studies that provide a better understanding of the experiences of learners. This is an important gap that this study seeks to address.

1.2 State of education in South Africa

There is a substantial body of evidence that supports the argument that there is an ongoing crisis in South African education, that the current schooling system is failing the majority of South Africa's youth (Spaull, 2013; Equal Education, 2014) and that education in South Africa is in a parlous state (Milner & Khoza, 2008). There is a strong contention that the annually-reported matric statistics are misleading (Spaull, 2013; Jansen, 2018 – personal conversation), because they do not take into account those students who never make it to matric.

There is evidence to show that of the 100 students that start school, only 50 will make it to matric (Equal Education, 2014), 40 will pass, and only 12 will qualify for university (Spaull, 2013), an alarming piece of evidence and information that the Department of Basic Education seldom shares, if it does so at all. Even though there appear to be some improvements in student pass rates, the results are not satisfactory. For instance, looking at the 6 814 secondary schools registered under the national Department of Basic Education (DBE) in 2016, only 2 853 schools attained between 80% and 100% pass rates in Matric. This means that only 41.9% of schools in South Africa managed to get 80% and above, and out of the balance of 3 961 schools that performed below 80%, 1 876 of those achieved a pass rate between 60% and 79%, leaving a total number of 2 088 performing below 60%. Spaull (2013) concludes that the "South African education system is grossly inefficient, severely underperforming and egregiously unfair" (p. 2).

The unfairness in this regard is linked to the fact that the majority of the schools impacted by challenges such as poor academic results, school dropouts and issues pertaining to safety are

schools based in disadvantaged communities and societies. There are statistics confirming that, of the 2 088 poorly performing schools mentioned above, 80% are situated in disadvantaged communities. This is a social challenge that requires inclusive innovation, aimed at finding best solutions to alleviate the frustration of those communities with limited resources.

There is enough empirical data to suggest that there is an ongoing crisis in South African education and that the current schooling system is failing the majority of South Africa's youth (Spaull, 2013). There is a strong contention that the annually-reported matric statistics are misleading due to their failure to take into account those students who never make it to matric (dropout rates) or those who make it to matric but never sit for the matric exam. In the case of Langa High School, for instance, Department of Basic Education (2018) shows a 78.10% pass rate for that year. This is an inaccurate presentation of the results, as it has excluded important information. What is not reflected is that 15 (19%) of the 79 students who were registered at the school in 2018 did not sit for full exams for various reasons, one being that they were not sufficiently prepared to take the exams.

Education is a human right. It is every child's right to have an education. There are two issues of concern: one is the students who start schooling but drop out along the journey for various reasons, including those linked to a school climate or environment that is not conducive to learning. The other concern is the students who make it to matric but fail to meet the required scores for passing the matric exams. A review of the education literature suggests that in order to effectively and sustainably bring about improvements in schools – in the overall performance of the school, the wellbeing of educators and students, and the academic performance of individual students – it is important to understand school climate. To do this, it is necessary to investigate the perceptions of educators, students and parents/guardians on the climate in their school.

A growing body of research provides sufficient evidence of the impacts school climate has on the school and its students and educators (National School Climate Council, 2007; National

School Climate Center, 2011; Thapa et al., 2013; Cohen et al., 2009; Cohen, 2012; Berkowitz et al., 2017). It is argued that school climate, amongst other things:

i. Has a direct impact on performance and students' achievement – in and outside the classroom, both academically and socially;
ii. Can affect students' self-esteem and a wide range of emotional and mental health outcomes including psychiatric problems, both for educators and learners;
iii. Has the ability to mitigate the negative effects of self-criticism, and is linked to levels of drug use
iv. Is linked with student dropout, absenteeism and suspension in school.
v. Has the ability to reduce academic achievement gaps between students and schools of different socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds. According to research, school climate can successfully disrupt the associations between low socioeconomic status and poor academic achievement. Thus, with a positive school climate, even schools with weak socioeconomic status background can attain high levels of academic achievements.
vi. Is a concept that powerfully and effectively supports data-driven pro-social school reform and therefore demands attention. Research, both local and international, shows that school climate plays an important role in providing a healthy and positive atmosphere for the school family.
vii. Is associated with child and youth development, effective risk prevention, health promotion efforts, student learning and academic achievement, increased student graduation rates and teacher retention.

1.3 Research Problem

The research problem that this study seeks to address has **two parts.** The first aspect is the limited literature in South Africa on school climate in general. That is, what school climate is; what it entails; how is it defined; what its dimensions are; how it is measured; and, most importantly, who in a school is impacted by it. As will be presented in chapter 2, a growing body of research concerns itself with the study of school climate; however, much of this work is focused on conditions outside South Africa. Furthermore, in South Africa, there are not many studies that look at school climate holistically. There are a few studies that, without explicitly using the term "school climate", do in fact examine it. Many researchers have investigated some dimension of school climate in isolation (Duze & Ogbah, 2013; Milner & Khoza, 2008;

Moloi, 2010; Xaba, 2006; Vos, van der Westhuizen, Mentz, & Ellis, 2012; Vos, Ellis, van der Westhuizen, & Mentz, 2013; Seobi & Wood, 2016). These issues include safety in schools; teaching and learning and the provision of quality education; interpersonal/institutional relationships; and physical location and facilities within school grounds. There is, however, no study that has looked at these many dimensions of school climate at one time.

The second part of the problem in the South African literature is that, although there are a few studies that examine some elements of school climate, their focus is mostly on Government policies; the perceptions of teachers on their relationship with the principal; and the leadership of the principal; a few just describe the school environment. None of these studies considers students' perceptions of the climate in their respective schools. Student perceptions cannot be ignored because there is a growing body of research that emphasises the importance of school climate and the impact it has, particularly on students. It suggests that a positive school climate promotes student learning, academic achievement, school success, and healthy development, as well as effective risk prevention, positive youth development efforts, and increased teacher morale and retention (National School Climate Council, 2007; Thapa et al, 2013; Cohen et al., 2009; Pickeral, 2012; Cohen, 2012;). It is also highlighted that positive school climate is crucial to preventing dropout and bullying behaviours, promoting school attendance, reducing substance abuse, and supporting social-emotional health (National School Climate Center, 2007).

Furthermore, school climate, either positive or negative, can affect students' self-esteem and a wide range of emotional and mental health outcomes including psychiatric problems, both for educators and learners. It also has the ability to mitigate the negative effects of self-criticism, and is linked to levels of drug use. A positive school climate is also linked with decreased student absenteeism in middle school and high school, and lowers rates of student suspension in high school (Thapa et al., 2013). School climate has the ability to reduce academic achievement gaps between students and schools of different socioeconomic status and backgrounds. According to (Berkowitz et al., (2017), school climate can successfully disrupt the associations between low socioeconomic status and poor academic achievement. Thus, with

a positive school climate, even schools with weak socioeconomic status can attain high levels of academic achievements.

Furthermore, as it is set out in the earlier sections of this chapter, the provision of education is still characterised by the unequal allocation of resources that was determined by race categories before 1994. This presents a unique perspective and context within which a comparative school climate study can be conducted. Again, there are no studies in South Africa that have attempted to understand students' differential perceptions of school climate resulting explicitly from these unequal backgrounds.

This study is undertaken on the basis of these limitations in the existing literature and it seeks to understand student perceptions of school climate from these two unique South African perspectives – one of privilege and one of disadvantage – based on the history, background, location and facilities of the schools, and looking at the overall school performance and academic achievement of individual students in these very different schools.

1.4 Research Question

Following the preceding discussion, the question this study seeks to answer is a comparative one: How do students experience and/or perceive school climate in historically white and black schools? This is the one significant gap in the research literature on school climate that this research seeks to address.

1.5 Objective of the study

The objective of the study is to investigate how students experience and/or perceive school climate in the dimensions of safety, teaching and learning, interpersonal relationships, physical environment, and social media in their respective schools. The study also seeks to identify the differences, if any, that exist in perceptions of school climate between the students of two very different schools, ones distinguished by their histories, backgrounds, physical locations and facilities. Although research strongly suggests a link between school climate and the academic achievement of students, this study does not seek to measure it.

1.6 Significance of the study

The impact that school climate has on the academic performance of schools, especially in developed countries, has been established in the academic literature. There is also a strong argument, supported by research, that school climate is a concept that powerfully and effectively supports data-driven pro-social school reform. Additionally, there is evidence that demonstrates that school climate can successfully disrupt the associations between low socioeconomic status and poor academic achievement. This body of knowledge has been developed outside of South Africa, mostly in the developed world. The problem is that these studies have not taken into account the unique historical context of South Africa.

This study contributes to the general understanding of school climate, specifically in developing countries, where little research exists on the subject. The study fills this contextual gap by using schools in South Africa as case studies. The study also contributes theoretically by identifying students as major stakeholders in the school environment, and therefore investigating school climate and its impact on academic performance through the lens of students. Methodologically, the combination of different data collection instruments augmented the quality of the results generated. The results of this study provide enough evidence for school management to act on those elements of school climate that are concerning for the students. This study can serve as a starting point for expanding the understanding of school climate in South Africa, and of how it impacts the academic performances of students.

1.7 Scope of the study

A very large volume of research has been conducted in the field of education looking at various challenges in the sphere of school climate (Thapa et al., 2013). There has not, however, been much theoretical work done on this topic in the context of South African schools, especially from the perspective of learners. The lack of prior research on the topic in the context of South Africa limits the body of knowledge that could be drawn upon. This limitation has created an opportunity for this research to provide novel, useful and insightful contributions.

This study depends on having access to people (students in the selected schools), and organisations (the two schools). The Western Cape Education Department and the

parents/guardians of the students in the two schools had to be asked for permission to have access to the students. Fluency in a language could be an issue – the students in one of the two schools sampled for this study have IsiXhosa as their first language, and they are mostly very fluent in Xhosa but less so in English.

One of the overriding facts about this study is that it had to be completed within a short period of time (less than 18 months). This impacted the study in two main ways: on the one hand, it 'focused the mind' of the researcher, requiring priorities to be settled and data to be provided in a relatively short period; on the other hand, it reduced the variety of possibilities available to the researcher.

The limitation in scope, i.e. the two schools in one out of the nine provinces in South Africa has an impact in the generalisation of the findings of this study, and this is despite the use of quantitative method to collect data. Therefore it must be noted that the intention of this study is to build theory.

1.8 Organisation of the chapters

This first chapter provides a background to the study. It highlights the unequal provision of education that has been in place for centuries, a fundamental characteristic of education in South Africa. Chapter two encompasses an in-depth review of literature on school climate, from both the international sphere and South Africa. It also introduces the widely accepted dimensions that determine school climate, while highlighting that the dimensions discussed are not a definitive list. The international literature on school climate is used as a basis to review school climate literature in South Africa. Chapter three presents the methodology adopted for the study, including the importance and credibility of using a reviewed and tested comprehensive school climate survey instrument.

Chapters four and six, respectively, detail the background of Pinelands High School and Langa High School. Through rich descriptions of the two schools based on their historical backgrounds, physical locations, facilities, and teacher and student profiles, it is demonstrated how the unequal distribution of resources has created the differences between these two schools, despite their close proximity. It is in these chapters that context about the environment within which these two operate and the challenges and opportunities they face are presented.

Chapters five and seven present the survey results and breaks them down into the five dimensions of school climate being studied here. Chapter eight presents the key findings comparatively. Chapter nine provides the meaning of the key findings and conclusions. It also highlights the implications of this study on theoretical and practical levels, presents the limitations of this study and provides recommendations for further research.

2 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter critically reviews the literature pertaining to school climate and its relationship to student performance. The chapter considers studies of school climate broadly, and then zooms into the case of South Africa. The scope of the review of literature for this study is not limited to published work.

The review of South African literature is deliberately restricted to the period from 1994 to 2019. This is because the focus is on the period after South Africa attained democracy and when far-reaching policy reforms in the education sector promised a fundamental transformation of schools. Howvere, although the literature is restricted to 1994-2019, it recognizes the enduring efforts of the apartheid education in the present (Spaull & Jansen, 2019; Jansen & Kriger 2020; Soudien, 2018).

Although the focus of this research is in the field of education, literature from disciplines such as psychology and sociology are also considered, given how they have been deployed in research in the social sciences. The themes and keywords for the bibliographic search included: school climate, school environment, organisational climate, educational climate, classroom climate, environment for learning and teaching, positive school climate, safety in schools, diversity in schools, interpersonal relationships, quality education, physical layout and resources in schools, social and emotional safety, physical safety, and high schools in post apartheid South Africa more generally.

2.2 Overview of the Chapter

I first introduce the school as an organisation. This is an important context as it will introduce questions of organisational structure and constituency, as well as the management of infrastructure, processes, and rules of behaviour and hierarchies of control. This is followed by a brief review of different conceptions of school climate in the literature. In this section, I also highlight that there is broad agreement among researchers of school climate that there is no one definition of school climate. Research agrees that school climate is a unique phenomenon and

is dependent on the perception of those who are impacted by it. Then this is followed by a review of school climate literature in the international context, of which the majority comes from the USA, with a few studies from other parts of the world, in particular the United Kingdom. In this section, I highlight the focused attention given to school climate by many researchers for over a century. It is in this section that I examine the importance of school climate and the need for the Department of Basic Education in South Africa to include a focus on school climate in their policies. I also highlight, as suggested in research, the need for schools to embed the focus on school climate in a practical way in the day-to-day running of a school.

With this knowledge, I then conduct a literature survey of the limited school climate literature in the South African context. This is followed by a section where I highlight some research-based school climate improvement processes or strategies which appear to have yielded positive results in schools. I conclude this chapter by providing a summary of (a) what we know about school climate from the literature, (b) what we do not know, which is a gap in literature and (c) I detail how my study will contribution to the body of knowledge in addressing some of the gaps identified.

2.3 School as an organisation

The literature acknowledges the nature of schools as organisations, responsible for driving formal and informal education (Bittner, 1965; Ballantine, 1997). An organisation can be defined as an organised group of people with a particular purpose, such as a business or government department. The term organisation, Bittner (1965) notes, applies to stable associations of persons in collaborative activities directed to the attainment of specific objectives. One of the decisive characteristics of organisations is that they are deliberately instituted relative to their set objectives (Bittner, 1965).

Ballantine (1997) also asserts that a school is a system composed of distinct part – educators, administrative staff, the school governing body, parents and students, each with goals; together, these parts, make a functioning whole. In understanding these concepts, it can be argued that a

school is an organisation where the teachers, principal, administrative staff, and leaners have a single purpose of teaching and learning. There are many ways of looking at a school as an organisation, the first one would be looking at the structure of the school and secondly, the informal organisation of the school – the interaction in a classroom, the process of teaching and learning, and school climate (Ballantine, 1997).

Moloi (2010) provided an insightful perspective to an organisation, specifically a learning organisation in the context of a school . Moloi's study looks at the work done by Dixon (1999) and the definition of a learning organisation that this provides. Dixon, in defining a learning organisation, "focusses on the intentional use of learning processes at the individual, group and system level to transform the organisation to increasingly succeed by turning knowledge into real value" (p. 1). Spaull (2013) talks about learners' ability to read, write and do maths at appropriate grade level; this could be one measurable value that Dixon refers to. Some researchers, such as Kim (1998) and Schein (1997), see a learning organisation as a place that nurtures an organisation's capability to take effective action with the objectives targeted at becoming successful in the vision and mission as set out by them.

Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross & Smith, 1996:3, as cited by Moloi, (2010) view a learning organisation as a place where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire and where people are continually learning how to learn together. According to Kelly, Luke and Green (2008), the ability to expand the capacity to create the desired results by learning organisations – in this context 'the schools' – is knowledge management. This is the same set of sentiments shared by many practitioners and researchers in the education field (Van Haght, 2018).

The success or failure of an organisation is dependent on all stakeholders (Thapa et al., 2013; Cohen, 2012; The National School Climate Center, 2011; Vos et al., 2012). It is therefore expected that the perceptions of students are critical for evaluating a school climate, since students are a key component of the school setup.

2.4 Defining school climate

Researchers agree there is no single and concrete definition of school climate. The views expounded by many researchers around the conceptions of what constitutes "school climate" in literature differ from one another. Some speak of school climate as the quality and character of school life (National School Climate Council, 2007; Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009; Thapa et al., 2013; Thapa et al., 2012; Cohen, 2012).

Others refer to it as an environment in which the school family feels valued in pursuing the school's mission free from disruption (Osman, 2012); or a secure environment where all students feel comfortable, wanted, valued, accepted and can interact with caring people they can trust (Borkar, 2016). Some scholars such as Vos et al., (2012) and Vos et al., (2013) see school climate as the complete experience of educators concerning their work environment, and also as the experience by learners of their learning environment, inside and outside the classroom.

Some writers refer to concepts such as learning environment as "a place where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (Senge et al., 1996:3, as cited by Moloi, (2010); or the organisational climate, which is described as the perception of teachers of their work environment and educational climate, as well as the perception of learners of their learning environment (Vos et al., 2012; Vos et al., 2013). Other scholars simply talk about dimensions or elements of school climate such as safety, teacher stress and morale, instructional leadership, lack of infrastructure in schools and the provision of quality education.

Cohen (2012) also grapples with the concept of school climate and interrogates the different studies that have attempted to define it. He acknowledges, however, the gap in literature in terms of an agreed definition of this concept and maintains that the majority of researchers have used the term to refer to people's subjective experience of school life.

Hoy et al., (as cited in Milner & Khoza, 2008), speak of a healthy school climate as a climate imbued with positive student, teacher and administrator relationships. Hoy et al., conclude that a healthy school climate is;

> (1) An environment in which teachers like their colleagues, their school, their job and their students and are driven by a quest for academic excellence.
>
> (2) An environment in which teachers believe in themselves and their students; and set high, but achievable, goals.
>
> (3) An environment in which students work hard and respect others who do well academically.
>
> (4) An environment in which the behaviour of the principal is also positive as these leaders have high expectations for teachers and go out of their way to help teachers (p. 159).

Simply put, and as suggested by Hoy and Miskal (2013) school climate refers to all the "the set of internal characteristics that distinguishes one school from another and influences the behaviour of people" (p. 210).

This study leans towards the definition by Hoy and Miskal (2013) because in the context of South African schools, it is impossible to talk about school climate in isolation from the history of the country and the factors that have influenced the education systems over the years. It is for that reason that the study defines school climate as a set of internal characteristics, often influenced or impacted by the background of the schools, their history, their context in the political regime, their current socio-economic status, the family and home environments and leadership traits and abilities that differentiate one school's performance from another and have the ability to influence the behaviour of the people in that school.

Some scholars and researchers argue that it is useful to distinguish "climate" and "culture" (Cohen, 2012), while others propose the usefulness of considering school climate, school culture, conditions for learning, and supportive learning environments as terms that are interrelated (The National School Climate Council, 2007). There are, however, opposing views on this, for example, as indicated by Cohen, (2012) and the U.S. Department of Education publication (2007), which suggests that culture is a subset of school climate.

2.5 The concept of school climate: a review

School climate has increasingly become a topic of interest amongst many researchers, educators and government institutions. This is because of the overwhelming evidence of what school climate represents. There is a growing body of research that emphasises the importance of school climate. It suggests that a positive school climate promotes student learning, academic achievement, school success, and healthy development, as well as effective risk prevention, positive youth development efforts, and increased teacher morale and retention (National School Climate Council, 2007; Thapa et al., 2013; Cohen et al., 2009; Pickeral, 2012; Cohen 2012).

From the beginnings of the 19th century to the most current knowledge that has been brought to light in the 20th century, there have been many researchers who, based on their observations, suggest that school-specific processes which influence school climate have vastly contributed to disparities in student achievement (Cohen et al., 2009). School climate consists of a set of complex forces that shape the quality and character of each school. To understand school climate in different types of schools and the specific schools, within these categories, a school climate assessment would need to be conducted in each school. For this reason, researchers agree that there is no definite list of forces that shapes a school climate.

There is however a consensus that the following four overarching dimensions of school climate should be considered when a school climate assessment is conducted: (1) Safety, (2) Interpersonal relationships, (3) Teaching and Learning; (4) Institutional environment (Cohen et al, (2009 & 2012); Thapa et al., (2013), National School Climate, (2007 & 2011); Anderson, (1982).

However, current studies conducted by the National School Climate Center (2011) have revealed new knowledge about school climate, and for that reason, the Center has included two more dimensions: (5) Staff relationships, also referred to as School improvement processes and, lastly (6) Social media, which focuses on social media bullying. There are also recent studies done by other reputable institutions across multiple fields on school climate, such as the Center for Disease Control and Prevention; the Institute for Educational Sciences; a number

of America state departments of education; the National School Climate Council; the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse; the Center for Social and Emotional Education (CSEE); the Education Commission of the States (ECS); and the U.S. Department of Justice and UNICEF.

Some of these institutions, for instance, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, focus more on issues of safety in schools, which includes physical and emotional safety and the ways in which these have an impact on the overall school climate. This is the same focus as that of the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, which in its work tackles addiction and substance abuse and extends this work to schools, while institutions and researchers such as the National School Climate Council, (2007); Thapa et al. 2013, Cohen et al. (2009) and Cohen (2012) look at school climate in a much broader context. Their view on school climate is not limited to just one element; it comprises many elements.

The next section of this literature review looks at the dimensions and sub-dimensions of school climate. The study discusses the themes of school climate based on the 5 dimensions set out in the literature.

2.5.1 Safety

Safety in schools relates to the sense of feeling safe socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically within the school environment (National School Climate Council, 2007; National School Climate Center, 2011; Thapa et al., 2013). According to the Maslow hierarchy of needs, safety is a fundamental human need (Maslow, 1943). The perception of safety in schools, by the whole school community, including learners, educators, governing bodies and the community at large, is an important feature of school climate.

Research argues that a safe environment is a healthy and positive environment that promotes teaching and learning. Devine and Cohen (2007) also noted that feeling safe in school promotes student learning and healthy development in a significant way, while Dwyer and Osher (2000) also believe that emotional and physical safety are the most important characteristics of high-

quality schools, as it allows students to feel a sense of belonging and are free to focus on learning.

Equally, research argues that unsafe schools are associated with victimisation of learners and teachers, which often results in high levels of absenteeism both by teachers and learners; lower levels of school engagement and connectedness; and increased disciplinary problems (Arseneault et al. 2006; Astor, Guerra & Van Acker, 2010; Bowen & Bowen, 1999; Henrich, Schwab-Stone, Fanti, Jones & Ruschkin, 2004; Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2000; Mayer & Furlong, 2010).

Recent research indicates that the perception of physical and emotional safety is directly related to academic achievement (Thapa et al., 2013; Cohen, 2012; The National School Climate Center, 2011). This suggests that in safe schools, that is, schools where the emotional and physical safety of the schooling community is given the attention it deserves, and where the necessary precautions are taken to ensure safety of students and teachers, there is a likelihood of a positive academic outcome.

A detailed view of school climate by Thapa et al. (2013) revealed that students and educators feel unsafe when a school fails to demonstrate safety variables such as supportive norms and rules, among others. There is evidence that suggests a significant number of teachers are threatened and/or assaulted by students every year, all over the world. Furthermore, it has also been recognised that an increasing level of daily stress on teachers, which is triggered by disrespectful behaviour from students, has serious implications on teachers' mental health (Gregory, Cornell & Fan, 2012).

Safety as a dimension of school climate is a broad concept. In this context, safety is broken down into three sub-dimensions: (1) Rules and Norms – that is, the set rules and norms with regards to the maintenance of safety within the school, in the classroom and outside; (2) Physical Safety within the school premises and lastly; (3) Social and Emotional Security – which encompasses bullying and includes cyberbullying, substance abuse and emotional safety (National School Climate Council, 2007).

2.5.1.1 Rules and Norms

As indicated in research, this scale pays focus on the clarity of the school's rules for maintaining both physical safety and social-emotional safety in school (National School Climate Council, 2007; National School Climate Center, 2011; Thapa et al., 2013). I also looks at the consistency and fairness with which rules are enforced. Research places an emphasis on the importance of school rules and perceived fairness in regard to dealing with students' behaviour (Thapa et al., 2013). A study by Gregory, Cornell, and Fan (2012), using regression analyses in a state-wide sample of 280 high schools in the United States of America, revealed that in schools where there is structure – that is, where school rules are clearly documented, communicated and understood by the schooling community – there was less teacher victimisation.

This demonstrates how important it is for schools to have rules about physical violence and bullying – including cyberbullying, verbal abuse, and harassment and teasing. Having neatly documented rules is not enough. These rules must be widely communicated, visible at all times and consistently enforced (The National School Climate Center, 2011). When these variables are not in place or visible to the school community, students are likely to experience violence, peer victimisation, and punitive disciplinary actions, which are often accompanied by high levels of absenteeism and reduced academic achievement (Thapa et al., 2013; Cohen, 2010) and high rates of student suspension (Cornell & Lovegrove, 2013).

2.5.1.2 Social and Emotional Safety

In the context of school and school climate, research sees social and emotional safety as students and parents views and attitudes about personal differences; conflict resolution taught in schools and bullying and individual responses to it (Cohen et al., 2009). The National School Climate Center (2011) suggest bullying as a sub-element of social and emotional safety, which can happen in physical form or cyber-bullying via social media. The next section looks at the sub-elements of social and emotional safety.

2.5.1.2.1 Bullying

Bullying comprises unwelcomed and hostile actions directed from one person to another. Often, it also involves a real or perceived imbalance of power between the two parties. Often, these aggressive actions are repeated or have the potential to be repeated (Olweus, 1997). Usually, bullying occurs in physical form; however, due to the advancement of technology, bullying can also happen online (cyberbullying) through the use of electronic devices such as cell phones, computers, and tablets. In recent times, there is a growing trend of cyberbullying that happens via computers and cellular phones. School bullying and harassment have moved to the virtual environment, and involve social media that groups or individual students use to harass their peers (Campbell, 2005).

Bullying undermines perceptions of safety and affects interpersonal relationships in schools (Thapa et al., 2013). It is a widespread public health problem that undermines children's ability to develop in a healthy way, and compromises learning (Cohen & Freiberg, 2013). In the United States of America, 49 states have reviewed the field and subsequently passed anti-bullying laws. This after a string of school children suicides and mass shooting in schools, partly influenced by issues of bullying in schools. The school climate improvement process requires strategies integrated in their day-to-day management of the school to prevent bullying (Cohen & Freiberg, 2013).

The perceptions of the school community on the levels of bullying as a safety issue are often differentiated by large margins. For instance, the National School Climate Survey (2011) found that students' experiences of lack of safety at schools is severe while parents/guardians and school personnel believe it to range between mild to moderate. This difference in perception could be for many reasons, one being that often students do not report these kinds of safety concerns and that bullying often does not happen in the open.

To elaborate more on issues of non-physical violence, Mayer and Furlong (2010) argue that although many urban and economically disadvantaged schools are overwhelmed by physical violence, most students, overall, are not exposed to physical violence. This is however not the

case for social, emotional, and intellectual violence (Mayer & Furlong, 2010). These types of violence happen in the form of bullying, victimisation, harassment and cyberbullying.

Research suggests that differences such as race, gender, sexual identity, disability, socioeconomic and cultural differences, are some of the causes for bullying. Homophobia is considered one of the most common causes of bully-victim behaviour (Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009). A school climate survey of 6,209 middle school and high school students in United States revealed that roughly 9 out of 10 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students experienced harassment at school (Kosciw, Diaz, & Greytak, 2008).

Bullying not only affects the student who is being bullied, it negatively affects the witnesses too. A study of more than 2,000 students of ages 12 to 16 found that those who witnessed bullying reported more feelings of depression, anxiety, hostility, and inferiority than either the bullies or victims themselves (Rivers, Poteat, Noret, & Ashurst, 2009).

Nansel et al. (2001) claim that an alarming number of students may choose to stay at home on any given day due to bullying by their peers at school. Students who are repeatedly bullied and/or are victimized, may develop significant psychosocial problems over time (Wolke, Woods, Bloomfield, & Karstadt, 2000). Bullying also affects the levels at which a student engages in school/classroom and/or at home, and lowers students' commitment to schoolwork. It is binding on school authorities to ensure that measures are in place to check bullying.

Research indicates the number of ways bullying can be addressed. On a practical level, Cornell, Sheras, Gregory, and Fan (2009) assert that a threat-assessment program had a positive and supportive effect on school climate. They found that for schools in which a threat-assessment guideline is implemented, there were fewer bullying incidents in comparison to schools in which it has not been implemented. Piscatelli and Lee (2011) look at state policies on school climate and bullying prevention efforts in United States of America. In their work, they highlight the lack of state policies on school climate and bullying prevention efforts. They also highlight how some states will have one and not the other policy, i.e., a policy on school climate but not a policy on bullying prevention and vice versa. Furthermore, Piscatelli and Lee also

note misalignment of state policies with definitions and current research in the school climate field.

2.5.1.3 Physical Safety

This scale focuses on the level at which the school community feel physically safe in the school building and in the area surrounding the school. The implementation of safety measures is a demonstration by the school that issues of safety at school are taken seriously. As an example, Cornell et al. (2009) explored the usefulness of threat assessment in targeting violence, using the Virginia threat assessment guidelines. Their assessment results indicated that in schools where threat-assessment guidelines were followed, students reported less physical harm or danger, felt more comfortable seeking help, and possessed more positive perceptions of school climate. As a result, these schools where perceived as safe by learners and therefore had fewer long-term learner suspensions due to issues of safety.

2.5.2 Teaching and Learning

This scale looks at factors that has the ability to influence school success. As indicated in research, factors such as the use of various instructional methods and strategies, which can promote students' reflective, self-monitoring, and decision-making skills (The National School Climate Center, 2011). Additionally, National School Climate Council (2011) and Thapa et al., (2013) also noted that students learn better when they are made to feel (1) safe "not knowing" as this allows them to ask for help in understanding and (2) comfortable to take initiatives and risks. Furthermore, adults' expectations for students – and the ability to communicate this – also powerfully shape learning and school engagement.

According to The National School Climate Center (2011), teaching and learning is both social and emotional, it is also ethical and cognitive in nature. A well rounded teaching and learning supports students' academic achievement and school success but it also supports students' development into responsible and productive citizens (The National School Climate Center,

2011). For this reason, teaching and learning looks at two aspects: (1) Support for academic learning and (2) Support for social and civil learning.

Teaching and learning is the most important dimension of school climate (Thapa et al, 2013; Cohen, 2012; National School Climate Council 2007; Cohen, 2012). It is therefore important that educators – school leaders and teachers – define the set of norms, goals, and values that shape the learning and teaching environment (The National School Climate, 2011; Cohen, 2012; Thapa et al., 2013).

According to research (National School Climate Center, 2011; Thapa et al., 2013; Cohen, 2012), for teaching and learning to happen in a way that yields maximum benefit, two things must happen; (1) there must be visible support for it. Visible support, as alluded by the National School Climate Center (2011), means that educators need demonstrate support through the use of supportive teaching practices, which would include amongst others, providing constructive feedback and encouraging students to do better. It also includes creating opportunities for students to demonstrate knowledge and skills, independent thinking and ability to create an atmosphere conducive for open discussion and questioning.

Research also argues there needs to be (2) support for the development of social and civic knowledge, skills, and personalities. This including, for example, students ability to listen effectively, resolve conflicts amongst themselves, self-reflection and emotional intelligence, self-awareness, empathy, taking responsibility for personal actions and decisions, and the ability to act in an ethical way (The National School Climate, 2011).

Additionally, when teachers feel supported by both the principal as the leader and their peers, they are more committed to their work (Singh & Billingsley, 1998) and this influences how they experience school climate. A positive school climate increases the morale of the teachers, decreases teacher emotional exhaustion and develops teachers' beliefs that they can positively affect students' learning (Thapa et al., 2013; Vos et al., 2012; Vos et al., 2013; Naicker et al., 2016).

Learning and teaching should not be limited to academic teaching only, it should also include social, emotional, civic, and ethical education (Thapa et al., 2013; Cohen 2012; National School Climate Center 2007). Implementing learning activities beyond the classroom is an effective way to incorporate civic education into a school. There are also benefits for encouraging students to learn beyond the classroom. Also noted by National School Climate Center (2011), introducing active and collaborative learning through projects is effective in promoting and encouraging interpersonal relationships, it also nurture trusting relationships between all members of the school community.

2.5.3 Interpersonal Relationships

According to the research (National School Climate Center, 2011; Thapa et al., 2013) school experiences are based on relationships, as a result, the process of teaching and learning is laid on the foundational principle of relationships (Thapa et al., 2013). One of the most important aspects of relationships in schools is how connected people feel to one another, that is - the level to which the school community (adults, students and parents) trust, respect and listen to one another as this is what shapes the school and defines its climate (National School Climate Council, 2007; National School Climate Center, 2011; Thapa et al., 2013).

Furthermore, they also note that the way students treat one another and the friendship they are able to establish in schools, is seen as the social support that is needed in a school environment. While social support between student and their peers is important, the quality of support students feel they can expect from adults in the school is also very important as it also shapes their perception of school climate (National School Climate Center, 2011). Students need to feel that adults in their school care about them as individuals and that they are available to them for help.

Student also look at adults in the school. The way adults communicate and collaborate with one another. Student perceptions of adult's relationship affects their expectations for appropriate behaviour and the quality of their school experience (National School Climate Center, 2011).

The feeling of safety and a positive school climate tends to foster good engagements and connectedness amongst the school community. Connectedness amongst the school community provides a good foundation for social, emotional, and academic learning (The National School Climate Center, 2011; Thapa et al., 2013; Cohen, 2012).

There are three elements that form the basis of interpersonal relationships: (1) Respect for diversity, (2) Social support by adults, and (3) Social support by students (National School Climate Center, 2002; Thapa et al., 2013). The next section briefly looks at these three sub-elements.

2.5.3.1 Respect for diversity

This element of school climate focuses on a number of factors; (1) the level to which adults and students in the school respect each other's differences with regard to factors such as gender, race, or physical difference, (2) peer relationships among students and among adults and (3) the relationships between adults and students (The National School Climate Center, 2011). For learning and teaching to happen in a way that maximises the benefits, students must respect their educators, their peers and themselves and this is the same for educators (National School Climate Center, 2011). According to Thapa et al. (2013), there is evidence that race in itself is a significant factor in explaining the variation in student perceptions of school climate. There are few studies that reflect this notion.

A study by Watkins and Aber (2009) that used quantitative survey data from 842 African American and white middle school students revealed that African American, poor, and female students perceived the racial climate in more negative terms than did their white, non-poor, and male counterparts, respectively. Another study by Schneider and Duran (2010) that used data from middle school students found that responses of Hispanic/Latino students varied considerably from those of white and Asian students. Slaughter-Defoe and Carlson (1996) conducted a similar investigation and their results indicated that African American children regarded teacher-child relations as the most important dimension of school climate, whereas

Latino children emphasized teacher fairness, caring, praise of effort, and the importance of moral order. The contrary results of these two studies highlight the complex interactions of race, ethnicity and age in student perceptions of school climate.

These studies confirm that race and ethnicity are an important predictor in explaining perceptions of school climate. This is however only true in multiracial schools and it is noted that it is not the only factor. In schools dominated by one race, there are other factors such as religion, culture and mental models. The findings of these studies reiterate the fact that it is important for school leaders and researchers to have the most complete understanding possible of what a positive school climate would look and feel like for students who identify as belonging to specific races, ethnicities, religions or cultures in order to improve school climate for all (Schneider & Duran, 2010).

2.5.3.2 Social Support among Students

This element of school climate deals with the quality of social support among students. It seeks to understand the level of social connections and friendships that students are able to establish that may become a support academically and socially. It is demonstrated in research that when students feel a sense of connectedness to the school, to their teachers and their fellow students, they will do well in school (National School Climate Center, 2011).

After all, a safe, caring and engaging school climate tend to foster strong connection to the school and this is true for both teachers and students, it also provides the best foundation for social, emotional, and academic learning in schools. (Blum, McNeely, & Rinehart, 2002; Osterman as cited in Thapa et al., 2013).

2.5.3.3 Social Support among Adults

The element of school climate that deals with social support among adults contributes to the quality of social relationships among adults and students. It seeks to establish mutual trust and support, looking at things such as working relationship between adults, the student perceptions

on the level of support, care for them and interest shown by adults in them, including adult's willingness to pay attention to their needs and to listen to what they have to say. The support by adults is the display of supportive and caring adult relationships for students (National School Climate, 2011). Cohen et al. (2009) noted that there are two aspects of school climate that have been shown to affect students' self-esteem the most: commitment to school and positive feedback from teachers. This highlights the importance of good teacher-student relationships and support.

One of the most important aspects of relationships in schools highlighted in school climate research is how connected people feel to one another (Thapa et al., 2013; National School Climate Center, 2011). Research has shown that in schools where students perceive a better structured school, fair discipline practices, and more positive student-teacher relationships, it is likely that the school will experience lower behavioural problems (Gregory & Cornell, 2009; Thapa et al., 2013). Furthermore, there is also evidence that suggests that when students perceive teacher-student support and student-student support, they tend to have positive self-esteem, achieve good grades and show fewer depressive symptoms (Jia et al., 2009).

According to Hamre and Pianta (2001), a negative teacher-student relationship or a relationship that is full of conflicts in the early days of a child's schooling is likely to negatively affect the student behavioural and academic performance in later grades. Additionally, it is also found that teachers' interactions with students can directly affect students' behavioural and emotional engagement in the classroom (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Skinner and Belmont (1993) also assert that when teachers support and interact positively with students, the students are likely to be engaged and behave appropriately.

The literature also provides evidence that racial school climate is associated with student achievement as well as other outcomes. For example, Mattison and Aber (2007), using data from 382 African American and 1,456 European American students, show that positive perceptions of the racial climate are associated with higher student achievement and fewer discipline problems. The study found that racial differences in students' grades and discipline outcomes were associated. Likewise, negative racial climate is also found to be an inhibiting factor in college preparation (Griffin & Allen, 2006).

Furthermore, results from a study by Hallinan, Kubitschek, and Liu (2009), using a large sample of elementary and secondary schools in a major urban school district, show that positive interracial interactions contribute to students' sense of school community, they also found the opposite to be true. Research also documents that race and ethnicity are significant predictors in explaining variance in disciplinary referrals (Shirley & Cornell, 2012).

Positive school climate has been considered important for racial minority and poor students (Booker as cited in Thapa et al., 2013). According to a study by Watkins and Aber (2009) that used quantitative survey data from 842 African American and White middle school students, African American, poor, and female students perceive the racial climate in more negative terms than do their White, non-poor, and male counterparts, respectively. A study by Schneider and Duran (2010) that used data from 2,500 randomly selected middle school students found that responses of Hispanic/Latino students varied considerably from those of White and Asian students. The study showed that Hispanic/Latino students considered personal relationships with teachers as more important than modelling of positive behaviours –contrasting with the preference of White and Asian students.

Slaughter-Defoe and Carlson (1996) investigated 1,000 African American and 260 Latino third graders' perceptions of school climate in an evaluation of the Chicago Comer School Development Program. Their results indicated that for African American children, teacher-child relations was regarded as the most important dimension of school climate, whereas for the Latino children, teacher fairness, caring and praise of their effort, was regarded as more importance. The results of these two studies highlight the complex interactions of both race/ethnicity and age with student perceptions of school climate.

These studies confirm that race/ethnicity is an important predictor in explaining perceptions of school climate. The findings reiterate the fact that in order to improve school climate for all, it is important for school leaders and researchers to have complete understanding of what a positive school climate would look and feel like for students who identify as belonging to specific races, ethnicities, or cultures (Schneider & Duran, 2010).

2.5.4 Institutional Environment

Research sees institutional environment in a school as both physical and social. Physically, it is seen in terms of the availability and cleanliness of facilities and resources that the school has, while socially, it entails students' sense of connection to the school and the level of engagement in the life (National School Climate Center, 2007 & 2011). Highlighted by National School Climate Center (2011), institutional environment seeks to understand if the students identify positively with the school and to believe that they and their families belong there and are welcome. The student perceptions of this element is an important aspect of a student's school experience and contributes substantially to school success (National School Climate Center, 2007 & 2011).

Naturally, teaching and learning in and overall connected and engagement in schools is also affected by the school's facilities – that is, how clean and attractive the school and the availability of the necessary resources to support it (Thapa et al., 2013; National School Climate Center, 2013). The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2009), defines "school connectedness as the belief by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals" (p. 3).

Students are more likely to adopt healthy behaviours and succeed academically when they feel connected to the school, and learners who feel connected to their school are less likely to participate in many risk behaviours, including early sexual initiation, alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, and violence and gang involvement (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). Studies also suggest school connectedness as a predictor of academic outcomes (Thapa et al., 2013; Cohen, 2012; National School Climate Center, 2011).

McNeely, Nonnemaker and Blum (2002) also found that the size of schools has a negative correlation with school connectedness. On the other hand, Klein and Cornell (2010) found that while the total number of bullying incidents was higher, the rate of bullying offenses was in fact lower in larger schools. These conflicting findings on the effect of school size on school

climate, further research is required to better inform this debate. However, as highlighted in research, the debate does not suggest a reduction in the size of the school as the only way to improve the school environment; instead, there's a strong suggestion for schools to pursue smaller learning communities as a way to improve the learning environment (Cotton, 2001).

There are a few factors that may influence school connectedness, one being the physical surroundings of the school, which is a sub-element of institutional environment. Research describes the cleanliness, order, and appeal of facilities; adequateness of resource materials in the school; and the physical layout of the school as the physical surroundings of the school community (National School Climate Center, 2011). The link between the physical layout of the school and issues of safety and security in that school often has an impact on school connectedness. The physical location of a school may also have an influence on the amount of theft and school violence the school may experience (Masitsa, 2011).

School space is another environmental dimension that impacts students' feelings about safety. Astor et al. (2010) demonstrated that students felt unsafe in unsupervised areas of the school building. In fact, there is a growing body of research that illuminates how environmental variables, such as classroom layout, activity schedules, and student-teacher interactions, can influence student behaviours and feelings of safety (Conroy & Fox, 1994; Van Acker, Grant, & Henry, 1996). In addition, Uline and Tschannen-Moran (2008) put forward an argument that suggests the effect of the quality of school facilities on student achievement through school climate as a mediator.

Researchers have shown growing interest in understanding school climate since the beginning of the twentieth century (Thapa et al., 2013). There is a broad consensus in the literature with regard to the general findings, as most school climate researchers agree that:

- There is no concrete definition of school climate.
- The elements or dimensions of school climate are not fully defined.
- A positive school climate has major benefits to the whole schooling community.
- School climate, either positive or negative, has a direct impact on the academic achievements of students in the particular schools.
- School climate perception is a group view and not an individual perception/view.

An understanding of school climate and its impact on the whole schooling community, from the perspective of the multiple stakeholders of school, is critical for sustainable school improvement initiatives. The next section focuses on the school climate literature in the South African context.

2.5.5 Social Media

Historically, bullying was mostly seen in the physical form and this was the focus for schools to address bullying. In recent years, school bullying and harassment have moved to the virtual environment through the cell phone, and involve social media that groups or individual students use to harass their peers (Campbell, 2005). This scale focuses on the degree to which people feel safe, socially and emotionally, on social media. Therefore questions on this scale probe experience and exposure to verbal abuse, harassment, and exclusion on social media. As indicated in research, bullying, in any shape or form, undermines perceptions of safety and affects interpersonal relationships in schools (Thapa et al., 2013) and must be addressed.

2.5.6 Staff-only dimension

This dimension of school climate focuses on elements that only impacts staff. It focuses attention on school's leadership team, particularly the professional relationships between staff members as a contributing factor to an overall perception on their work environment (National School Climate Center, 2011). For school's leadership team, it seeks to establish whether or not the team has defined a clear vision and their decision making process and the effectiveness of their communication style. The dimension also focuses on the quality of working relationships among school staff. It seeks to establish whether the staff work well together and the willingness to learn from one another. It also seeks to establish if there mutual trust and constructive collaboration amongst them.

For the purpose of this study, the staff-only dimension will not be measured. This is because the scope of this study is limited to student perceptions of school climate and does not look at the perception of teachers and the principal.

2.6 Importance of school climate

The literature provides sufficient evidence that school climate has an impact on school performance and students' achievement – in and outside the classroom, both academically and socially (Pickeral, 2012; Pretorius & de Villiers, 2009; Thapa et al., 2013; Jansen & Blank, 2014; Cohen, 2012; Bradshaw et al., 2014; Duze & Ogbah, 2013; National School Climate Center, 2007 & 2011; Mestry et al., 2009; Borkar, 2016; Weldy, 2009; Milner & Khoza, 2008; Moloi, 2010; Thapa et al., 2013; Naicker et al., 2016; Borkar, 2016; Bear et al., 2014).

According to the National School Climate Council (2007), school climate is the overall perception of the school family, that is, perceptions of students, parents and school personnel, and is based on their experience of school life. School climate fosters or undermines children's development, learning and achievement (The National School Climate Council, 2007).

A study on schools in Michigan (McEvoy as cited in Milner & Khoza, 2008) revealed that "school climate factors accounted for 63% of the variation in mean school achievement between low and high achieving schools" (p. 159). It is therefore important to create and sustain a 'positive' school climate (Duze & Ogbah, 2013) and this is the responsibility of the educators, learners and the community at large. A lack of dedicated focus on improving school climate perpetuates challenges in schools around dimensions such as healthy relationships and school connectedness (Thapa et al., 2013; Cohen, 2012), and hampers efforts around preventing dropouts in schools (Cohen, 2012).

A growing body of research provides in great detail some of the outcomes associated with school climate. For instance, according to Thapa et al. (2013) and the National School Climate Council (2007), school climate, either positive or negative, can affect students' self-esteem and a wide range of emotional and mental health outcomes including psychiatric problems, both

for educators and learners. It also has the ability to mitigate the negative effects of self-criticism, and is linked to levels of drug use. A positive school climate is also linked with decreased student absenteeism in middle school and high school, and lowers rates of student suspension in high school (Thapa et al., 2013).

School climate has the ability to reduce academic achievement gaps between students and schools of different socioeconomic status and backgrounds. According to Berkowitz (2017), school climate can successfully disrupt the associations between low socioeconomic status and poor academic achievement. Thus, with a positive school climate, even schools with weak socioeconomic status can attain high levels of academic achievements.

This is demonstrated in the work of Naicker et al. (2013), titled "Schools Performing against the Odds: Enablements and Constraints to School Leadership Practice". Research agrees that school climate is a concept that powerfully and effectively supports data-driven pro-social school reform and it therefore requires attention (National School Climate Council, 2007; National School Climate Center, 2011; Thapa et al., 2013). Research, both local and international, agrees that school climate plays an important role in providing a healthy and positive atmosphere for the school family.

It is widely accepted that school climate is associated with child and youth development, effective risk prevention and health promotion efforts, student learning and academic achievement, increased student graduation rates, and teacher retention (Thapa et al., 2013; Cohen, 2012; Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009; Jansen & Blank, 2014; Vos 2012; Vos 2013; Seobi & Wood, 2016; Milner & Khosa, 2008; Moloi, 2010); hence, the growing interest in understanding school climate and how it is perceived by leaners in their schools.

2.7 School climate in the context of South African Schools

There is a substantial amount of literature on school climate in South Africa; however, it is not as detailed as has been documented elsewhere in the world. Many studies in South Africa have looked at one or two of the dimensions of school climate, and most focused on quality teaching and learning. In fact, there is no single study that looks at the multiple elements and the related sub-elements of school climate.

Despite limitations in the literature, researchers and practitioners in South Africa agree that there is a relationship between school climate and school performance and the academic achievement by students, hence the interest in it. Pretorius and de Villiers (2009) and Vos et al. (2013) emphasise the development and nurturing of the right school climate. This is because school climate can reveal factors which impact negatively on school improvement interventions.

The next sub-sections look at studies conducted in South Africa on school climate based on the dimensions presented by international literature. This study does not however accept the defined dimensions and elements of school climate as the conclusive knowledge on this topic, but rather as the basis for further investigation.

2.7.1 Safety in South African schools

The South African Constitution and legislation make provision for the protection of the rights and safety of learners in schools. Section 28(1) of the South African Constitution (hereafter, the Constitution), stipulates that: "every child has the right to be protected from, among others, neglect, abuse or degradation" (Republic of South Africa, 1996, p. 11). Learners' rights to a safe and secure environment are therefore protected by law, through the constitution. Despite this, learners and educators in South Africa feel unsafe in schools (Barnes, 2012; Masitsa, 2011), both physically and emotionally.

Violence in South African schools is a critical problem (Le Roux & Mokhele, 2011); this is supported by the findings of Masitsa, (2011) who concluded that schools in general are seen as unsecured and unsafe environment.

Exploring safety in township schools in the Free State, particularly focusing on physical safety, Masitsa (2011) points out a number of examples, ranging from robbery to murder, in the past (between 2008 and 2009) that illustrate issues of safety in schools. In recent years, there are more examples that demonstrate how unsafe South Africa schools are. For instance, a 17-year-old learner of Ramotshere Secondary school in Dinokana, a small community in North West Province, was arrested for stabbing a 24-year-old teacher to death ("Zeerust school pupil..." 2018). In an article titled "Violence in Schools is Out of Control" (Peter, 2018), the author highlights incidents of violence in schools.

Another example found is in an article titled "Violence in Schools Is a Public Health Risk" (Lesufi, 2017), published in City Press, where Panyaza Lesufi, the Gauteng MEC for Education, speaks of safety-related incidents which happened within school grounds. He speaks of a story of a girl who was punched and kicked while lying on the ground in a school yard by a boy in her school, while fellow learners stood by and filmed this violent ordeal. He also speaks of incidents of teachers who were found to be sexually assaulting learners within or outside of school grounds (Lesufi, 2017).

The Center for Justice and Crime Prevention (2017) conducted a National School Violence Study, which involved 12,794 learners from primary and secondary schools, 264 school principals and 521 educators, and found that 15.3% of children at primary and secondary schools have experienced some form of violence while at school, in the form of assaults or robberies. What is of great concern is that the perpetrators of these acts of violence are learners acting against fellow learners in their schools. What the study revealed also is that access to alcohol, drugs and weapons within the school is easy; this is as experienced by teachers and learners.

According to the CJCP (2017), of the sample of learners who participated in the study, 33.33% of primary school students and 66.66% secondary school students revealed that it is easy to get alcohol in their communities, while 33.33% of secondary school learners think that access to a gun in their communities is easy. This provides a context to this issue since a school is merely an extension of the community. Often, the life and character of a school is a mirror of its community. Therefore, these shocking findings must be contextualized within the family and community environments in which these learners live. The findings also show strong association between the home environment and violence at school, with some of these learners reporting parental use of illegal drugs, or their caregiver or parent or siblings being in jail (CJCP, 2017).

Barnes, Brynard and de Wet (2012) also present a detailed investigation of the influence of school culture and school climate on violence at schools in the Eastern Cape. Using an adapted California School Climate and Survey – Short Form (CSCSS-SF), as the data-collection instrument, they discovered that if the school culture and school climate at schools are perceived as positive by the students and educators, the level of violence at school is low. This is based on the results completed by 900 Grade 10 to 12 learners. On the other hand, Barnes et al. argue that a lack of safety in schools contributes to learners experiencing higher levels of violence in their respective schools (Barnes et al., 2012).

Masitsa (2011) suggests that school crime is more apparent in large schools than in small schools and that poverty is associated with increased school crime. He further suggests that poverty, population turnover and crime in the surrounding neighbourhood are among the strongest predictors of school violence. Xaba (2006) shares the same views, indicating that South African township schools are more vulnerable to unsafe conditions and threats of violence due to, among others things, their location, especially in and around informal settlements. School violence also impacts secondary schools 13 times more than elementary schools (Masitsa, 2011).

It is found in Netshitahame and Van Vollenhoven (2002) that most schools in rural in South Africa situated in high-poverty areas and this has led to countless incidents of school vandalism and theft in these schools. Creating safe schools involves designing a variety of safety-

awareness programmes and policies and plans, as well as organising school support networks (Netshitahame and Van Vollenhoven, 2002). The combined efforts of school authorities, parents, community leaders and government are the only mechanisms through which school violence can be addressed effectively.

Physical violence is not the only highlighted safety concern in schools. Bullying is also of concern to many students. Highlighted by Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (2012) and the Department of Basic Education (2012), "bullying constitutes a significant challenge to school safety, and undermines directly the creation of an enabling school environment that supports personal growth and development" (p. 2). The Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (2012) also argues that bullying is one of the most underrated yet persistent problems in schools today. They also note that adults are often unaware of bullying, despite growing research evidence that shows that it is a reality in the lives of most South African children, either as victims, witnesses or bullies themselves (Centre for Justice and Crime prevention, 2012).

Concerns of safety in schools triggered the need for a National School Safety Framework (NSSF), which was developed by CJCP with funding from UNICEF and formally approved by the Minister of Basic Education in April 2015. This is one of the many attempts to address school safety. This framework provides guidance for schools in addressing school safety within the context of the broader community, and within the current legislative and policy perspectives. It provides practical tools and guidelines that a school can use in order to: identify the safety and violence risks at the school; measure staff and learner experiences of crime and violence at school; develop a sound action plan which integrates data gathered from learners and staff; and measure and evaluate the impact of the action plan.

2.7.2 Teaching and learning in South African schools

South Africa emerged from apartheid and embraced democracy in 1994; this is after almost 5 decades of people of colour being subjected to sub-standard education (Venkat et al., 2015). During the early stages of South Africa operating under the new democracy, the teacher education colleges were integrated into higher-education institutions; however, graduates of

the former segregated institutions still occupy positions in many South African schools (Venkat & 2015) alongside post apartheid teacher education graduates. This means that schools, mostly those is rural and township areas, have a blended workforce, yet the expected level of performance is the same.

Research in the South African context argues that the reason learners are performing so poorly is that teachers are struggling, for various reasons, to provide a quality teaching and learning experience (Venkat & Spaull, 2015; van der Berg, Taylor, Gustafsson, Spaull & Armstrong, 2011; Van der Berg, 2008 as cited in Seobi & Wood 2016).

Others attribute poor student performances to teachers working in socio-economic and resource-deprived communities; poor initial teacher training and preparation, especially those who were subjected to inferior black education during the apartheid era (Venkat et al, 2015); teacher content knowledge (Van der Berg, Spaull, Wills, Gustafsson & Janeli Kotzé, 2016; Venkat et al, 2015; Spaull, 2013); instructional leadership by the Head of School (Van der Berg et al., 2011; Naicker et al, 2016); and a lack of ongoing professional development, on the job and further development opportunities, due to resource constraints and school infrastructure that is not equipped sufficiently to allow quality teaching to happen.

Due to the differing levels of education that were provided to the different groups of the society, with blacks receiving the least, there is a justifiable concern that many of these teachers lack the content knowledge required to provide access to the disciplinary ideas of mathematics (Venkat & Spaull 2015). According to Taylor and Vinjevold (as cited in Venkat et al, 2015), in which he provided a summary of 54 studies on teachers' subject content knowledge, it was discovered and confirmed that teachers' poor conceptual knowledge of the subjects they are teaching is a primary constraint on the quality of teaching and learning activities, and therefore on the quality of learning outcomes in schools (p. 4).

Seobi et al. (2016) argue this topic from a slightly different viewpoint. According to them, instructional leadership, when it is effective, can promote the manner in which teaching and learning happen in schools. Their argument is that in most schools instructional leadership

becomes the sole responsibility of the principal as the head of the school, and this has a negative impact on the school's performance, especially in schools with limited resources and teaching staff (Seobi et al., 2008). There is evidence to suggest that in schools where principals also play the role of a teacher, not just focusing on the running of the school, the results show good academic achievements (Seobi et al, 2016). Therefore, to increase the principal's capacity to teach, especially in under-resourced schools, the Heads of Department would need to be fully equipped to play the role of an instructional leader.

Moloi (2010) presents a picture of school as a "learning organization", specifically in the context of schools working in difficult socio-economic contexts, i.e., schools that are classified by the South African Department of Basic Education as Quintile 3 schools and lower. According to Moloi (2010), schools 'should' be regarded as learning organisations. Reviewing the studies conducted by Brennan (2001); Chan (2009) and Senge (2006), Moloi contends that the findings of these studies do not apply to education and, in particular, not to schools working under difficult socio-economic contexts such as Langa High School, one of the schools in this study.

In providing more context, Moloi (2010) refers to some of the many definitions of a learning organisation. For instance, she refers us to the work by Dixon (1999), who suggests that a learning organisation is an organisation that "focuses on the intentional use of learning processes at the individual, group and system level to transform the organisation to increasingly succeed by turning knowledge into real value" (Dixon as cited by Moloi, 2010, p. 621). She further cites the work by Garvin, Edmondson and Gino who define a learning organisation as "a place where employees excel at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge" (Moloi, 2018, p. 622).

Although Moloi borrowed the definition used by many researchers of what a learning organisation is, she admits to having been influenced heavily by the work of Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross and Smith, who view a learning organisation as a "place where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (Moloi, 2018, p. 622).

The discussion above demonstrates that leadership is one of the enablers of a positive school climate or a positive environment for teaching and learning. The opposite, however, is also true – that is, a lack of leadership can play a role in creating a negative school climate and pose a threat to the stability and management effectiveness of schools (Mafora, 2013; Milner & Khoza, 2008). An example of this is found in the study by Mafora (2013), which aimed at understanding students and teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership in their school.

Socio-economic factors such as increasing levels of poverty among school communities; high levels of illiteracy and unemployment; high parent mortality rates that increase the number of child-headed families and thus exacerbate child poverty; ill-resourced schools (with no libraries, computer or internet facilities, and, in some instances, without electricity) may all have a negative impact on school performance and the academic performance of students. However, this can be mitigated by a positive school climate, which can be achieved through the creation of a positive environment for learning and teaching.

2.7.3 Interpersonal relationships in South African schools

Where students perceive good relationships with each other, with the educators and all structures within the school, and believe themselves to be receiving good support from their peers and educators, the probability of "behavioural problems" is lower, and these perceptions can be linked directly to students' self-esteem and grade marks (National School Climate Center, 2011; Thapa et al., 2013). There is also evidence that when teachers support and interact positively with students, students are more likely to be engaged and behave appropriately (Thapa et al., 2013). School climate is the complete experience of educators of their work environment, and also the experience by learners of their learning environment, inside the classroom and outside (Vos et al., 2012 & 2013), thus negative perceptions by teachers and learners of their environment suggest a negative school climate.

A common theme amongst researchers and practitioners is that leadership, regardless of who plays this role, is vital in creating a positive environment for teaching and learning, and that poor learner performance in under-resourced schools in South Africa, linked to poor-quality teaching, can be attributed, in part, to a lack of instructional leadership at schools (Seobi et al.,

2016). The behaviour of the principal and how the teachers perceive this behaviour has a direct influence on how they experience school climate, and when teachers feel supported by both the principal and their peers, they are more committed to their profession (Thapa et al., 2013; Vos et al., 2012, Vos et al., 2013, Naicker et al., 2016).

Duze (2012) also speaks in detail about school climate and how it is influenced by leadership practices. Duze refers to the work by Willower et al. on two types of schools – Custodial and Humanistic. They uses the Pupil Control Ideology (PCI) scale that measures the assumptions and attitudes of teachers and supervisors toward students on a continuum from custodial to humanistic. Based on the findings, Willower et al. (as cited in Duze (2012), demonstrate that custodial schools tend to be rigidly controlled and concerned with maintenance and order, while humanistic schools see and accept students as members of a system and therefore seek their cooperation and interaction.

The type of school influences school climate, that is, the perception of teachers of their work environment and the perception of students of their learning environment. Depending on the type of leadership, the school could experience a positive or negative climate. The principal is the key figure in promoting an environment within the school that is conducive to student learning.

2.7.4 Institutional Environment in South African schools

The physical and social environment of a school is a key determinant of the school climate. Moloi (2010) speaks of challenges faced by some of the most disadvantaged, ill-resourced schools. These are schools that work without libraries, computer or internet facilities, and in some instances without electricity, while working alongside some of the well-resourced schools from the previously advantaged communities. Moloi studied Grade 12 results for eight years (2001–2008) and found that, of the 47 secondary schools in the same district, 38 of them were underperforming, with results ranging between 29.73% and 39.16%. In the same district, the top seven best-performing schools were all from the previously whites-only schools, with average pass percentages ranging 86.56% to 99.63%, in the same years 2001.

There are two categories within which the external environment can be divided: school connectedness/engagement and physical layout and surroundings of the school. The first element of external environment, that is, school connectedness, looks at how connected people feel within the school environment – the connection amongst students and their peers, between students and educators and educators with their colleagues. For instance, a study by Naicker et al. (2016) provides evidence on positive outcomes the school can achieve if there is a feeling of connectedness and positive engagement within the schooling environment. This connectedness can be seen inside the school and also within the community within which the school is situated.

The second element of institutional environment focuses on physical surroundings. This also encompasses the resources, such as laboratories and libraries, to execute the basic functions of a school. According to Paton-Ash and Wilmot (2015), a significant number of schools in South Africa do not have libraries. For instance, in 2011, only 21% of state schools had libraries, only 7% of these libraries had stock, while the rest were completely without stock. About 8 years ago, 79% of schools had no library at all (Paton-Ash & Wilmot 2015, p. 1). This challenge impacts on school performance, and especially on the academic success of students. School libraries are no longer "depositories of information but transformational spaces" (Erikson & Markuson, 2007, p. ix), where information is not only accessed, shared and stored, but challenged and created (Erikson & Markuson, 2007).

2.7.5 Social media in South African schools

We live in a digital world, and for that reason, more and more South Africans have access to mobile telephones and the internet. This has created a new form of bullying – cyber bullying, which is rapidly becoming a key concern for educators and parents.

The CJCP (2012) defines bullying as an action that is repetitive and involves "picking on someone with the aim of hurting or harming them physically, emotionally or socially" and it usually involves an imbalance of power. In most cases, the bully is bigger, tougher, or physically stronger, or someone who is more popular or influential. There are different types of bullying, which may occur simultaneously, meaning someone can be subjected to one or

many types at the same time. According to CJCP (2012), bullies are found in most schools and communities, even in the most disciplined or positive schools. There is a misconception amongst the community members around this phenomenon. Most people often associate bullying with males. Bullying is not a gender-specific problem. Both girls and boys can be bullied and be bullies**.**

A study by the Center for Justice and Crime Prevention, which looked at a total of 1 726 young people between the age of 12 and 24, showed that 46.8% had experienced some kind of cyberbullying. This is an alarming statistic that cannot and should not be ignored by schools (CJCP, 2012). A growing body of knowledge sound alarms around the seriousness of bullying. Bullying can cause serious physical, psychological and emotional harm that can last a lifetime (CJCP, 2012).

There is evidence that links bullying and children's performance at school. There are also instances where those who are or were bullied ended up committing suicide or dropping out of school due to fear of the bully or the stresses relating to being bullied. Some children who experience bullying go on to bully others. These children tend to show higher levels of problem behaviours, depressive symptoms, less self-control, poorer social skills, and worse performance at school. In these cases, bullying may be a way of trying to appear strong and dealing with negative feelings by hurting others. The Center for Justice and Crime Prevention, in partnership with the Department of Education, has drafted a workbook on bullying.

2.8 The importance of improving school climate

Researchers in the field of education across the globe are interested in learning about and understanding school climate, the aim being to identify and successfully implement effective and sustainable school improvement processes, especially in schools where there are challenges in overall performance and in the academic achievements of learners. This is because school climate is an important factor in the successful implementation of school reform programs (Guffey, Higgins-D'Alessandro, & Cohen, 2011; Guo & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2011; National School Climate, 2011) and it plays a significant role in providing a healthy and positive atmosphere (Duze, 2012) for the whole school community.

Success for all students is the overarching goal for national and local-level school reform initiatives. This means that at policy and practical level, school improvement processes must result in success for the school, but most importantly, in academic achievement by all learners in that school.

Teachers are expected to positively influence children and youth, not only teaching them to read, write, and think in words and numbers, but also to help students develop their social and moral sensitivities, character, and sense of citizenship (Cohen, 2012; Pinelands High School Principal 2018 – in a speech). The core characteristics of a liberal education, specifically the development of rational, critical, and imaginative thinking, rest on positive school climate (Guo & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2011). Consequently, teachers' perceptions of school climate are critical, as they influence their ability to implement school-based character and development programs (Guo, 2012; Vos et al., 2012).

Studies about the implementation of character education programs have suggested that the most effective programs are those that are incorporated into the school curriculum and developed holistically with the school community (Thapa et al., 2013). Felner et al. (2001) add to this by stating that "Whole school change efforts, when implemented comprehensively and with appropriate intensity and fidelity, may powerfully influence the prevention of socio-emotional, behavioural, and academic difficulties, as well as promotion of the acquisition of the full range of developmental competencies necessary for life success, well-being, and resilience" (p. 177).

Educators are required and expected to play a significant role in addressing the negative perceptions of the schooling community; however, they, too, need support. School climate and the necessary reforms are not the responsibility of the teacher educators only, but also the responsibility of policy makers and practitioners. The National School Climate Council (2007) produced an informative paper titled "The School Climate Challenge - Narrowing the Gap Between School Climate Research and School Climate Policy, Practice Guidelines and Teacher Education Policy", to highlight changing needs and challenges for policy makers, practice leaders and teacher educators.

The NSCC report has great bearing on this study and it has been reviewed extensively. Their study could be very informative to the groups toward which it is targeted. It is therefore recommended that a detailed review be conducted in order to influence and/or implement the correct and sustainable school climate reforms.

Other important work is done by Naicker et al. (2016) in the study titled "Schools Performing against the Odds: Enablements and Constraints to School Leadership Practice". This study demonstrates school climate reforms/strategies that have yielded great academic performance by the school and for all the learners in the school. This is another important body of knowledge that shows positive school improvement reforms. Although the study does not use the term "school climate" its focus was nevertheless on it. A detailed review of this study will benefit other schools and researchers in learning more about school climate.

According to Mourshed, Chijioke and Barber (2010), it is important to determine the differing levels of performance, as this can and should shape improvement goals and the level of reforms required. They suggest adoption of certain beliefs, such as:

> (1) that all school communities can work to foster meaningful school improvement efforts; (2) that we need to think systemically and about combinations of interventions; (3) that schools functioning at different levels (e.g., poor to fair, fair to good, good to great, and great to excellent) need to focus on different improvement goals; and (4) that it is essential to consider (a) what mobilizes the whole community to learn and work together, (b) how we can helpfully assess "where we are" and "what would be useful next steps to consider," (c) what cluster of instructional and school- wide implementation goals and efforts will "work" for "our school," and (d) how we can support a successful and sustained effort.

A study by Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, and Easton (2010), titled "Organizing Schools for Improvement" details how the following four systems interact in ways that support or undermine school improvement efforts: (a) professional capacity (e.g., teachers' knowledge and skills, support for teacher learning, and school-based learning communities); (b) order, safety, and norms (labeled as "school learning climate"); (c) parent-school-community ties; and (d) instructional guidance (e.g., curriculum alignment and the nature of academic

demands). There are similar themes in the study by Naicker et al. (2016), who suggest that success in reforming schools can be achieved if the basis of change is on making leadership principles visible: Leading learners within the classroom; Leading Colleagues in Curricular, Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities; Leading Staff in Whole School Development; and Leading beyond the School Borders into the Community.

The strategies/models mentioned above are completely aligned and refer to similar themes. The overall view of research is that, for schools to implement successful processes/reforms, these principles must be part of the initiatives: Leadership – by the principal, educators, students and the community at large; involvement by the community – the whole schooling community, i.e., religious bodies, the police force, schools, private and government organisations and parents or guardians; Clear rules/norms for all participants; Teacher development and continuous assessment – to ensure that teachers are competent and supported throughout their teaching career. This includes empowering teachers with the new skills required to deal with changes in school climate, leaners' behaviour, and external forces (Political instability and economic challenges). This is because schools operate within larger systems: the school community, neighbourhood, state, and nation (Cohen, 2012) and never in isolation.

Practically, what does the "school climate improvement process" mean? The National School Climate Council (as cited by Cohen, 2013) has defined the school improvement process as an "intentional, strategic, collaborative, transparent, and coordinated effort to strengthen school learning environments. Democratically informed decision-making constitutes an essential foundation for the school climate improvement process". In school climate research, school climate improvement process is seen as a process that engages all stakeholders (parents/guardians, educators and students) in the following six essential practices (National School Climate Council, 2007; National School Climate Center, 2011; Thapa et al., 2013; National Dropout Prevention Center, 2013):

1. Decision-making process is involves all stakeholders (parents/guardians, educators and students) and is collaborative and democratic.
2. Data (quantitative and qualitative) is used to define and drive the implementation of programmes targeted at improving school climate. Also highlighted, data collection

process must be done regularly to evaluate progress and continue to inform the improvement process.

3. As data informs improvement goals, schools must be able to align these goals to the unique needs of the students and broader school community.
4. Drive capacity building among school personnel as this promotes adult learning in teams and/or through professional learning communities, to promote the effectiveness of the team and skills required in providing whole child education.
5. Scientific research informs curriculum, medium of instruction, student supports interventions. Interventions include practices and programs that represent an all-inclusive variety of approaches to promote healthy student development and positive learning environments as well as address individual student barriers to learning.
6. The improvement process as defined through use of data must strengthens (1) policies and procedures related to learning environments, and (2) operational infrastructure to facilitate data collection, effective planning, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability.

The National Dropout Prevention Center believes that these processes powerfully support the effective strategies that shape evidence-based efforts to prevent student dropout rates, improve school-community collaboration and safe learning environments.

2.9 Summary of literature review

What do we know about school climate?

School climate can determine the success or failure of a school (National School Climate Council, 2007; Vos et al., 2012 &2013; Moloi, 2010; Gregory et al., 2012). It is, moreover, the school climate that distinguishes one school from another. School climate is linked to school performance and the academic achievements of students in schools. A positive school climate does not only result in the positive academic achievement of students, but also supports physical and emotional wellbeing of students and educators, and the whole school. All the elements of school climate must be understood. This is because school climate affects the whole school community – students, parents/guardians, educators, school governing bodies.

Researchers in the field of education are interested in understanding school climate from multiple perspectives – students, educators and the whole school community – in order to identify and successfully implement sustainable school improvement processes. Generally, there are six main dimensions of school climate identified in the literature: safety, teaching and learning, interpersonal relationship, institutional relationships, social media and school improvement processes (National School Climate Center, 2011; National School Climate Council, 2007; Cohen 2009, 2010 and 2012). The first five elements affect the whole schooling community, while the latter only affects teachers and the principal in a school environment.

School climate plays a significant role in providing a healthy and positive atmosphere. Improved school climate is a goal to pursue because a school with a positive perception by all its participants is a healthy organisation. A positive school climate promotes students' learning and their academic achievement, greater success by the school and healthy development of the school. It also promotes effective risk prevention, positive youth development and increased teacher retention. Furthermore, it is said that positive school climate has the ability to reduce academic achievement gaps between students and schools of different socioeconomic statuses and backgrounds. According to Berkowitz et al. (2017), school climate can successfully disrupt the associations between low socioeconomic status and poor academic achievement. Thus, with a positive school climate, even schools with weak socioeconomic status can attain high levels of academic achievements.

There are, however, gaps in what we know about school climate, internationally, but more so in South Africa and the African continent as a whole. This lack of knowledge limits both researchers and practitioners in improving the environment for teaching and learning and hinders whole-school reform.

There is broad research that shows the impact of school climate on students' mental and physical health. Thapa et al. (2013) draw from many studies that have shown the impact of school climate on student's mental and physical health. As highlighted, there are studies that have evidenced the impact of school climate on students' self-esteem (Hoge, Smit, & Hanson, 1990) and how positive school climate is able to mitigate the negative effects of self-criticism

in students (Kuperminic, Leadbeater, & Blatt, 2001), and promotes emotional and mental health outcomes (Kuperminic, Leadbeater, Emmons, & Blatt, 1997; Payton et al., 2008; Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989; Shochet, Dadds, Ham, & Montague, 2006; Way, Reddy, & Rhodes, 2007). As noted by Thapa et al. (2013), research has also revealed a positive correlation between school climate and student belief in themselves.

Furthermore, Thapa et al. (2013) also highlight the relation that a positive and sound socio-emotional climate of a school has to the frequency of its students' substance abuse and psychiatric problems. They further noted that school climate it is linked to lower levels of drug use.

According to Berkowitz et al. (2017), school climate can successfully disrupt the associations between low socioeconomic status and poor academic achievement. Thus, with a positive school climate, even schools with weak socioeconomic status can attain high levels of academic achievements.

What we do not know about school climate?

While much is known about school climate, there are 6 key limitation in this literature: firstly, although the significance of school climate for teaching and learning and for school environment have been well-established in the literature (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, and Easton, 2010; Brand et al., 2003; Naicker et al., 2016; National School Climate Council, 2007; Thapa et al., 2013; Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2011; Cohen, 2012; Duze, 2012; Pickeral, 2012), this is not the case for South Africa and the African continent as a whole. There is an obvious limitation in the understanding of school climate within the South African context. School climate literature in South Africa identifies external factors, such as political and social climate as drivers of school performance and the academic achievement of students and omits to look at factors within the control of the school management, like school climate.

Secondly, as stated in the research, school climate is unique to a specific context, and as a result, what we currently know about school climate has mainly been research in the context

of the schools in the United States of America, which may not necessarily apply in the South African and African context. Therefore, there is a need for extensive research on school climate in South Africa and Africa, which is currently very limited.

Research also argues that there is a link between school climate, positive or negative, and school performance and the academic achievement of those in schools (Cohen, 2009; Thapa et al., 2013). However, there isn't sufficient evidence to articulate this link. This is an area that requires further research and is seen as the third gap in this literature review.

The forth gap in this literature review is on the definitions of school climate. There is an agreement in school climate research that, because of the unique nature of school climate, the definition of it is not definite and or static (National School Climate Center, 2007; Cohen, 2009; Thapa et al., 2013; Cohen, 2012; U.S. Department of Education Publication, 2007). School climate is an evolving phenomenon. Because of this, there is limited knowledge on the definition and the elements of it. This is another area that provides immense opportunity for future research.

What we also know from the literature today is that school climate is a group phenomenon and it impacts the whole schooling community in different ways. To have a better appreciation of school climate in a particular school or environment, a researcher would need to engage the whole schooling community, that is, educators, students and parents. Duze (2012) also noted that climate pays more attention on the school's interpersonal work life that mostly affects teachers, administrators, and supervisors, however, climate also affects students. Despite this knowledge, most school climate studies only look at the perception and experience of the educators (teachers and principals) and neglect to understand the perception of parents and students in the school. In South Africa and the rest of the African continent, there is no single study that investigates the perceptions of students in schools, through direct interaction with them. This is one big gap in the school climate literature, which this study seeks to address. Further research on this is required.

Lastly, the sixth gap that is identified in the school climate research is that, while there are limited studies on the relationships between various aspects of school climate and school or student achievement in South Africa and other parts of the world, there has not yet been a study that directly examined school climate and differing performance levels in historically white and black schools within South Africa. This study explores this gap to provide insights into how students from differing backgrounds perceive school climate in their respective schools.

How is this study going contribute to knowledge base on school climate studies?

As highlighted previously, there is a strong argument in research that school climate is a concept that powerfully and effectively supports data-driven pro-social school reform. Additionally, there is evidence to prove that school climate can successfully disrupt the associations between low socioeconomic status and poor academic achievement. However, this body of knowledge exists outside of South Africa, mostly in the developed world. The problem is that what is known in these studies has not taken in to account a unique context such as that of South Africa. The impact that school climate has on the academic performances of schools, especially in developed countries, has been established in the academic literature. There are a number of gaps identified in the literature on school climate; however, due to its limited scope and resources, as well as time constraints, this study will only address few of these gaps. This creates an opportunity for further studies on school climate.

This study will contribute to the general understanding of school climate, specifically in developing countries where little research exists on the subject. The study fills this contextual gap by using schools in South Africa as case studies. The study also contributes theoretically by identifying students as major stakeholders in the school environment, and therefore it has investigated school climate and its impact on academic performance through the lens of students. Methodologically, this study introduces the use of a scientifically developed school climate instrument by the National School Climate Council (2007) that is widely recognised and accepted in United States of America. This study can serve as a starting point for expanding understanding of school climate in South Africa, and how it impacts on the academic performances of students.

Limitations of the study

In this study, due to limited resources, capacity and its focussed scope, the following concerns will not be addressed; this creates an opportunity for further research on school climate:

- The perception of parents/guardians on school climate. While this study addresses the gap in knowledge on how students perceive school climate, the existing gap in understanding parents/guardians' perceptions is an opportunity for further research.
- This study will not investigate or address the empirical connection between school climate and the academic achievement between the former white and black schools.

3 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

3.1 Introduction

For this dissertation, I have adopted a mixed methods approach, using qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data to address the research problem. I have also clearly highlighted the benefits of using the mixed method. In this study, a survey instrument was used and the resulting quantitative data were supported with qualitative data gathered through the conduct of focus group sessions. Both the survey and focus group sessions were targeted at students from the two sampled high schools in the Western Cape; therefore, the primary sources of data for this research are the students. This sampling was purposefully adopted as it supported the objective of this study, which is to understand the student perceptions of school, as it is the evident gap in the body of knowledge on school climate that this study aims to address.

3.2 Research Methodology, design and approach

School climate is intangible, yet its impact on the functioning of a school, including the academic achievements of students in that school, is noticeable (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Naicker et al. 2016). While quantitative measures may be used, they are likely to yield insufficient information about the school climate, therefore to gather further insights about the school and examine less obvious aspects of the school climate and its different elements – such as interpersonal relationships and how connected the participants within a schooling community are to their school, it is beneficial to combine quantitative and qualitative methodologies for data collection.

A mixed methodology was used for the empirical data collection, using numerical and verbal data, in order to gather rounded, reliable data. A survey approach was used to gain an overall picture, and a more fine-grained analysis was achieved through focus group sessions.

Supported by research (Cohen et al., 2007; Chen, 1997; Greene, Caracelli and Graham, 1989; Morse, 2003), this study adopted a mixed methods approach, using qualitative and quantitative data in order to have a deeper understanding of the investigated issue and gather reliable data.

3.3 Sources of primary of data

This study specifically focused on the perception of students on school climate in their respective schools. Therefore, the primary source of research data on school climate was gathered from the students in both schools through the use of the comprehensive school climate instrument and through focus group interviews. Thus, data collected for this study is primary data.

Additional sources of primary data were teachers, principals and members of the school governing body, especially in the case of Langa High School. These sources were engaged purely to gather information about the school, in order to provide a rich description of the school. These other sources of data were adopted because, unlike Pinelands High School, Langa High School could not provide school documents containing the history and background of the school. The method used for collecting this data was the semi-structured interview (see interview protocol in appendix C). Furthermore, for Pinelands High School, document analysis of the school records was used in order to gather knowledge about the school's background and history.

It is important to note that all sources of information, apart from the students themselves, were only used to gather information about the background of the school in order to do rich description of the schools for better context, as presented in Chapter 4 and 6.

3.4 Study population and sampling strategies

Cohen et al. (2007) argue that 'The quality of a piece of research stands or falls not only by the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted" (p. 100). For the purpose of this research, a purposive sampling

technique was used. Cohen et al. (2007) noted that for sampling, the researcher would need to consider the following 4 key factors; (1) the size off the sample, (2) the representativeness and boundaries of the sample, (3) access to the sample and lastly (4) the sampling strategy to be used. The intent of this study was to examine the perception of school climate by students in two very different high school in South Africa, from a position of privilege and disadvantage. With time and resources constraints in terms of funding, the sample size needed to be small, while still meeting the objective of the study. The second consideration was also the accessibility of the sample. I live about 7 and 10 kilometers from Pinelands High and Langa High School respectively.

With all of these considerations, two secondary schools in the Western Cape Central Metro District were chosen as the sample. Within these two schools, only three grades (Grades 10, 11 and 12) became the focus of this study. For this research, 250 students were sampled for quantitative data collection, which is the equivalent of 25% of the total population of Pinelands High School. However, for Langa High School, the sampled percentage of the total population in the school was much higher, at 40%. This was done intentionally, to ensure that adequate data from the respondents were collected. For qualitative data collection, 21 students were sampled for focus group sessions. These 21 students were a representative of 7 students from Grade 10, 11 and 12 in both high schools.

In chapters 4 and 6 of this study, which contain the rich descriptions of the two schools in terms of infrastructure and resources, I have highlighted the limited resources that Langa High School is faced with. As a result, it was important to preempt some of the challenges by sampling a large number.

3.4.1 Profile of the two schools: Overview

The two schools of interest to this study are Pinelands High and Langa High schools. These two schools are situated within 7 km distance from each other in the southern suburbs of Cape Town, in the Western Cape Province of South Africa, and both fall within the jurisdiction of the Western Cape Education Department. Pinelands High School is classified as a former white

school and is situated in an affluent suburb of Pinelands, while Langa High School is a black school situated in the township of Langa.

These classifications are, in South African educational policy, used as criteria with regards to the distribution of funding, with the aim being to reduce inequalities and to close the gap between communities of different social standing. This classification is important, as it provides the context for the schools of interest in this study.

A detailed profile of each school will be provided in chapters 4 and 6 of this study, with chapter 4 providing a detailed description of Pinelands High School and chapter 6 providing a detailed description of Langa High School.

3.5 Data collection method

Cohen et al. (2007) suggest that the instruments or tools used in data collection has an influence on the credibility of a research investigation. As a result, it is important that the tools used for the study be appropriate and well suited. For the purpose of this research, a mixed-methods approach was used for data collection and these methods were: surveys, focus group interviews, observations, and document analysis. The next section will provide more detail on these instruments and the reasons they were chosen for this study.

3.5.1 Survey questionnaire

Measuring school climate is a data driven strategy that identifies the social, emotional and civic as well as intellectual aspects of student learning. Measuring school climate is considered the most effective strategy that engages students, parents/guardians, school personnel and community members learning and working together, in order to create safe, supportive, engaging, helpfully challenging and joyful schools.

A number of reputable bodies, such as the National School Climate Center, The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The Institution of Educational Sciences (IES), the U.S. Department of Education recommend school climate reform as a scientifically sound strategy in order to promote healthy relationships, school connectedness, and dropout prevention, as well as prevention of violence or any other safety concerns in schools.

For this reason, the researcher conducted a thorough research in terms of the best survey instrument to use for this study and, after careful consideration, the NSCC's Comprehensive School Climate Inventory (CSCI) became the instrument of choice. This is because the NSCC has assumed a universal view and leadership role in developing this school climate measurement, amongst others.

The CSCI was developed over a period of several years, with the construct based on theoretical and survey work done in the field of social and emotional education. In 2007, the survey was extensively tested by the NSCC, using factor analysis and structural equation modeling to validate the sub-scales and confirm the theoretical model of school climate. The evidence of this data confirmed the validity of the tool in the context of this study.

The CSCI is the only instrument of its kind that measures thirteen essential dimensions of a healthy school climate in five broad categories: Safety, Teaching and Learning, Interpersonal Relationships, Social Media, and Institutional Environment, as well as two distinct dimensions for personnel only. The CSCI was developed over a period of several years, with the construct based on theoretical and survey work done in the field of social and emotional education. In 2007, the survey was trialed extensively by the NSCC, using factor analysis and structural equation modeling, in order to validate the sub-scales and confirm the theoretical model of school climate.

The evidence of this data served to confirm the validity of the tool. Furthermore, this instrument has been reviewed and validated by external review bodies and confirmed to effectively provide empirically validated data. Through the use of a Likert scale (1-5), data is arranged in order of magnitude to determine the central location, in this instance, the median. Overall, the

measures are ranked as positive, neutral, and negative. An element of any dimension is considered positive if its median value ranges above 3.50. Those between 2.50 and 3.50 are neutral while elements with median scores below 2.50 are negative.

Table 3-1: Comprehensive School Climate Inventory Dimensions

Safety	
1. Rules and Norms	Clearly communicated rules about physical violence; clearly communicated rules about verbal abuse, harassment, and teasing; clear and consistent enforcement and norms for adult intervention.
2. Sense of Physical Security	Sense that students and adults feel safe from physical harm in the school.
3. Sense of Social-Emotional Security.	Sense that students feel safe from verbal abuse, teasing, and exclusion.
Teaching and Learning	
4. Support for Learning	Use of supportive teaching practices, such as: encouragement and constructive feedback; varied opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skills; support for risk-taking and independent thinking; atmosphere conducive to dialog and questioning; academic challenge; and individual attention.
5. Social and Civic Learning	Support for the development of social and civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions including: effective listening, conflict resolution, self-reflection and emotional regulation, empathy, personal responsibility, and ethical decision making
Interpersonal Relationships	
6. Respect for Diversity	Mutual respect for individual differences (e.g. gender, race, culture, etc.) at all levels of the school—student-student; adult-student; adult-adult and overall norms for tolerance.
7. Social Support—Adults	Pattern of supportive and caring adult relationships for students, including high expectations for students' success, willingness to listen to students and to get to know them as individuals, and personal concern for students' problems.

8. Social Support—Students	Pattern of supportive peer relationships for students, including: friendships for socializing, for problems, for academic help, and for new students
Physical Environment	
9. School Connectedness/Engagement	Positive identification with the school and norms for broad participation in school life for students, staff, and families.
10. Physical Surroundings	Cleanliness, order, and appeal of facilities and adequate resources and materials.
Social Media	
11. Social Media	Sense that students feel safe from physical harm, verbal abuse/teasing, gossip, and exclusion when online or on electronic devices (for example, Facebook, twitter, and other social media platforms, by an email, text messaging, posting photo/video, etc.).

3.5.2 Focus group interviews

Deciding on either focus group session or group interviews was one of the key consideration in acquiring a deeper understanding of the research problem. As noted by Creswell (2007) and Cohen et al. (2007), mixed methods research provides a more complete understanding of the research problem than either quantitative or qualitative alone, and this is the reason that in addition to the survey, a second method of collecting data was adopted for this study. Focus group interviews allowed me to gather further insights about the school and examine less obvious aspects of the school climate.

Highlighted by Cohen et al. (2007), these are both good technique that are growing in popularity, particularly in educational research. This techniques have unique advantages and disadvantages which would need to be carefully considered. It is easily clarified that while focus groups may be similar to group interviews which are mainly a backwards and forwards between interviewer and group, focus group differs in the sense that it is reliant on the interaction within the group selected to discuss a topic supplied by the researcher (Cohen et al, 2007), resulting in a collective rather than an individual view.

In a focus group, the participants interact with each other rather than with the interviewer, and allows the views of the participants to emerge. In focus groups, the participants' agenda dominates that of the researcher's agenda (Cohen et al, 2007). Focus group was chosen as it would serve the purpose of collecting collective views about school climate in these two schools.

The focus groups consisted of small group of students who completed the survey. At Pinelands High School, two groups of students participated. The first group had 14 participants, 7 from grade 10 and 7 from grade 11, however, split in two groups of 7 in each group. The second group was only made of 7 students from Grade 12. The reason for two groups was that the grade 12 students were not available at the time when the first session was held.

At Langa High School, a session with 12 students from grade 10, 11 and 12 was held. In this session, students where split in to two groups of 6 students in each group. The identification of these focus group participants was based on those students who showed deep interest in sharing their views and perceptions of school climate in their respective schools.

These interviews were conducted using a defined agenda that specifically sought to further clarify data that was collected on the dimensions of school climate through the use of the comprehensive school climate instrument (CSCI). The interviews were also conducted using the open-ended questions approach.

From an analysis of the comprehensive school climate survey results, I had a sense that scores are not telling the entire story. It became necessary to conduct focus group session which helped in obtaining a better understanding. Using the CSCI Framework, I designed the focus group interview guide and focussed on the areas which revealed limited knowledge about areas of concerns with the schools pertaining to school climate. Below is the focus group interview guide. Questions were asked and discussed based on the key results that obviously highlighted the specific elements as issues of concern.

Table 3-2: Focus group interview guide

This below table must be read with this understanding;

- Column A represents the 11 dimensions of school climate which were the focus for this study. These are the dimensions used when conducting a survey. Following the analysis of quantitative data, these dimensions were further used to gather more insights through focus group sessions.
- Column B represents the researchers set of formulated questions for focus group discussions.
- Column C is an indication of which of the elements of school climate where a focus for a particular school. For instance, if the results of the survey shows that physical safety is perceived in a negative light, the focus group session will address that in order to get a deeper understanding of the issue.
- Column D is a reference to literature.

Column A	**Column B**	**Column C**		**Column D**
Dimension	**Focus group question**	**Question / Focus for school?**		**Reference to literature**
		PHS	**LHS**	
Safety – Physical	▪ What makes you feel not safe at school or in areas outside of school? ▪ Who or what do you fear? ▪ How often have you experienced or witnessed theft (personal or school property), violence or damage to school property?	No	Yes	NSCC; Thapa et al., 2013
Safety – Social and emotional	▪ Which areas within the school grounds or times is one more likely to experience bullying? ▪ Who do you think the bullying are and why do you think is that? ▪ Have you or your friends reported bullying when you experience or witness it? What has been the outcome?	Yes	No	NSCC; Thapa et al., 2013
Safety – school rules	The majority of students in this school believe that the school has well documented and communicated rules about good conduct in and outside of school, yet the students in this school have experienced or witnessed bullying, physical violence and theft of property. ▪ Why do you think is that?	Yes	Yes	NSCC; Thapa et al., 2013

Teaching &Learning – Academic			Yes	NSCC; Thapa et al., 2013
Teaching & Learning – Civil			Yes	NSCC; Thapa et al., 2013
Interpersonal relationship – Diversity	▪ I'm interested to understand how you understand or define diversity? ▪ Do you think that some of the issues of bullying has anything to do with issues of diversity such as race / gender / sexual orientation / culture / religion? Please explain your answer ▪ Please tell me how do you relate with teachers of different races? ▪ Please tell me how do you relate to fellow students of different races? ▪ At what point do you think diversity, social and academic support are linked?	Yes	No	NSCC; Thapa et al., 2013
Interpersonal relationship – Social support_Teachers	▪ At what point do you think diversity, social and academic support are linked ▪ What makes a good teacher? ▪ Explain the kind of support do you receive from your teachers? ▪ What is it that the teachers do or don't do that makes you judge (positive or negative) their level of social support towards you and the rest of the students. Do you experience it the same with all teachers?	Yes	No	NSCC; Thapa et al., 2013
Interpersonal relationship – Social support_Students		No	No	NSCC; Thapa et al., 2013
Institutional Environment – Physical Layout	▪ How do you see your school in comparison to other schools you've seen? ▪ What are 5 things you like about how the school looks? ▪ Name 5 things that you do not like about the way the school looks. ▪ What facilities do you wish to have in the school and why? ▪ What you do you like about where the school is situated?	No	Yes	NSCC; Thapa et al., 2013
Institutional Environment – School Connectedness	▪ What do you understand school connectedness to be?	No	Yes	NSCC; Thapa et al., 2013

	▪ What are the things that makes one feel connected to the running and activities of the school? ▪ Is there are link between physical layout of the school, safety and school connectedness?			
Social Media	▪ What do you think social media is? ▪ Do you think in SA social media is big? ▪ Is bullying via a social media possible? In what way? ▪ Have you experienced or witnessed social media bullying by students in your school? ▪ Have you reported these incidences? And what was the outcome?	Yes	Yes	NSCC; Thapa et al., 2013

3.5.3 Other data collection method

Structured observations

Observational data that was collected provided the research with data on the physical environment at the school, including elements of school climate such as safety, school connectedness, and facilities within the school, as well as interpersonal relationships, including a view on issues of diversity. In addition, this approach helped the researcher to validate data gathered through the analysis of school documents. The focus of observations was to get an understanding of issues such as the nature of shared and private spaces, the cleanliness of the school, school grounds, infrastructure for extra mural activities, infrastructure in and around the school, notices, and regulations, among others.

This process was also used to validate data collected via analysis of a school's documents. It provided the researcher with rich data regarding the evaluation of the effectiveness and consistent application of a school's policy documents, rules and codes of conduct.

3.5.4 Document analysis

The fourth method of collecting data used for this study was to analyze the school's documents with the objective of describing each school and its academic context and results (historical documents, assessment scores for each grade being studied, school policy documents, etc.). It must be noted however that document analysis as a method of collecting data was only applied at Pinelands High School. This is because Pinelands High School, as one of the two schools of interest to this study, is the only one that has documented its rich history for many years and is able to share this information. The school's documentary history can be accessed in a print form and on the school's well-maintained and updated website.

3.5.5 Individual consultations with members of Langa High School

The last method used to collect and supplement data, specifically for Langa High School, was through conversations with the school community. This was because unlike Pinelands High School, Langa High School did not have a well-kept and maintained school documents to refer to. The school does not have a website where information about the school could also be found. The focus for these conversations was to gather knowledge about the background of the school, based on its history, physical location, identity, teacher/student profile and significant changes post-1994, if any, as well as the general impression of the school, the school building, facilities for academic learning and extra mural activities, overall performance of the school and the students' academic achievements over time.

These conversations where held with multiple stakeholders, including the current and previous teachers and principals, as well as current and previous members of the school governing body. Though these conversations were not part of the initial gathering of school data in order to detail rich description of the school, the limited documented information about Langa High School made it apparent that there is a gap in the knowledge available to the researcher about the school, therefore necessitating these conversations.

The primary objective of these conversations was to collect data to aid in the description of Langa High School and its academic context and results. For the validity and reliability of information collected through this technique, a data triangulation method was applied to enrich, refute, confirm and explain the pieces of data collected from different stakeholders.

While this form of data collection is beneficial since it provides raw data, as noted by Miles and Huberman (1994), the credibility and reliability of qualitatively derived findings can be doubted. To address this concern, as indicated in the preceding sections, a mixed method of collecting data was adopted in order to test the credibility of the different sources of data.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity in research are very important pieces of every study, they highlight the strength of the data upon which final conclusions will be drawn (Shelly, 2015 - personal conversation; Cohen et al., 2007). As indicated in early section, this study used a survey instrument that was developed and tested by National School Climate Center in the United States of America and had gone through three independent reviews (National School Climate Center (2011). As a result, only validity is addressed in this section.

Cohen et al. (2007) noted that "Validity is an important key to effective research. An invalid piece of research is worthless" (p. 133), this means validity is a requirement in the conduct of a research, for both quantitative and qualitative research. There are many ways in which validity can be addressed. For example, in qualitative data, validity can be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings of this study, a multi-method data collection technique was employed.

To improve the reliability and validity of this study, a triangulation method of collecting data was applied. Research defines triangulation as the use of more than one method of data collection (Cohen et al., 2007; Shelly, 2015 – personal conversation) and has been proven to provide a deeper and reliable data. As indicated in sections below, in this study quantitative data through a use of a survey instrument was collected, which was follows by collecting qualitative data through the focus group sessions with students. Additionally, particularly in a case of Pinelands High School, document analysis was also applied as a method of collecting data. In the case of Langa High School, observation and stakeholder interviews were the fourth and fifth data collection methods applied in this study. It is important to note that (1) document analysis, (2) observation, and (3) stakeholder interviews were conducted purely to enable the researcher to obtain knowledge about the school in order to provide rich descriptions of Pinelands High School (chapter 4) and Langa High School (chapter 6).

The quantitative survey data was further supported with qualitative data collected through students' focus group interviews. In addition, rich, in-depth data was collected from a wide variety of key respondents, comprising both current and previous stakeholders from within the

school community. The responses of different stakeholders were compared for similarities and differences, where necessary, and they were all factored into the analysis process.

Additionally, this study utilised a survey template that had gone through three independent reviews by researchers in the field of education and psychology, attaining an overall reliability scale of .94 for elementary schools and .95 for middle and high schools.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

"The planning of educational research cannot be left to chance – the research itself is an unavoidably ethical task, thus, ethical issues must be addressed very early in a research study" (Cohen et al., 2000). Zolfaghari (2017 – personal conversation) and Jansen (2018 – personal conversation) also noted that it is expected (by the research community) that the research study be conducted rigorously, scrupulously and in an ethical manner. In fact, before a study is approved to commence, most institutions of learning, in this case the University of Cape Town, insist on ethical clearance.

For this study, The Western Cape Education Department was contacted for permission to access the two schools. This permission was granted with clear timelines and terms and conditions stipulated. This permission allowed the researcher to approach the two schools of interest for permission and to be granted access. Permission from the schools was also granted, also with clear terms and conditions of engagement.

In both cases, the purpose of the research was outlined in letters that were sent to them. With the guidance and the involvement of the school personnel, a request to for student participation was sent to the parents/guardians of the students in the school. This was to allow learners to take part in the conduct of the study. Parental consent was received prior to the commencement of the administration of the survey for leaners. This was, however, not without challenges, especially, at Langa High School.

At Langa High, the process was relatively challenging. Firstly, parents of Langa High School students are not always well educated and they mostly communicate with the school in isiXhosa. As a result, the parental consent forms needed to be translated into isiXhosa. Secondly, most of the learners at Langa High School either come from child-headed households or from homes where parents are hardly available to attend to requests such as a parental consent to conduct a survey. As a result, it was quite challenging to receive parental consent.

According to the schools' principals and members of the school governing body, the best action to take in order to proceed with this valuable study was for the school principal to assume the guardianship of the leaners in his care. The principal of Langa High School, with the approval of the school governing body, therefore provided consent for all grade 10-12 learners to participate in the survey for this research.

The participants' dignity, privacy, confidentiality and interests were considered and respected at all times, through the conduct of the study. The survey used is completely anonymous, while information collected through interviews made no reference to the identity of the respondents. Before completing the questionnaires, the learners were informed that the process was completely voluntary and that they could withdraw at any stage during the process, and these terms and conditions were read to them.

4 CHAPTER FOUR: PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL: A CASE DESCRIPTION

4.1 Introduction

This section of the report details the background of the school, based on its history, physical location, identity, teacher/student profile and any significant changes post-1994. This section also reports on the general impression of the school, the school building, facilities for academic learning and extramural activities, and overall performance of the school, as well as the students' academic achievements over time.

4.2 Background of Pinelands

Pinelands, previously known as the Garden City, is one of the well-regarded middle-to upper class suburbs in Cape Town, Western Cape. This suburb was officially established in 1923 under the trust (the Garden City Trust) formed by the Union Government and Richard Stafford, who became one of the first residents of Pinelands. Pinelands was the first town-planned area to be established in South Africa, based on the economic and scientific principles suggested by Ebenezer Howard in the UK (Garden Cities of Tomorrow, 1898) and a "whites only" suburb. This meant that only "white people" could reside in this area, but has changed.

The construction of Pinelands started in 1919; however, it was only in 1922 that the first 60 members of the Pinelands community had settled in, in about 24 completed houses. By early 1923, the suburb had electricity and soon after, there were proper street lights. This was followed by building of churches, schools and commercial buildings and a creating of parks around the neighbourhood. The whole Garden City was centred on a beautiful landscape. It is no surprise that Pinelands is one of the most attractive suburbs in the highly rated residential zones of Cape Town, known as the Southern Suburbs.

Prices of houses in Pinelands range between R2.5 million and R15 million or more – this is the equivalent of $1 million, at the exchange rate of $1 to R15. This affluent suburb is regarded as one of the more expensive suburbs in the south of Cape Town. Allow in the early years, Pinelands was segregated by race, in recent years, the population of Pineland is characterised

by class ‘affordability’. Only people who live well above the poverty line can afford a house in Pinelands. Residents of this prestigious suburb fall between the middle- to upper-class members of society. They either run their own companies or hold high positions in companies or professional bodies. These are mostly people who studied at prestigious universities like the University of Cape Town, which is situated less than 10 kilometres from the suburb.

Most people in this suburb also had opportunities to study at universities outside of Cape Town, e.g., the University of the Witwatersrand, Rand Afrikaners University, Medunsa, and abroad. Most of these people are also Pinelands High School alumni. Pre-1994, under the Apartheid Regime (1948-1994), Pinelands was mostly occupied by whites, and schools in this area were also primarily designated for whites only.

Suburb of Pinelands

4.3 History of the school: Pinelands High School

Pinelands High School, which is centrally situated in Pinelands, was established in July 1952 in a period of strict Apartheid Law, which discriminated against black people with regards to education, and many other aspects of life such as where they could live and their career prospects, for example. Since its inception and until shortly before 1994, the school only served the white community, i.e., students and teachers at the time were only white, and the majority of them were residents of Pinelands.

The first principal of the school was Mr J. P. Kent, who remained the principal of the school until 1970, when he retired. Kent was succeeded by J. E. Goss in 1971, who served until 1981. On Goss's departure, C. F. Thomson took over the responsibility until 1988. In 1989, W. E. Schroder was the principal and remained in the position for only a year and was replaced by B. D. Ingpen in 1990, who remained in the position until 1996. The sixth principal of Pinelands High School, appointed in 1997, was D. I. Arguile. He was succeeded by A. D. Reeler from 2003 until the middle of 2010. J. M. Gibbon became the school's principal from the latter part of 2010 until the middle of 2015. D. J. Campbell, who is the current principal of Pinelands High School, was appointed in 2015.

Post-Apartheid, former "white only" schools, in accordance with the South African Schools Act of 1996, were forced to open the gates to non-white students, i.e., Indians, Coloureds (those of mixed race) and blacks. However, at Pinelands High School, the first intake of students from the marginalised communities was in 1991. As noted by Hassiem (2019), 50 students from the marginalised groups were enrolled at the school in 1991. About 33% of them were from Pinelands and the same number were from Langa Township, while the remaining students lived in the greater Maitland/Kensington/Garden Village area. These 50 students were registered in grades 8-10 only. This was the beginning of the school's intended transformation. However, the majority of student at the school during this time were still white.

The shift that saw a majority of students at the school being those from previously disadvantaged groups happened after 1994, post-apartheid. In 2018, student demographics of Pinelands High School, under the leadership of Mr. Dave Campbell, was: 89 black, 86 white,

519 coloured,37 Indian and 229 classified as 'other'(a group who has not been correctly categorised as either Black, White, Indian or Coloured), totalling 973 students. According to one teacher at the school, these demographics are considered a fair representation of the Western Cape population. The school is a mixed school that accepts girls and boys. In 2018, the school had a total of 492 girls and 481 boys.

The school is situated on a land area estimated at 6 times or more the size of the land occupied by Langa High School. Interestingly, these were the conditions of Pinelands High School pre-1994 and to this day, the school still enjoys the same privileges. In South Africa, there are schools in the suburbs which display 'first-world' luxuries in terms of facilities and the general atmosphere, where parents are also able to contribute large sums of money to the school in order to maintain costly sporting and academic facilities and the general maintenance of the buildings. Pinelands High School is one of these schools.

Apart from the funding the school receives from the Department of Basic Education, based on the "quintile" system, the school is able to raise funding through fee contribution by the parents. Schools receive money from government according to Quintiles. Quintile 1 schools receive the highest allocation per learner, while Quintile 5 receives the lowest. Every year the Minister determines the national quintiles for public schools which must be used by the MECs to identify schools that may not charge school fees. MEC's must subsequently identify and publish a list of these schools in their provinces. Schools in each province are therefore classified into five groups from the most poor to the least poor. For example Quintile 1 is a group of schools in each province catering for the poorest 20% of schools. Quintile 2 caters for the next poorest 20% of schools, while Quintile 5 schools represent the least poor.

Pinelands High School is classified as a quintile 5 school, which means that the school receives the lowest allocation per learner per year and has to find ways to provide extra funding. As a result, Pinelands High School charges school fee of R2700 per learner, which suggests that only students who live beyond certain socioeconomic limits are able to attend this school. Furthermore, to sustain itself, i.e., do maintenance, meet security requirements and provide the additional facilities required, Pinelands High School receives funding from a big pool of School Funders, which is made of a long list of the school's alumni.

4.3.1 Pinelands High School feeder schools: Pre- and Post-1994

There are 3 primary schools in Pinelands, namely: Pinelands North Primary School, founded in 1948 (Red School), Pinehurst Primary School (Green School) and Pinelands Primary School (Blue School) and all these three primary schools in Pinelands are former 'white only' schools. All three primary schools in Pinelands are fee-paying schools and classified as quintile 5. Pre-1994, the majority of students in these primary schools were white and from Pinelands and neighbouring suburbs, while a few were from nearby townships like Langa. These were the primary feeders of Pinelands High School pre-1994.

Post-1994, the school admits students from over 70 residential areas in the greater Cape Town area and approximately 40% of the new intakes in grade 8 reside in Pinelands and Thornton, while the remaining 60% are students from other significant feeder areas, such as Athlone, Crawford, Goodwood, Kensington, Lansdowne, Langa, Maitland, and Rondebosch East (Hassiem, 2019). She further adds (Hassiem, 2019), that the school also has new intakes that come from as far as Khayelitsha, Mitchell's Plain, Strandfontein, Ottery/Retreat/Grassy Park. Over 30 primary schools in the broader Cape Town area supply learners into Grade 8 annually. As confirmed by Pinelands High School representative (2019), approximately 50% of annual intake is from Pinehurst Primary, Pinelands Primary, and Pinelands North Primary, in roughly equal numbers from each school.

According to the policy of the Department of Basic Education on feeder zones, schools are only obliged to admit students who are geographically located in close proximity of the school, and this has significantly defined the admission criteria at Pinelands High School. First preference is given to students from the three feeder schools, thus excluding, by default those students who are outside of Pinelands. During the Apartheid Era (Pre-1994), Pinelands High School only accepted students from the three primary schools in Pinelands; it was only in 1991 that the school first accepted students from the marginalised groups.

Pinelands High School: A view from the front entrance.

4.4 Facilities at Pinelands High School

The first thing that one experiences stepping onto the school campus is the atmosphere within the school grounds. There is a calming atmosphere and a feeling of serenity. This is because the school has a beautiful, spacious garden that has plentiful plants and flowers that brighten up a space that, despite the drought experienced in recent years in Cape Town and the Western Cape overall, is still verdant. Pinelands High School is situated on a spacious expanse of land, and enjoys a large area that has provided the school with the opportunity to have sports facilities and other much needed infrastructure, to enable teaching and learning and the facilitation of a number of sporting activities.

All classrooms at Pinelands High School have internet access and are fitted with data projectors. There are two computer laboratories, which are fully resourced and accessible to all

learners at all times during normal school hours. The school has specialist technology which includes: interactive whiteboards in one maths classroom, one Natural Science laboratory and one Life Sciences laboratory; tablet computers in all the maths and maths literacy classrooms; Autocad in the Engineering Graphics and Design classroom; Proscope in a Life Sciences laboratory; Digital microscopes and document cameras in all Life Sciences and Natural Sciences laboratories and three digital projectors in the Kent Hall. Kent Hall, named after the first principal of the school, can hold the entire school in one sitting, and is used for school assemblies, general meetings and drama productions, and it has excellent sound and lighting equipment.

Other facilities in the school include: (a) a computer centre, which is made up of two computer rooms, with over 25 computers in each; (b) multiple art venues, which include an art room, textile design and a ceramics room with a firing kiln; (c) a technology block, which consists of a fully-fitted workshop with drawing room and computer facilities for engineering graphics and design; (d) the music block, which houses a number of practice rooms, fully equipped for teaching musical instruments and theory, and (e) a science and biology block, consisting of a number of laboratories that allow the practical side of these subjects to be demonstrated.

Some of these laboratories underwent a complete makeover just over 15 years ago and were "attractive, modern and user-friendly spaces" (Pinelands High, 2018 – school website). In addition, there is (f) a consumer studies area, which has a fully-fitted kitchen with ample space for theory and practical work. From observation, it appears that consumer studies only caters for halaal-friendly food and excludes some of the needs of non-Muslim learners. These are some of the small things that suggest the difficulties in a diversified school.

The school can also boast of the (g) Thomson Hall – also named after one of the previous school principals – a spacious indoor sports facility that hosts basketball, cricket, netball, soccer and hockey, (h) outdoor facilities include the following: 4 hockey fields, 2 soccer fields, 3 cricket fields (2 with grass pitches), cricket nets, 5 tennis courts (2 also used for netball), 1 basketball court, a 25m swimming pool, 1 full-sized hockey field with Astroturf, 1 mini-Astroturf field – both of which were built in 2017 through the effort and help of parents of the school, using private donations and some funding from school fees; and (i) the school has a

well-equipped and resourced school shop that sells the official PHS uniform and sports clothing, as well as second-hand uniforms and textbooks and most stationery. This school shop provides considerable convenience for parents in sourcing school uniform and books. This is especially useful for parents who do not have the luxury of time.

Lastly, (j) the school has the beautiful and spacious Reeler Centre. The Reeler Centre, which was renovated and adequately resourced in 2015, is a hybrid of a school library and a space created for fostering a culture of learning. It is considered by the school to be vital, as it "plays an important role in enhancing information literacy among our pupils" (Pinelands High, 2018 website), and provides support to the teachers in identifying innovative ways of teaching, especially in the subjects that are not easily teachable and/or explainable, such as a study on DNA, this is as narrated by Van Zyl (2019)

The Reeler Centre is equipped with 15 internet-enabled computers and a library containing thousands of books. This enables pupils at Pinelands High School to conduct research as part of their curriculum requirements. The Reeler Centre not only serves as a library with a very large collection of a range of books, but also serves as a space where learners can engage with each other in a safe environment, during breaks and after school. It provides the opportunity for learner-to-learner support for learning through interactions. The Reeler Centre is seen as a space where interpersonal relationships amongst learners can be formed, this is noted by Van Zyl (2019). He further agrees with research studies that suggest the importance of a school facility such as a library and the impact is has on teaching and learning as a dimension of school climate. According to him, learners and teachers at Pinelands High School have easy access to information. Van Zyl (2019) makes an example of the cost of internet data in South Africa and how this is a barrier to access to information for many students in other, less well-resourced, institutions.

At The Reeler Centre, students have internet access that is funded by the school, enabling them to conduct research for tasks and assignments given by the teachers in class. The Reeler Centre is also resourced with wide variety of books which spans across almost the entire curriculum and the subjects offered at the school. It also has a very large collection of current affairs

publications, providing accurate, reliable, and current information about important topics in the country.

Van Zyl (2019) acknowledges the benefit of having such a facility, well-resourced with academic books, magazines, school curriculum books and materials, and many other resources that are extensively used by both teachers and learners in the school. The Reeler Centre provides support to teachers through access to information on best teaching techniques used by some of the world-class schools and this information is sourced by the school librarian.

“Teachers are streched and often they do not have the capacity to conduct research on best teaching practices their own, as they work long hours and have families to go to at the end of the day”, says Van Zyl (2019). A facility like the Reeler Centre provides much needed help to the teachers. An example of benefit to the teachers, as a result of having the Reeler Centre, is the research he (Van Zyl) conducted, using resources he has in Reeler Centre, on how best to teach learners complex topics such as tracking DNA profiles. He recounted a study that demonstrated, through a YouTube video, a good deal of information about DNA, which made it much easier for learners in science class to understand the concept (Van Zyl, 2019).

Learners at Pinelands High enjoy a quiet, extremely comfortable and safe space to be productive, where they are able to do school homework, assignments, research and reading in their own time. What was also observed was that there are groups of students who walk together to the Reeler Centre. This suggests that learners also perceive the Reeler Centre as a source of support for themselves as individuals, but also with their friends, in a group.

A facility like Reeler Centre provides learners with access to material that talks and /or teaches about diversity, that is, different cultures, religions, and beliefs. This is of specific importance for a school that has such varied groups of learners, coming from different backgrounds in terms of culture, socioeconomic standing, religion and beliefs.

Diversity in schools and how it is taught has an impact on interpersonal relationships in schools. The Reeler Centre librarian noted, that teachers are expected to teach this “complex” topic, thus making the Reeler Centre critical in undertaking such task. He therefore ensures that

teachers are best equipped with resources and innovative teaching ideas that would cater for the complexity and sensitivity of these issues without compromising the quality of teaching and of the learners' ability to learn.

It cannot be ignored that to have a world-class facility such as the Reeler Centre requires money. Van Zyl (2019) acknowledges that although Pinelands High School may not have the full funding required to continuously resource the center, they are still privileged as there are many schools in South Africa and the African continent without a library. Pinelands High enjoys a level of privilege that not many school communities in South Africa are exposed to. According to a study conducted by the NGO Equal Education, many schools in South Africa do not even have a library and often, even if there is one within the school facility, it is badly resourced (Equal Education, 2018).

On the level of broader social interaction, the school also has a coffee shop, which was donated by a parent at the school. The coffee shop is called 'Page Break' and is open to the public. This coffee shop provides access for the community to be able to visit the school and fosters further interest among the broader community, allowing them to learn more about Pinelands High and identifying how they can partner with the school. Research suggests that it is through the involvement of the whole community with an interest in schooling that a positive climate can be achieved (Thapa et al., 2013; Cohen, 2009; National School Climate Council, 2007). According to information collected from the school documents, the decision to provide the local community access to the school coffee shop was an idea born out of the desire to involve the community in the activities of the school.

In addition to the numerous facilities that the school has, it can also be observed that these facilities are well maintained. Pinelands High is litter-free, and rarely would one find litter on the school grounds. In fact, the school has rules to ensure that the school facilities are kept clean at all times. There is also sufficient evidence that these rules are consistently enforced and the consequences for non-adherence are applied. An example of this is the detention notification received by the parents of one of the grade 11 learners for the failure of the learner to participate during the scheduled cleaning of classrooms. At Pinelands High, although there

is a cleaning team hired by the school, the learners are expected to clean their classrooms. This is one way the school teaches learners about responsibilities.

Looking at physical safety, the school also has good security system. Pinelands High School employs three security guards who are responsible for ensuring that the promises are guarded 24 hours a day, with an eight hour shift for each. There are four main school entrances. Three of these entrances have electric gates, where entry is only through a security code, or access is granted by the security guard. The other one is also under the strict supervision of the security guard and senior learners at the school and only opens in the morning before school starts.

There are security gates all around the interior of the school as well, for example at reception, at the school shop, and guarding all the entrances that give access to the inside of the classrooms, reception, administration offices, staff rooms and other school facilities, such as library, music room, science laboratory, school hall, indoor basketball court. Furthermore, there are security cameras placed at prominent spots within the school premises. According to school records, there has not been any reported loss at the school of school property; this shows the benefits the school enjoys from the security it has.

These 'first-world' luxuries have, arguably, significantly influenced the performance of the school and academic achievements of students at Pinelands High School over time. It is to these resources, including the best teacher allocation, that the school's success since its inception can be attributed. As indicated in the well-kept records of the school, Pinelands High School has had a very good record in terms of matric results for many years. In fact, since it was formed, Pinelands High School has consistently achieved a pass rate of over 98% in matric. The school is considered one of the higher performing schools in Cape Town and the Western Cape, and has produced some of the leading people in academia, in sports, in politics as well as well-respected doctors, lawyers, psychologists, accountants, actuaries, nurses, teachers, police officers and many other professionals in the economy.

Some of the notable Pinelands High School alumni's are: Lesley-Ann Brandt – actress; Tim Harrell – a professional baseball pitcher who represented South Africa at the 2000 Summer

Olympics; Craig Matthews - South African cricket player; Jimmy Nevis – singer; Siv Ngesi - prominent comedian and actor; Austin Smith - captain of the South African men's hockey team at the 2012 Summer Olympics in London; Thami Tsolekile - South African cricket player; Tony Twine – Economist, Nandipha Mntambo – Artist.

These facilities at Pinelands High School not only promote teaching and learning at the school, they are also the enablers for the community of Pinelands High School to be involved in the activities of the school. In school climate research, this is defined as 'school connectedness' and 'engagement'. At Pinelands High School, parents/guardians and the community of Pinelands are engaged in the academic, civic and sporting activities of the school. During every term of the school calendar there is a parents/learner meeting to discuss learner progress and for parents/guardians to engage the teacher in formulating better strategies for academic improvements for their children. The school also has yearly events such as the science fair, which is usually held every second quarter of the year. This is an opportunity for science learners to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the subject and concepts by conducting scientific experiments, increasing their motivation and pride in their work.

This is another opportunity for teachers and parents to get involved in their children's school work and to appreciate what the pupils learn at school. For this event, the invitation is extended to members of the community at large, including scientists and academics, who contribute a great deal in this sphere. These scientists and academics also form part of the team of judges for scientific activities at the school. Through this important initiative, one learner produced a world-class innovation. This was Chase Newel, who produced The Design and Testing of an Ankle Induction Coil Cell Phone Charger, which was recognised in an award for 'Outstanding Engineering' and another, awarded by the national electricity provider, Eskom, for 'Eskom Energy Efficiency' as well as receiving a gold medal at the International Science Fair, held in Johannesburg in October 2017. In addition, he was nominated to represent South Africa at the Intel International Science Fair held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA, in May 2018.

Science Fair Event inside Kent Hall, the main hall at Pinelands High School.

There are also many sports tournaments and events hosted by the school, which the surrounding communities are encouraged to attend. In these events, high levels of attendance and support by the families of learners can be witnessed. At Pinelands High, learners are required to choose a summer and a winter sport for the year. And for each choice, the school requires the learner's selection to be signed off by a parent/guardian. This encourages learner participation in sport as well as parental support. To consistently support this drive, the school schedules sport practice weekly and arranges a home or away game event every week. This emphasis has yielded great results for learners at the school, with some of them being nominated to play sport at the provincial level or winning awards either from the school or the external bodies. For instance, eight female learners have been selected as part of the Western Cape provincial hockey team.

Another example of high achievements in sport is that of Matthew Vianello, a learner who took part in two Western Cape off-road regional races in the 250cc open bike class, and came in second. He was awarded a silver medal for this.

An engaged and connected schooling community has to have the propensity to achieve academically and to connect these achievements to the community. An example of such a connection between the school and the community at a cultural level was demonstrated in a music event on 9 March 2018, organised by the school and attended by over 800 people, including learners and educators at Pinelands High, their families and friends.

These are some of the many events and initiatives that the school has supported in order to promote and encourage an engaged and connected school community. In these events, members of the school community, including parents, students, teachers and community members at large, have a role to play. This role can include assistance in selling tickets, organising, promoting, and even performing at these events.

Pinelands High School Computer lab.

Pinelands High School library

Pinelands High School Astro pitch.

Pinelands High School Soccer fields:

4.5 Academic curriculum and performance at Pinelands High School

Pinelands High offers a broad academic and extramural programme. In the junior grades (grades 8 and 9), the academic curriculum includes English as the first language, and a home language, either Afrikaans or isiXhosa. The language issue is seen as slightly biased as it does not cater for the other cultural groups in South Africa. For instance, the home language for some students is Sesotho, but the only options for them to choose as home language are Afrikaans and isiXhosa. This is because, apart from those speaking English, the majority of people in Cape Town speak either isiXhosa or Afrikaans.

Other subjects offered at the school are Mathematics, Creative Arts (Art, Music and Drama), Economic Management Sciences, Life Orientation, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Technology. Furthermore, students in Grades 10 – 12 have the following as compulsory subjects: English Home Language, Afrikaans or isiXhosa as first additional Languages, Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy, and Life Orientation. In addition, learners have the opportunity to choose three electives from the following available subjects: Accounting, Computer Applications Technology, Consumer Studies, Design (Surface and Textiles),

Dramatic Arts, Engineering Graphics and Design, Geography, History, Information Technology, Life Sciences, Music, Physical Sciences, Tourism and Visual Arts, and Information Technology.

Pinelands High School has had a very good record in terms of matric results for many years. In fact, since it was established, Pinelands High School has consistently achieved a pass rate of over 97% in matric, see table 4-1 below. Furthermore, in a period of 20 years, the school has not experienced a dropout rate of more than 2.5%. As a result, Pinelands High School is considered one of the high performing schools in Cape Town, Western Cape, see table 4-1 below.

Table 4-1: School Performance: Pinelands High School matric results 1997-2018

Exam	Centre Name	ExamDate	Entered	Wrote	Passed	Pass Rate
Senior Certificate	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	199711	166	165	163	98.8
Senior Certificate	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	199811	170	169	161	95.3
Senior Certificate	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	199911	183	180	179	99.4
Senior Certificate	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	200011	175	173	170	98.3
Senior Certificate	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	200111	177	176	176	100.0
Senior Certificate	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	200211	218	213	212	99.5
Senior Certificate	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	200311	206	206	206	100.0
Senior Certificate	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	200411	185	185	183	98.9
Senior Certificate	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	200511	183	183	182	99.5
Senior Certificate	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	200611	177	175	173	98.9
Senior Certificate	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	200711	187	185	180	97.3
NSC	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	200811	174	174	174	100.0
NSC	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	200911	186	185	185	100.0
NSC	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	201011	180	178	178	100.0
NSC	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	201111	182	180	178	98.9
NSC	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	201211	182	182	181	99.5
NSC	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	201311	182	181	181	100.0
NSC	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	201411	180	180	180	100.0
NSC	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	201511	188	186	185	99.5
NSC	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	201611	179	179	179	100.0
NSC	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	201711	189	188	185	98.4
NSC	PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL	201811	189	188	188	100.0

Source: Western Cape Department of Education_07/06/2019

Apart from boasting about being a high performing school and reflecting on the great academic achievement of the pupils in the school, Pinelands High prides itself of being able to attract the best calibre of teachers/educators (Masureik, Grade 11 Science Fair speech, May 03, 2018), specifically, in maths, science and technology (Hassiem, 2018). Hassiem goes on to explain how the school is able to achieve this enviable record, stating that the school has a programme

that is run in partnership with the Anglo American Company as the sponsor. This provides a context in which they have the opportunity to provide scholarships to deserving students in mathematics, science and technology in order for them to move on to do a degree in education.

These scholars, while they are still busy with their degrees, are offered internships as teachers at the school to gain experience and stand an opportunity to be employed at the school should there be a vacancy. As part of the contract, the school enjoys first preference for the selection of these teacher-students for employment opportunities. One of the school teachers who came up through this programme and now teaches at the school is Mrs Pampalis, a grade 12 mathematics teacher.

In total, the school has 75 full-time and 15 part-time teachers and a number of administrative and support workers. Looking at the history of education, particularly in relation to the provision of education and the allocation of resources during the colonial and apartheid periods, Pinelands High School, like many schools of its kind (whites-only schools), enjoyed preferential treatment over other schools. As stated in chapter 1 of this paper, based on the criteria for the allocation of resources, Pinelands High School was allocated teachers chosen from amongst the best in the field at the time, in terms of academic qualifications and experience, and the teacher/student ratio was much better than those of schools in the black communities. To this day, the school has retained and continuously acquires teachers of a high calibre.

5 CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS ON SCHOOL CLIMATE OF PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of students' perception of school climate at Pinelands High School. The study surveyed 239 students out of the 250 potential sample from Pinelands High School, representing 95.6% success in attracting participants. The descriptive results are presented in Table 7-1 below. The summary shows students' gender and grades.

Table 5-1: Summary Statistics for Pinelands High School

Attribute	Category	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	123	51%
	Female	114	48%
	Unknown	2	1%
Grade	10	81	34%
	11	98	41%
	12	48	20%
	Unknown	12	5%

As is demonstrated in Table 5-1, 123 of the total of research population in Pinelands High School were females, representing 51%; 114 were males, representing 48%; and there are 2 students who opted to not indicate their gender, representing 1%. In the Grade section, there are 81 in Grade 10, representing 34%; 98 in Grade 11, representing 41%; 48 in Grade 12, representing 20%. There is a total of 12 students who have not indicated which grade they fall under, with a representation of 5%. The following sub-sections presents the results of school climate at Pineland High School. In these sub-sections, the greater portion refers to quantitative data, which is also supported or disputed by the qualitative data from focus group sessions.

5.2 School safety

This section reports the results of the survey conducted at Pinelands High School dealing with 'safety and security' as one of the measures of school climate. The study considers all three elements of safety in the Climate Inventory: rules and norms, physical security, and social-emotional security. The student perceptions on each of these safety elements, as well as the overall perception of safety at the school, is measured. The results indicate that the general perception of safety at Pinelands High School is neutral at a median score of 3.50. This score is an aggregate score of the safety elements.

Regarding the elements of safety, it can be observed that some are perceived by students as positive, and others are negative, while others are neutral. The student perceptions of **rules and norms** around the maintenance of safety is significantly higher at a rating of 3.80. Students' general feeling of **social and emotional safety** is the lowest of all the categories of safety, as indicated by a median score of 2.50, while the feeling of **physical safety** is neutral, reflected in the score of 3.50. The differing scores on the elements of safety are influenced by varying students' ratings; this is depicted in table 5-2 below.

Table 5-2: Summary of respondents' perception on Safety at Pineland High School

Safety	**Median**	**Percentage score (%)**		
		Negative	Neutral	Positive
Rules and norms	3.80	4	27	69
Physical security	3.50	9	57	34
Social-emotional security	2.50	47	44	9

As can be observed in table 5-2 above, the positive score on rules and norms is influenced by a rating of 69% of respondents who have rated it neutral; 27% who have rated it positive; while only 4% of them rated it negatively. Most students (79%) say that Pinelands High School has clear rules against hurting other people (for example, hitting, pushing, tripping, etc.). They also say that adults at school are fair about making sure that all students follow the rules against physical and verbal harassment (55%). Furthermore, there is a strong belief amongst the students (76%) that adults in the school will stop students if they see them physically hurting each other (for example, pushing, slapping, beating each other up, etc.).

Pinelands High School is a school with very clear rules against insults, teasing, harassment, and other verbal abuse; this is what the majority of students (74%) indicated as their experience. The students (61%) also believe that adults in the school would stop students if they saw them insulting, teasing, harassing, or otherwise verbally abusing other students.

Figure 5-1 below.

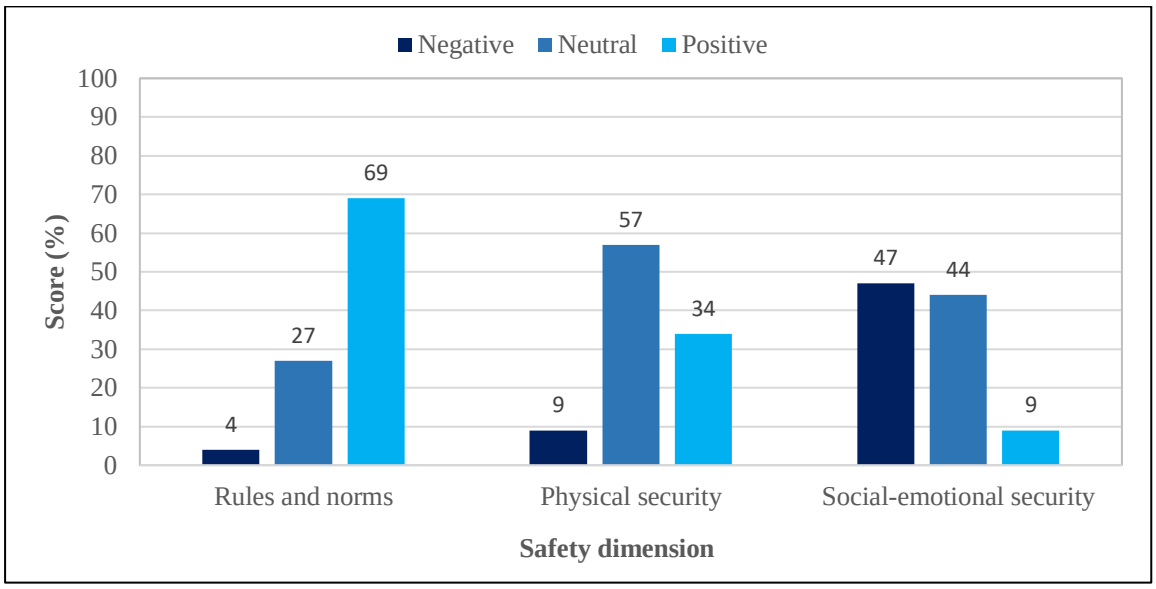


Figure 5-1: Depiction of perception on Safety at Pineland High School

While rules and norms around maintenance of safety at Pinelands High School are perceived in a positive light, student perceptions of physical safety is not viewed in the same light. As indicated in the results in table 5-2, only 9% of the respondents raise concerns around physical security, 57% show no real concern, with 34% showing no concerns at all when it comes to physical safety.

It is interesting that, while the majority of the students (75%) say they feel physically safe in all areas of the school building (for example, classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, restrooms, etc.) and 54% of them also saying that they feel physically safe in the area outside the school (for example, the school yard, on the bus, walking to and from school, etc.), there are some concerns raised. Noticeably, a number of students (20%) say that they have been physically hurt at school more than once by other students (for example, pushed, slapped, beaten up, etc.). In addition

to this, a significant number of students (69%) say that at Pinelands High School, they have witnessed students who have been physically hurt at school more than once by other students (for example, pushed, slapped, beaten up, etc.).

Although physical safety is a concern at Pinelands High School, it is not raised as the top issue when it comes to safety. Social and emotional safety is the one critical safety concern that requires immediate attention. The low feeling on **social-emotional safety** as indicated by a 2.50 score (see table 5-2) is predominantly influenced by a significant number (47%) of the respondents who have rated it negatively, while a small number (9%) of them rated it positively, and the rest, also represented by a large number (44%), gave it a neutral rating. This makes the overall perception of social-emotional safety at Pinelands High School negative, with bullying being a major issue of concern at the school.

According to the results, the majority of students (57%) confirm having been insulted, teased, harassed or otherwise verbally abused more than once in the school, while 71% of them also say they have seen other students being insulted, teased, harassed and verbally abused more than once in the school. Also, only a small number (24%) of students believe that students will stop other students from insulting or making fun of others. “Generally, students will stand and watch or take videos, while their fellow students are being insulted”, a grade 11 student elaborated.

Furthermore, a high number of students (61%) believe that there are groups of students in the school who exclude others and make them feel bad for not being part of their group. In fact, 100% of the students who participated in the focus group session agree that there are groups in the school whose aim is to cause emotional harm to other students. However, while the majority students raise concerns around being insulted, teased, harassed or verbally abused, only 19% of them believe that students at Pinelands High School make fun of other students.

5.3 Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning is considered the most important dimension of school climate. It is most effective in an environment perceived to be safe by all the teachers, students and the support staff. The elements of teaching and learning evaluated in the study are the support for academic learning and social and civic learning. At Pinelands High School, the results for support for learning indicate that 16% of the students rated it negatively, 36% rated it positively, and 48% rated it as neutral, resulting in a median score of 3.25. On the social and civic learning element, 10% of the respondents scored it negative, 37% positively, and the remaining 53% were neutral, culminating in a 3.40 median score (see *Table 5-3*).

Although the overall rating on teaching and learning is neutral, apart from a dominant neutral rating, the positive ratings are bigger than the negative ratings. This can be seen in table 5-3 below.

Table 5-3: Summary of respondents' perception on Teaching and Learning at Pinelands High School

Teaching and Learning	**Median**	**Percentage score (%)**		
		Negative	Neutral	Positive
Support for Learning	3.25	16	48	36
Social and Civic Learning	3.40	10	53	37

Looking at support for learning as the first element, the general feeling amongst the students is that they do not get the desired level of support from adults in the school. A large number of students (73%) do not agree that their teachers help them figure out how to learn best, while 50% of them also feel that teachers do not give them useful feedback on their work. Other students (54%) also feel that teachers do not acknowledge them when they do a good job; as a result, only 44% of students say they feel comfortable to let the teachers know when they are confused about something in class. It is also found that a small number of students (38%) say that teachers at Pinelands High School encourage them to try out their own ideas.

Furthermore, only 44% percentage of students say they feel comfortable letting their teachers know when they are confused about a specific topic/subject in class. A number of students (34%) also say not many teachers in the school help them figure out how to learn best. Additionally, the general feeling amongst the students is that teachers do not show them how to learn from mistakes; neither do teachers give useful feedback on their school work. In fact, only 46% of the students feel that they get valuable feedback on their performance from teachers.

However, there are a large number (61%) of students who believe that teachers in the school challenge students to do more than they think they can, while only 16% disagree with this statement.

Still looking at teaching and learning dimension, it is noticeable that support for learning (academically), is not the only element the students are raising concerns about. Students at Pinelands High School also do not believe that the school promotes social and civil learning. The general feeling (69%) is that very few adults in the school teach students how to express emotions in a proper way. Other students (67%) also say the school does not teach ways to resolve disagreements in a manner such that everyone can be satisfied with the results or with how to best handle difficult situations, or the importance of understanding their own feelings and the feelings of others.

However, the majority of students (63%) believe that the school does allow discussions about the way students actions will affect others; they also say that at Pinelands High School, there are facilitated discussions about issues that help students think about what is right or wrong. Furthermore, over 80% of students believe that the school promotes students' participation in activities that help other communities (for example, canned food drive, cleaning and recycling program, etc.)

Figure 5-2 shows the ratings of the different elements of the Teaching and Learning dimension.

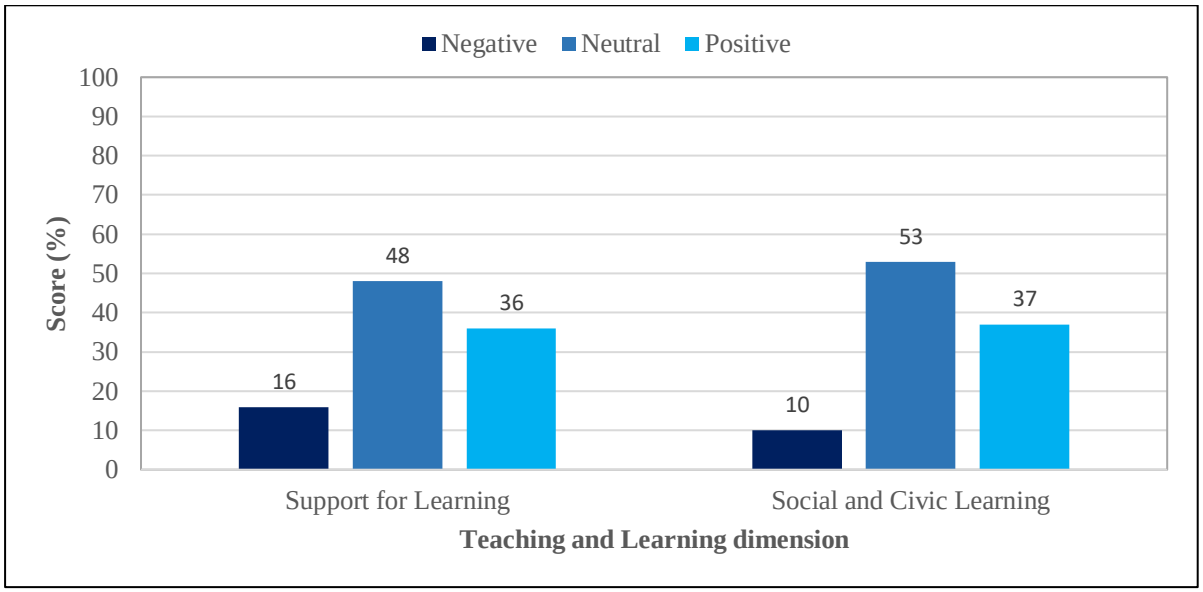


Figure 5-2: Depiction of perception on Teaching and Learning at Pineland High School

5.4 Interpersonal relationships

Interpersonal relationship as a dimension of school climate has three elements: respect for diversity, social support from adults, and social support from students. With these elements, the study found that the social support from students is the element perceived most positively by the students of Pineland High School. The overall rating on social support for students was rated 71% positive, 3% negative, and 26% neutral, resulting in a median score of 3.80 (see *Table 5-4*).

Students in this school believe that they receive good social support from their peers. They (76%) say that most students have friends at school whom they can turn to if they have questions about homework and can trust and talk to when they have problems. Furthermore, over 70% of them also say they have friends at school to eat lunch with and, most importantly, they (71%) also believe that students at their school try to make new students feel welcome in the school. Overall, there seem to be positive relationships amongst the students; this is despite the concerns they (58%) raise around the fact that not all students work well with each other even if they are not in the same group of friends.

Table 5-4: Summary of respondents' perception on Interpersonal Relationships at Pinelands High School

Interpersonal Relationships	**Median**	**Percentage score (%)**		
		Negative	Neutral	Positive
Respect for Diversity	3.67	4	44	53
Social Support_ Adults	3.43	6	49	45
Social Support_Students	3.80	3	26	71

Respect for diversity also had an aggregate positive score of 3.67 after scoring 4%, 44%, and 53% for negative, neutral, and positive, respectively. With this element, students (61%) at Pinelands High School believe that adults in their school respect each other's differences and differences in the students (for example, gender, race, culture, disability, sexual orientation, learning differences, etc.). Furthermore, students (70%) say Pinelands High School welcomes and accepts people from diverse backgrounds and that they (76%) like working with someone who is different than them (for example, another gender, race, culture, disability, sexual orientation, learning differences, etc.).

While the above feedback seems quite positive, there are concerning items. A majority of students (67%) do not believe that students at Pinelands High School respect each other's differences (for example, gender, race, culture, disability, sexual orientation, learning differences, etc.); they also highlight that some students (56%) also do not respect differences in adults (for example, gender, race, culture, disability, sexual orientation, learning differences, etc.).

While social support for students presents some areas of concern, it is seen as less critical than social support for adults is. The results of show that social support_adults has an overall median score of 3.43, which is the lowest value among the three elements of the interpersonal relationship dimension at Pineland High School. However, looking at the table 5-4, it can be observed that only 6% of students rated social support_adults negatively, while 45% of them rated it positively, with another significant number (49%) rating it neutral.

A closer look at the detailed data, it is found that a greater number of students (59%) agree that adults in Pinelands High School are a good example of the values the school teaches, seem to work well with one another, and help one another. Furthermore, 74% of students agree that teachers at Pinelands High School have high expectation for student's success. Additionally, students (69%) also say that students at the school have someone – an adult – they trust and can talk to if and when they need to talk, and some (36%) said they are comfortable that adults in the school listen to what they have to say.

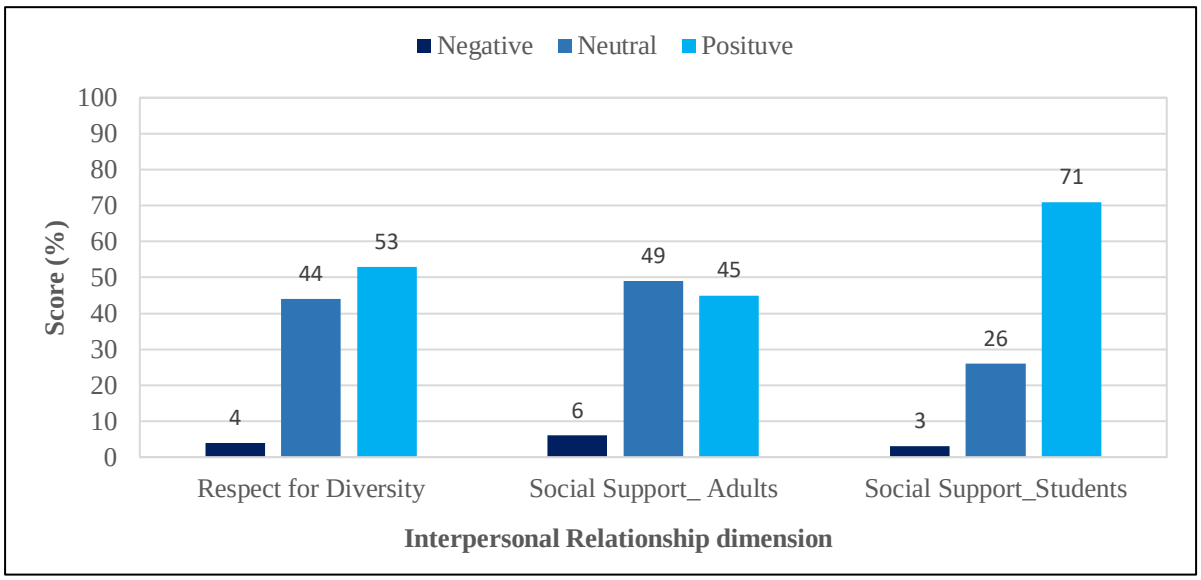


Figure 5-3: Depiction of perception on Interpersonal Relationships at Pineland High School

5.5 Institutional environment

This dimension of school climate has two elements: school connectedness and engagement and physical surroundings. The perception of Pinelands High School students on school connectedness and physical layout is positive, rated at a score of 3.57 and 4.00, respectively. The element of Physical surroundings is the highest among all those measured for Pinelands High School. This higher rating is based on a 2% negative rating, and a 73% positive, while 25% students maintain a neutral stance.

Physical surroundings is not the only element of institutional environment that is seen in a positive light. School connectedness and engagement, as the second element of institutional

environment, is also seen in a positive light by the students of Pinelands High School. The median score for school connectedness and engagement is 3.57, resulting from a 5%, 38%, and 57% ratings of negative, neutral, and positive, respectively (see *Table 5-5*).

Table 5-5: Summary of respondents' perception on Institutional Environment at Pinelands High School

Institutional Environment	**Median**	**Percentage response (%)**		
		Negative	Neutral	Positive
School connectedness engagement	3.57	5	38	57
Physical surroundings	4.00	2	25	73

With physical surroundings, over 80% of the respondents at Pinelands High School agree that their school looks good (for example, enough space, nicely decorated with student art) and the buildings are clean and are also kept in good condition. Furthermore students of Pinelands High School agrees that the school has great academic and sporting facilities. The students agree that the school has up-to-date and functional computers and other electronic devices available to students. The students also agree that the school has enough supplies, such as books, paper and other stationery in the school and enough space and facilities for extracurricular activities.

When it comes to school connectedness, Pinelands High School students (86%) agree that the school tries to get students join after school activities, while 38% of them also say the school tries to get all families to be part of the school events. With this, most students (62%) indicate that their family and parents are comfortable talking to their teachers and 67% said that their parents feel welcomed at the school. Additionally, students (45%) say they feel that they belong and are part of the school, 48% of them also say they feel good about what they do at the school and that the school tries to let their families know about what is going on in school. At Pinelands High School, very few students raise concerns with regard to school connectedness and engagement (see Figure 5-4), as an element of school climate.

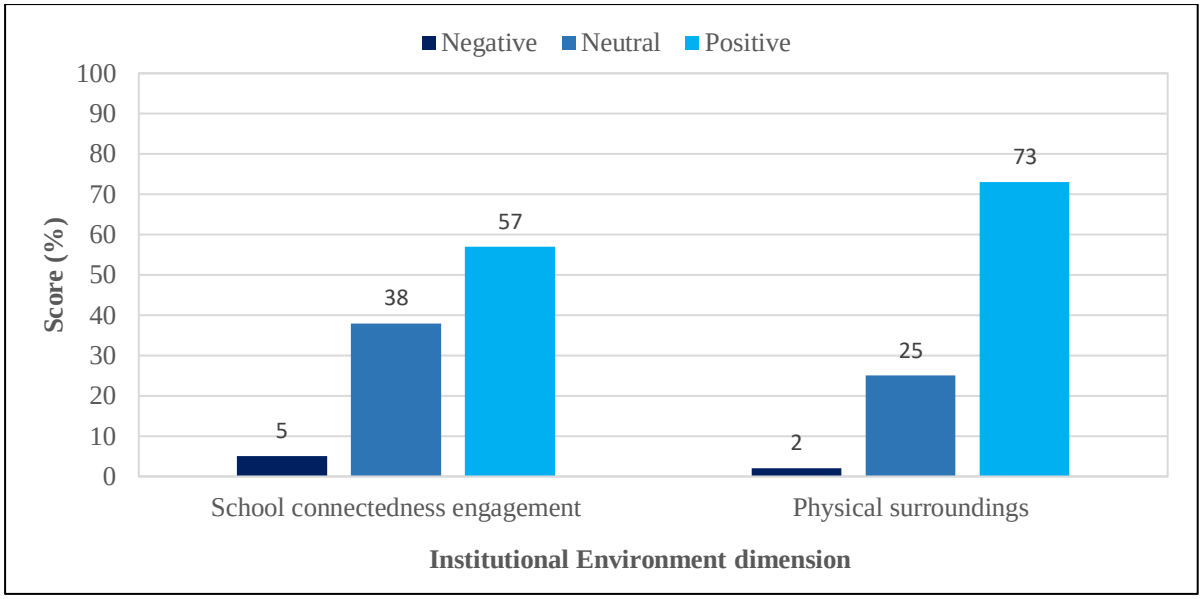


Figure 5-4: Depiction of perception on Institutional Environment at Pineland High School

5.6 Social media

The results from Pineland High School pertaining to social media indicates a 3.17 median score. This is based on the responses from students revealing 13% negative, 63% neutral, and 24% positive perceptions on social media. As in can be observed in table 5-6 below, the majority of students have opted to not share their views on this dimension which has influenced the score in a significant way (see *Table 5-6*).

Table 5-6: Summary of respondents' perception on Social Media at Pinelands High School

Social Media	**Median**	**Percentage response (%)**		
		Negative	Neutral	Positive
Social media	3.17	13	63	24

However, this did not obscure some of the concerning items raised by the students. For instance, only 20% of the students agree that many students in the school will try to stop other students from threatening or harassing others using social media, while a similar number (21%) also agree with a statement that suggests that that majority of students in the school do not share inappropriate information (including personal information) on social media. Furthermore, another small percentage the students (35%) at Pinelands High School also say

that students in the school use social media in ways that support one another (e.g., emotionally, academically, etc.).

Despite this, the general feeling amongst the students (56%) is that they can use social media without being harassed by another student and as only 13% of them say that they have been threatened or harassed on social media more than once by a student in this school. Figure 5-5 below is a visual representation of the results on social media.

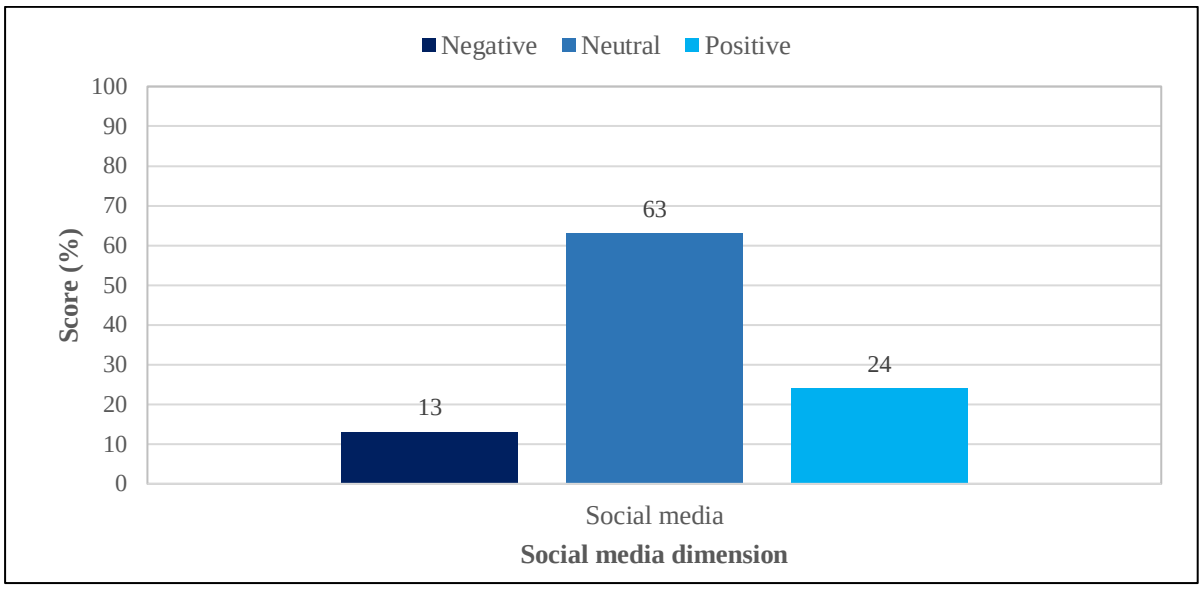


Figure 5-5: Depiction of perception on Social Media at Pineland High School

5.7 Additional qualitative data from focus group session

As indicated in chapter 3 of this study, following the completion and analysis of the survey data, I conducted focus group sessions with a group of students from the two schools. These sessions were scheduled in order to get more clarity and insights on the findings of the quantitative results. As a results, only relevant sections of the school climate elements that presented a concern for a specific school were addressed. This section is the presentation of insights gathered from focus group sessions and will be presented in less formal structure than that of the quantitative presentation of data. In this section, I will provide a summary of the questions asked using dimensions of school climate as themes and then present the results.

5.7.1 Safety – Social and emotional safety

The question with this element was intended to ascertain the severity of bullying at the school and the impact it has on the students who have witnessed or experienced it. There is an agreement amongst students that bullying is a serious issue at Pinelands High School. A grade 12 female students note "*Ma'am, bullying happens all the time at the school, bullies in this school do not even hide themselves, they do it in the open*". Furthermore, the general feeling is that the perpetrators are mostly Coloured males in the ninth grade, who have established themselves as a gang within the school grounds.

Students at Pinelands High School classify this gang as dangerous and bold. "*The grade 9 students are dangerous and are not even scared or respect the grade 12's*", a grade 11 students states. To emphasis this, another grade 11 adds by saying "*In our time as grade 8's, we used to stay in our court and would never move to the grade 12 court, but these grade 9 move around the whole school like they own it".* According to all students who attended the focus group sessions, there is a great feeling that the teachers know about this gang but are not doing anything about it.

To follow on this discussion, I asked a question around quantitative results on rules and norms with regards to maintenance of safety in school, which shows a positive perception, yet students say teachers are aware of bullying and not addressing it. A grade 12 student responds by explaining "*Although the school has clear rules around student conduct at school, these rules are not consistently applied and adherence to the rules is also not consistently enforced. If rules were consistently enforced, we would see a reduction of bullying cases*". A grade 12 student also adds "*I don't think teachers are aware or understand the severity of bullying in school".*

Not many student agrees with the statement. According to a grade 12 student, *"It is obvious that the school knows about bullying, but choses to ignore or not deal with. This is because the school cares more about its image and wants to be seen as a school without any of the challenges other schools are dealing with".* To support this claim, a grade 11 students recounted a few incidents that occurred in the school. She provides an example of cases where issues were reported to the teachers and principal and nothing was done about them, as

highlighted "*A boy in the school was being bullied persistently even after the issue was reported to the school and no action was taken. In this case, the father of the boy that was bullied ended up taking matters in his hand by beating up the bully within the school grounds*;", the grade 11 student adds. Another example, as narrated by a grade 10 student "*I also know of a grade 8 who was consistently bullied by a grade 10 until his sister, who is also a student at the school, and her sister's friends, who are all in grade 12 at the school, decided to confront the bully"*.

As recounted by the students, this confrontation spiralled in to three massive physical fights which were followed by a number of suspensions at the school. These are only two of the many incidences of bullying that the students have witnessed.

When asked how these issues of bullying impact them, A grade 11 male student responded "*Pinelands High School used to be a safe school, but not anymore*". A grade 11 female student also added "*I really feel sorry for how the grade 8s are experiencing high school, especially this year (2018)*".

5.7.2 Social media

While bullying is a serious concern at the school, students at Pinelands High School seem to not worry much about cyberbullying. "*A lot of us social with only close friends, especially on social media, for instance, I only chat to my friends via WhatsApp messages and block people I do not want to talk to, this is the same for Instagram, Facebook and Twitter"* a grade 12 student explains. According to students Pinelands High School, a majority of students at the school only have their close friends as friends on social media. In this way, they prevent the unwelcomed comments and abusive behaviour via social media. As a result, Pinelands High School students do not see social media bullying as a critical issues.

5.7.3 Interpersonal Relationships: Respect for diversity, Social support_Adults and Social support_Students

Social support_students is rated positive by students at Pinelands High School In a focus group session, students confirm that they have supportive (socially and academically) relationships with their fellow students. What also has become evident in the discussion is that students tend to be friends with students of the same race, irrespective of gender. To elaborate further, a grade 10 students recounted "*I am black and all my close friends are black females and males and are the only peeps I hang with, but I am friendly with everyone at school*". Another student, a grade 11 also explains "*It is just easy to hang with people who are like you and are able to get your jokes easily".* Another student adds "*Language is also an issue. If you are friends with people from a different race, you almost have to speak English language all the time*".

Apart from issues of bullying by an isolated group of students, students in the school seem to relate well to one another. This can't be said the same with regards to social support_adults. While the quantitative results as presented above suggest little to no concern when it comes social support_adults, the qualitative results suggests otherwise. According to students, social support by teachers in the school is dependent on race. Students of colour believe that white students enjoy much more support than the students of colour. Additionally, Black and Coloured students claim to be treated different to their white fellow pupils.

A grade 10 student explains "*I have had a bad experience with a white female teacher. When I raise my concerns about certain behaviour in class or how she treats me in compared to my white peers, she told me that I am being disrespectful, yet when the same point is raised by a white student, they are told that they are within their right to speak up*" As a result, one grade 11 student, who agrees to the statement say "*I have resorted to not speaking up in fear of victimisation*". In such cases, as highlighted by grade 12 coloured male "*The teachers and the principal always protect the teachers and take their sides without listening to both sides of the story*".

It seems that race plays a major part in how student relate and trust teachers of different race, while this is not seen in how students relate to their fellow students.

5.7.4 Teaching and Learning

A majority of students at Pinelands High School believe that their teachers do support them academically a lot more than they do socially. To explain this, students talk about all the interventions put in place to ensure that students succeed academically. A grade 11 students explains "*We have maths hot seats which are one on one extra maths lessons and this has worked very well for me*". Another student also highlighted benefit of Reeler Centre "*We also have reading sessions in the Reeler Centre for students who like reading or need to improve their reading ability", I used to go to Reeler Centre when I started here in grade 8 and those sessions helped me a lot*". Another student adds to this by saying "*I like the fact that we also have access to computers either in Reeler Centre or the computer lab for research purposes, this helps especially when I don't have data on my phone".*

Students of Pinelands High School say that the school drives the academic part of the school curriculum more than it focus on the social part. While the view is positive when it comes to support for academic learning, most students do not believe that the school allows freedom of expression, which they see as part of the social and civic learning. Students say that teachers are not able to authentically address social issues, which learning can be derived from. A grade 11 student makes an example of how history classes are conducted. According to this student, "Teachers are scared to touch and address issues of apartheid and the impact of it in the current political climate". Another student note, "*Transformation and addressing social issues requires authenticity and openness in discussions and debates. Avoiding issues makes one a suspect of not supporting transformation*". Additionally, "*Teachers are not willing to hear us out, sometimes when "we", the students speak, we are told that we are disrespectful, yet we are also taught to openly engage on all topics related to school*", adds a grade 12 student. In closing, one students alludes "*Multi-racial schools are not ready yet for transformation, there is just pretence, but reality in schools is different. Social teaching is not real or open*"

5.7.5 Institutional Environment: Physical surrounding and school connectedness and engagement

The students at Pinelands High School acknowledges that they are in a much better environment and has better facilities in comparison to many schools located in townships and rural areas. When asked what they think their school, one student responded "*Our school is beautiful and clean, just a little overcrowded, but I guess it is big enough to accommodate us all. And I think we have the best facilities in comparison to schools in the townships*". Another student, who travels from Langa Township adds "*If you've seen schools in the township, you will appreciate what we have here*". There is a general feeling that the facilities in the school creates opportunities for student to connect with fellow students and participate in the activities of the school.

Although the general feeling is positive with regards to school facilities, including sporting facilities, there are a few students who have raised concerns. A grade 12 female student explains "*I feel the school pays more attention to certain sports that it does with others. For instance, hockey is favoured over netball. If you see the AstroTurf and compare it to the netball court, you will understand what I mean*".

5.8 Summary on Pinelands High School

Overall, Pinelands High School enjoys a positive school climate, as reflected by a median score of 3.57. Some elements are perceived in a positive light, with a significantly higher score than others. There are concerns pertaining to other elements, and the need for intervention. Safety, social and emotional, is one of the concerning elements of school climate at Pinelands High School, with the majority of cases resulting from bullying. With cyberbullying, there is no major concern but there are elements which require attention.

The second dimension of school climate is interpersonal relationships, mainly, social support from adults. Students at Pinelands High School do not believe that their teachers are supportive, in the social context. They indicate that they receive much more support from their fellow students, significantly higher than the support received from their teachers. Therefore, with regard to all sub-elements of interpersonal relationship, the third dimension, only social support

from adults seem to be of concern for the students. Support for teaching and learning is also not seen in a positive light by the students at Pinelands High School. Students at Pinelands High School do not believe that they receive the required level of support for learning, a similar view to what can be observed with regard to social support from adults.

The one dimension that is rated outright positive with very little concerns is 'Institutional Environment'. With this dimension, both elements, that is, the school connectedness/engagement and physical surroundings, are perceived in a positive light.

6 CHAPTER SIX: LANGA HIGH SCHOOL: A CASE DESCRIPTION

6.1 Introduction

This section provides details of the background of the school, based on its history, physical location, and identity, teacher/student profile and any significant changes post 1994. This chapter also reports on the general impression of the school; the school building; facilities for academic learning and extramural activities; and the overall performance of the school, as well as the students' academic achievements over time.

6.2 Background of Langa

As Kasana (2018) recalls, Langa Township was established following the forced removal of black people from Ndabeni location, near Maitland, in the late 1920s. Ndabeni, which was purposely established to permanently host black people after they were forcefully removed from Cape Town docklands and from District Six. Langa was, during the early stages, the only official "native's location" in Cape Town (Musenwa, 1993). However, due to what Musenwa refers to as "the hasty establishment of the location" by the Government of Cape Town at the time, the living conditions in Ndabeni deteriorated as a result of, amongst other things, poor sanitary conditions and overcrowding (Musenwa, 1993 p. 19).

The removals of black people from Ndabeni were also designed to make way for and provide space for the establishment of the Garden City, or Pinelands, as it is currently known (Musenwa, 1993). The forced removals of black people in Ndabeni as well as the establishment of Langa Township in 1927 coincided with the establishment of Pinelands.

Like many townships in Cape Town, Langa was designated for black people and is regarded as one of the oldest townships in Cape Town, where there was the largest concentration of an African working-class community (Musenwa, 1993; Saunders, 1978; Mohamed, 1989). The establishment of Langa was carefully debated and planned by the Cape Town Municipality and the ruling Government at the time and the two parties agreed that Langa would be established

under the Urban Areas Act of 1923. According to the Urban Natives Areas Act of 1923, all the Africans *had to* be confined to "locations", which were closely monitored in terms of entry and exit.

Under the Urban Areas Act, Langa was to be managed by the Superintendent, who had jurisdiction to exercise some level of control over the residents. In order to control the township, Langa was governed under very strict rules and regulations. Some of the regulations were (Musenwa, 1993 p.25):

1. The prohibition at any time of trading.
2. Reporting of visitors and stating the objective of the visit to the Superintendent.
3. Entrance into and exit out of the township was to be only through gateways provided for that purpose.
4. No residence was allowed to host any non-resident African without permission of the Superintendent.
5. Gathering, public meetings or entertainment of any kind was not permitted unless a written permission was granted by the Superintendent.
6. No dance, public meeting, Sunday tea or special gathering was to be held or continued on Sunday or any other day after 10pm, except on Saturday where the extension was until 11pm.

Residents of Langa were not happy with these rules, and for a very long time they protested against them. Some battles were won and some were not. In December 1948, it was agreed by the authorities to relax the regulation that made it compulsory for all visitors to Langa to report to the Superintendent before seeing their friends or relatives.

Langa, which was designed to only accommodate a maximum of 5 000 people, was built in phases. In the initial stages, there were only about 233 residents, made up of 231 males and only 2 females (Musenwa, 1993). The community grew substantially from mid-1928. By December 1928 the community had increased by over 400%, sitting at over 950 people. By 1970, the population of Langa was 31,073, far exceeding the 5,000 population mark it was designed for (Musenwa, 1993). Langa, like Ndabeni, was overcrowded, and this put a strain on the Government in terms of the provision of housing. Langa today (2019), still carries the burdens of this past. Post-1994, although there have been slight improvements in Langa, the

condition of living for most people is poor. Langa is characterised by overcrowding, lack of basic services, poverty, illiteracy and unemployment. There are still a large number of areas that still do not have basic services, such as proper sanitation, electricity and clean running water. Many people still live in informal structures.

In terms of accommodation, the initial housing structures were untidy and there were no paved roads and no electricity supply. The provision of housing in Langa was based on the views expressed in the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, which suggests that the majority of Africans, mostly male, were ‘temporary sojourners’ in the city and had no intentions to stay in the city for long (Musenwa, 1993). This is what informed the formation of the barrack system, which made up the core housing in Langa (Musenwa, 1993; Kasana, 2018) recounted. For married couples, there was provision for housing to accommodate a family structure. These families were provided with a two or three roomed house.

People from Langa Township worked at the Cape Town docks, on building sites, in railway stations, and at municipal and domestic work. There were, however, a very few professionals, such as teachers, court interpreters, clerks, ministers of religion as well as a few African female nurses. For most people in the township, their aspirations were limited to these professions. The 'unofficial' and 'non-elite' cultures described here will refer to the prevailing culture of many individuals in the township and this was very different from the 'cultures' of the ruling class.

Between 1927 and 1948, there were about 20 churches in the community; however, very few of these churches had their own buildings. The first four churches in Langa Township had their own building and, apart from hosting church services, they were also used as the only school classrooms in Langa. The first schools in Langa, although they were ultimately taken over by the Bantu Education Department in the 1950s, were built by the churches (Musenwa 1993; Bongo, 2018). This symbolises the critical role played by churches in the history and social structures of Langa. Education was highly valued in Langa; however, during this period, only primary schools were set up in the area (Musenwa, 1993; Bongo, 2018). It was only from 1937 that the authorities gave permission for secondary classes to be provided. This came as a result

of a group of clergy and parents relentlessly approaching the authorities on this matter (Musenwa, 1993; Bongo, 2018).

Section of Langa Township: Images take by Thulani Nxumalo, 2019.

Section of Langa Township: Images take by Thulani Nxumalo, 2019.

Section of Langa Township: Images take by Thulani Nxumalo, 2019.

6.3 History of the school: Langa High School

Langa High School was established in 1937. As noted by Mohamed, this was after 10 years of battle by the people of Langa to obtain permission for secondary education in their township (Mohamed, 1989). In 1936, an interdenominational committee, comprised of Reverends of churches in Langa, a local businessman, Superintendent of Langa and Chairman of the Native Advisory Board, was established to address the issue of the lack of secondary schooling in Langa (Mohamed, 1989). Narrated Bongo (2019) and Kasana (2018), both ex-teachers of Langa High School, churches in the community played a critical role in the education of black people in Langa Township. As a result, the first classes of Langa High School where held at Langa Methodist Church in January 1937, with Mr Qunta as the principal, Mr Siwahla as the teacher assistant, and a handful of students in standard 7 (Mohamed, 1989).

Two years later, in July 1939, Mr Mkhize, who held a BA degree from London, became the principal of Langa High School, while Mr Qunta, the then-principal, left to complete his teacher's degree at the University of Fort Hare. As narrated by Mohamed, the appointment of Mr Mkhize came after the Cape Department of Education insisted that the school must be run

by a qualified teacher (Mohamed, 1989). In 1940, the school had about 51 students taking secondary classes. During this period, the school only classes from standard 7 until pre-JCs. It was only in 1941 when the Junior Certificate, also known as JC, was introduced at Langa High School.

The JC classes where held at Presbyterian and AME Churches in Langa, because the school had not erected classrooms to accommodate students in JC (Mohamed, 1989). Mohamed further note that JC classes were not free and this became one of the hurdles that students who wanted to complete JC had to go through. Through the help of Mr Mkhize, 6 students were awarded bursaries; these were Alfred Klaas, Ezekial Ndudumo Nel, Rosie Nkosi, Templeton Dweba Qalinge, Koloti Robert Makitle and Clifford Scott, the first students in JC at Langa High School, in 1942 (Mohamed, 1989).

The school building for Langa High School, situated in Washington Street, was officially opened in March 1943 and comprised of one building comprised of 4 classrooms, a school library, a science room, a domestic science room, the principal's office, a staff room, a store room and a block of toilets for girls and boys (Mohamed, 1989). These classrooms were built to accommodate a maximum of 35 students in a classroom. Years later, the school's teacher/student ratio started becoming a challenge as the school had more students, while the recruitment of teachers wasn't a focus. Furthermore, the school also had a challenge with a number of teachers resigning, as a result of challenges of lack of accommodation for them in Langa (Mohamed, 1989).

Interestingly, despite the challenges with regards to the school not having enough teachers for the number of students that were enrolled at the time, it is recorded that Langa High School was doing very well. In 1948, 56% of students in Senior Certificate passed their examination while over 90% of students in Junior Certificate also passed (Mohamed, 1989). These great results, and also the fact that Langa population was growing at an alarming rate (Musenwa, 1993), saw an increase in the number of students enrolled at the school.

In 1949 the school had 287 registered students and in 1950, a year later, the school had 367, a growth of over 28% in just one year, while the number of teachers was not growing. In this period, as noted in (Mohamed, 1989), the school's facilities could only accommodate a maximum of 250 students. This overcrowding and disproportion in teacher/student ratio was the beginning of a number of challenges experienced at the school.

Narrated by Mr. Bongo (2019) and Mr. Kasana (2019), both ex-teacher at Langa High School, Mr Mkhize was later succeeded by Mr Qunta, who came back to the school after completing his teacher's degree. Mr Qunta remained the principal of the school until 1970 and was succeeded by Mr. Malangabe, who retired in 1986. On Mr Malangabe's departure, the Department of Education appointed Mr Kwebulane as the Acting Principal from 1987; he too retired and was succeeded by Mr Murugan, who was appointed the principal of Langa High School in 1996 until he went on retirement in the middle of 2015. In July 2015, Ms Ndlovu became the acting principal until December 2016 and in January 2017, Mr. Magugu was appointed the Acting Principal of the school and is this in this position (as at end 2019). Due to time constraints, the information around the ex-principals couldn't be confirmed with the Western Cape Department of Education.

Langa High School is situated on land estimated to be a quarter of the size of the land Pinelands High School occupies. There is a small patch of grass, one or two trees and very little landscape of flowers. The entrance to the school yard is relatively small in comparison to that of Pinelands High School. If it were to be compared to a school like Pinelands High School, one would argue that the physical layout of the school is not as appealing; however, in comparison to similar schools in the townships, Langa High School is not an exception. The layout of the school is that of a normal school situated in a disadvantaged community. This is not surprising.

Confirmed by School Secretary (2018); Langa High School has 600 registered learners: 88 students in Grade 8, split into 3 classes, 110 students in Grade 9, also split into 3 classes, 140 student in Grade 10, split into 6 classes, 123 students in Grade 11, split into 4 classes and lastly, 79 students in Grade 12, split into 3 classes. Over the years, there have been drastic changes in the number of registered learners at the school. For example, the number of registered learners in 2017 was 698 and just above 800 in 2016 (School Secretary, 2018). There has been a

significant decline (25%) in the number of learners at Langa High School. This decline, as explained by Magugu (2018), was because of the consistent poor performance in matric by the school. Most parents moved their children to better-performing high schools in Langa, e.g., Ysilimela High School or other high schools in the neighbouring communities, e.g., Pinelands High School.

The school has approximately 25 full-time teachers, 5 Heads of Department (two appointed and paid by the department of Education and 3 appointed and paid by the School Governing Body) and 1 School Secretary (Magugu, 2018).

6.3.1 Langa High School feeder schools: Pre and Post 1994

Students at Langa High School are mostly recruited from primary schools in Langa (25%), primary schools from the neighbouring townships (50%) and primary schools from rural Eastern Cape Province (25%) (Kasana, 2018; Magugu, 2018; Bongo 2019), a province about 1200km from the Western Cape, and a predominantly rural setting. What is important to note is that even the students from primary schools in Langa and other primary schools from the neighbouring townships, originally come from the Eastern Cape (Kasana, 2018; Nxumalo, 2019). According to Kasana (2018) and Magugu (2018), about 95% of students at Langa High School are originally from rural Eastern Cape and most started their elementary school there. These students have either moved with their families (mother and father, mother alone or grandparents) in search of better urban life and better schooling environment.

What do we know about schools in rural Eastern Cape?

Generally, the infrastructure of most schools in the Eastern Cape is not in great condition. The majority of schools there operate without proper school buildings, proper toilet and necessary school facilities like libraries, science laboratories and computer rooms (Equal Education, n.d). Department of Basic Education's National Education Infrastructure System report 2011, cited in Equal Education (n.d) states that thousands of schools in SA lack infrastructure necessary to provide learners with quality education, and schools in Eastern Cape and Kwazulu Natal are

the worst. There are about 400 schools in the Eastern Cape that are classified as "mud-schools" (Department of Basic Education's National Education Infrastructure System report 2011, cited in Equal Education, n.d.).

In schools in rural Eastern Cape, classes are primarily conducted in isiXhosa, which often is the only language spoken at the school; as a result, most children from these schools do not speak English. It is interesting to see the views and perceptions of these students on school climate in their current school (Langa High School), especially with regard to physical environment and facilities for teaching and learning. With this knowledge, it is befitting to argue that any school environment that is better than that of schools in rural Eastern Cape can be seen as a positive environment. Most students at Langa High School come to this school for a "better" school environment. This context partly explains their view on school climate (See chapter 7 of this study).

What do we know of family structures of students of Langa High School?

Firstly, we know that the majority of students at Langa High School migrated from the rural Eastern Cape to Cape Town, Western Cape, in search for a better life and schooling environment. These families also migrated as migrant labourers. These are mostly families that live below the poverty line. In most instances, these students moved with either the one parent – the mother, or with the grandmother or by themselves, leaving their whole family behind, to come live in the township with extended family members. The majority of these students are from poor families with both parents not working.

These students also come from families where the father is not available, leaving the care of the children to a single parent, the mother, who is either not employed or works in the informal sector. Other children in this school come from child-headed families as a results of death of both parents or in cases where parents had to stay behind in the Eastern Cape to look after smaller siblings. This is an important context to appreciate because to understand the type of a child at Langa High School, it is important to understand the environment within which they started their schooling career.

Langa High School: A view from the front gate

6.4 Facilities at Langa High School

The first thing one notices from outside the school yard is the relatively small-sized building of the school in comparison to that of Pinelands High School. One also notices visibly broken windows and inadequate security by the school gate and inside the school premises. There are three gates that give access to the premises of Langa High School. Two of these are functional and the third only functions intermittently. There is one big remote-controlled gate for cars that are entering the school premises, and one pedestrian gate for learners, teachers and visitors who are on foot. These two functioning gates are guarded by a member of the community, performing the role of a security guard. This is because the school does not have funds to employ a well-trained and skilled security officer. In addition to not having a qualified and fully equipped security officer at all entrances, the school does not have a security officer in and around the school premises.

Furthermore, the school does not have any fitted security cameras for extra security. As a result of all these limitations, there have been a number of reported break-ins and physical violence at the school, and this has had an influenced on the perception of physical safety at the school. Interestingly, this all happens despite the fact that the school is situated less than a kilometre from Langa Police Station.

There are fewer classes in Langa High School than there are in Pinelands High. In fact, there are 21 classrooms which accommodate a minimum of 32 learners and a maximum of 48. This total number of classes includes the new block that was built in 1991 by the Department of Education. The reason for the extension of the school was to enable Langa High School to accommodate more leaners from Langa and neighbouring communities. Somewhere between the early and mid-1960s, the school was not big enough to accommodate all students. In fact, this overflow also resulted in the establishment of Fezeka Secondary School in Langa in 1966. What happened was that when Langa High School was not able to accommodate all learners, the principal and one of the founders of Langa High decided to establish Fezeka (Bongo, 2018).

The school has a staff room, five Head of Department offices, and an administration space that accommodates the principal, deputy principal and the administration staff. Langa High School does not have critical facilities such as science laboratories, computer room, a fully resourced library and a fully resourced, fully equipped music room and functioning kitchen for practical learning. There is a room with a label at the door designating it as the 'Science Laboratory'. This room, however, is a normal classroom and is used as such. There is not a single piece of scientific experimental equipment in this laboratory. This science laboratory has remained without any equipment for over 20 years. Narrated by Kasana (2018), most of the science equipment that the school had was destroyed by the police and military forces during the apartheid era. Because of lack of funding, the school has not been able to purchase replacements for the necessary equipment.

In a conversation with Magugu (2019), to close the gap with regard to science laboratories, the school uses a mobile laboratory provided by iThemba Labs for scientific experiments. This mobile science laboratory is owned by a parastatal company, and the access to it is funded by

the Department of Basic Education. In addition, the school has a partnership with University of Stellenbosch. Additionally, the university's science faculty visits the school towards the end of every quarter to facilitate and monitor scientific experiments by the science students, adds Mr. Kasana.

It should be noted that, while the school and these supporting entities do their best to close the gap in teaching and learning, the learners of Langa High often go for weeks without scientific experiments. Similar to the case of the science laboratory, the school has a room with a sign on another door saying "library"; this too, is merely a room. All the book shelves in this room are empty. Nxumalo (2018), who was part of the school governing body until 2018, during his tenure, the library has never been used for its intended purpose; instead, it was used as a place to hold meetings for the governing body and sometimes, the library would be rented out to the community for community imbizo (meetings). Kasana (2018) confirms this claim and adds "the library has remained unutilized since it was built in 1991".

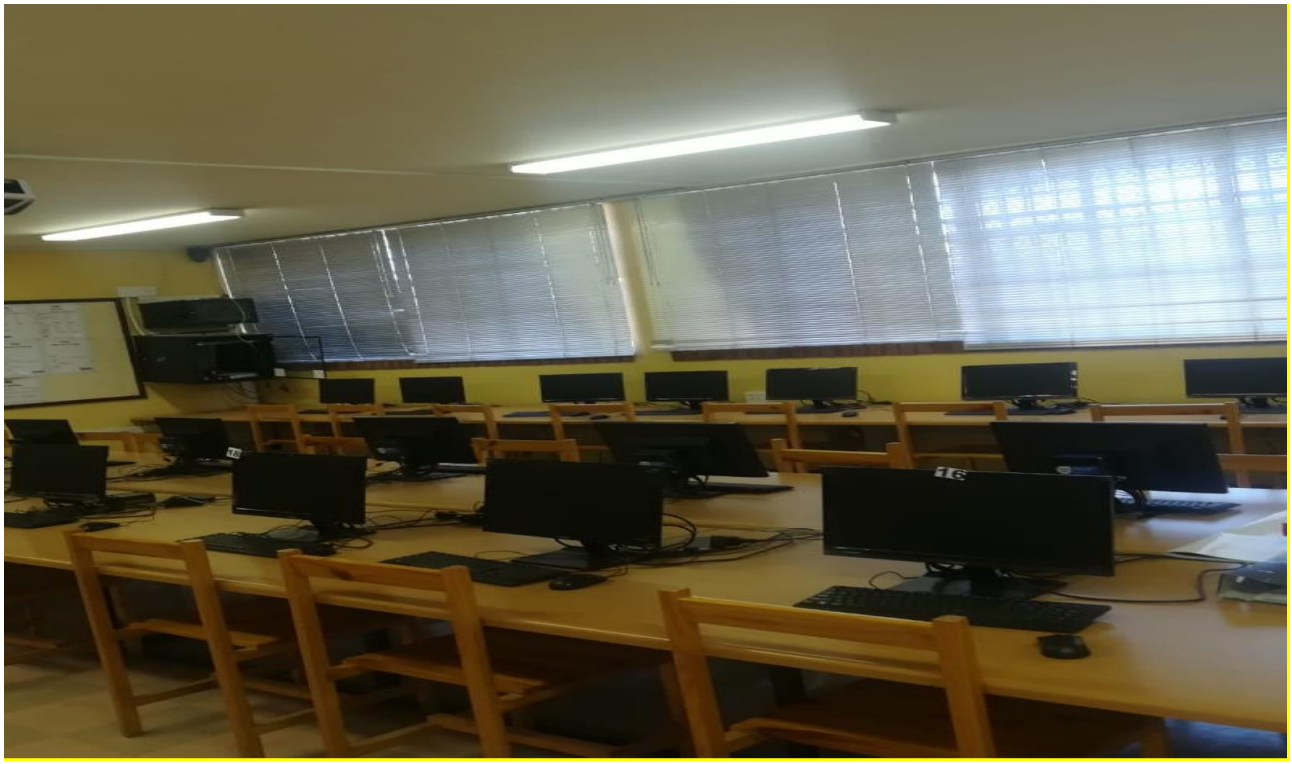
With regard to the issues of the library, there is an initiative funded by Collaboration School Funders, to source relevant material for this school library. According to Magugu (2018) the relevant material will include curriculum and non-curriculum books, magazines, newspapers and other materials that are current and relevant for learners and for the teachers. During the conduct of this investigation and until the research was concluded in December 2018, Langa High School library remained without any material. "The only way this challenge can be addressed in a sustainable manner is if Langa community and the surrounding communities, with the support from the department of education, work together to improve the condition of the library. The school's leadership is clearly incapable of addressing this issue" said Mr. Nxumalo (personal conversation, April 22, 2018). "Without a funding injection and activism from the part of the community, the school will remain without a school library", he added.

Langa High School Library

The school also has a new hall that was built in October 2017. According to information on News24 website, Langa High opened the doors to the new school hall on 11 October 2017. The hall was donated to the school by Garden Cities Archway Foundation, which worked closely with Collaboration School Funders. The total cost for the hall is estimated at R6.2 million, of which the Western Cape Education Department contributed R2.7 million and the Archway Foundation R3.2 million. The balance of the money was funded by the school through its other main sponsors. The hall is seldom used for school events. This is because the school does not actively organize school events. The hall is also available for use by residents in the area, at a small fee.

Langa High School Hall

Langa High has two computer rooms, one fitted with 20 computers but with no access to Wi-Fi while the other room is without computers. The one functioning computer room is only available for use by learners during basic computer classes. In addition, there are about 10 computers in a small room allocated to teachers as a workroom; this is, however, with no internet or Wi-Fi connection. The workroom is used by teachers to prepare for classes and to source material for teaching. Teachers use this working room between classes to prepare for the next class and in the afternoon, should they need to prepare for the next day's classes.



Langa High School Computer room

According the Langa High School profile, the school offers some sporting activities including Athletics, Soccer, Netball and Handball to Basket Ball, rugby, cricket and golf. In 2018, this seems unlikely to be entirely true. Although the school profile suggests that these sporting disciplines are offered by the school, there is no empirical data to confirm this. There is no evidence to suggest that there have been any sporting activities that have taken place in the recent period, especially for sports like Rugby, cricket and golf. Langa High School does not have fields to support this. However, according to Mohamed (1989), pre-1994, "one of the most significant activities at Langa High School was sport such as rugby, cricket, soccer and netball". She further noted that, "it was the rugby team, though, which was the pride and joy of the school. Mohamed also noted that the school did very well in debating.

For other sports such as netball, the school encourages students to participate, despite a lack of proper facilities. A netball court, which is alternatively used for basketball (Magugu, 2018), is located between sections of the building. This is due to the limited space within the school yard.

Langa High School Netball and Basketball court:

The segregation that dominated South African cities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries affected sports, at the community and school level. By 1905, segregation in schools in Cape Town was complete and this affected the playing of sport. Molapo (1994) noted, "The creation of Langa in 1923 reinforced that social separation of the races and meant that Langa residents had to get their own sporting facilities, as 'Natives' " (p. 42), this affected the schools as well. Langa High School still carries the burden of the limited facilities that were created/provided to black schools under the Apartheid Regime.

According to Nxumalo (2018), the school did not offer any sporting activities during this time. This is due to reasons such as sport fields not being in good condition for use, and learners not having proper sporting attire for the relevant sporting activities. Despite many attempts to source sponsors in order to motivate learners to get involved and be active at school, learners were not interested in partaking.

There is no big focus on sport at Langa High and this is the result of a lack of resources to take up sport. Nxumalo (2018) added that sport was not a priority for the school and learners at the

time he was part of the school governing body. He referenced Maslow's hierarchy of needs to explain his view. According to him, though sport, in the context of Langa High School, would be good, there are more pressing challenges, such as lack of well-resourced Library. Nxumalo (2018) recalls a period where the sports field for soccer was completely inaccessible because a private company had used it as a dumping site, assuming that the fields were not needed or used by the school. This encroachment was another issue the school had to deal with: getting the company concerned to remove the dump and to restore the field back to the condition it was in earlier, with hopes that the school could start participating in soccer.

Langa High School used to pride itself in sport. Sport was highly regarded at the school; this was also to ensure that the students at the school receive a balanced education, despite lack of proper sporting facilities due to limited funding from Apartheid government. Despite these constraints, the school has produced great sportsmen and woman, the likes of Mr. Nika Khumalo, a boxing champion and Mr. Thabo Mgomeni, a professional soccer player. Both these gentlemen completed their matric at Langa High School in a period between 1980 and 1990, respectively.

Langa High School soccer field

Nonetheless, even with limited or no resources to support sporting activities at Langa High School, the school managed to produce good sportsmen and women who played at the highest levels, playing for the City, the Province and the Country.

6.5 Academic curriculum and performance at Langa High School

Langa High School offers a broad academic and extramural programme; however, due to resource and facilities constraints, the school does not offer the extensive academic and extramural programmes like those offered at Pinelands High School. In the junior grades (Grade 8 and 9) the academic curriculum includes IsiXhosa as the first language and English second language. There is also a language bias, as the school caters for only the isiXhosa speaking cultural groups in South Africa. However, as explained by the principal, although he acknowledges this as an issue, there has not been much impact arising from this situation, as all students at the school currently are fluent in isiXhosa and use it as a home language.

Other subjects offered at the school are Mathematics, Mathematics Literacy, Economics, Life Orientation, Natural Sciences, Computer Application Technology, Accounting, Consumer Studies, Geography, History, Information Technology, Life Sciences and Physical Sciences. In addition, the school offers Music, Drama and Dance and Public Speaking.

It is obvious to see the vast differences between subjects offered at Langa High and Pinelands High School. For the most part, this is because Langa High School does not have proper facilities to be able to provide subjects such as Computer Applications Technology, Design (Surface and Textiles), Dramatic Arts, Engineering Graphics and Design.

Langa High School's performance has been inconsistent, showing positive results for a short period of time, 2-3 years, while for the majority of the time the school's performance has been poor. As it can be observed in Table 6-1 below, in a period of 20 years, the school performed above 50% in only 7 years. Furthermore, also noted in table 6.1 below, the average dropout rate in Langa High School is just over 10%, with some years showing a dropout rate of 5% (2003) while in other years (2009), the dropout rate was as high as 22%. See below table 6-1.

Table 6-1: School Performance: Langa High School matric results 1997-2018

Exam	Centre Name	ExamDate	Entered	Wrote	Passed	Pass Rate
Senior Certificate	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	199711	271	248	42	16.9
Senior Certificate	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	199811	352	330	66	20.0
Senior Certificate	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	199911	249	224	46	20.5
Senior Certificate	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	200011	202	180	51	28.3
Senior Certificate	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	200111	137	114	48	42.1
Senior Certificate	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	200211	160	138	89	64.5
Senior Certificate	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	200311	142	134	116	86.6
Senior Certificate	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	200411	212	199	140	70.4
Senior Certificate	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	200511	196	181	84	46.4
Senior Certificate	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	200611	207	184	116	63.0
Senior Certificate	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	200711	163	151	103	68.2
NSC	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	200811	271	241	44	18.3
NSC	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	200911	259	200	72	36.0
NSC	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	201011	118	109	61	56.0
NSC	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	201111	134	124	68	54.8
NSC	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	201211	116	111	70	63.1
NSC	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	201311	97	88	51	58.0
NSC	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	201411	136	134	59	44.0
NSC	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	201511	151	129	54	41.9
NSC	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	201611	156	137	47	34.3
NSC	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	201711	158	145	72	49.7
NSC	LANGA HIGH SCHOOL	201811	79	64	50	78.1

Source: Western Cape Department of Education_07/06/2019

In looking at the data, one will notice a significant improvement in the results in 2017 and 2018, compared to 2016 results. The percentage pass rate improved by at least 15% in 2017 and 28% in 2018. There is another issue revealed in these results, especially for 2018. The 2018 School Performance Report of Langa High showed the school had 79 registered matric students at the beginning of the year; however, the school performance report only reflects 64 students who wrote the exams. This means that there are 15 students (19%) who did not write the matric exams. Spaull (2013) and Jansen (2018 – personal conversation) also raise this as a concern and as a misrepresentation of the results. Nonetheless, there has been a significant improvement in the school performance over the last two years and both the school and the Langa community can celebrate these success stories.

7 CHAPTER SEVEN: FINDINGS ON SCHOOL CLIMATE OF LANGA HIGH SCHOOL

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of students' perception of school climate at the Langa High School. The potential student respondents for this study were 250 students. However, only 181 students responded to the survey, representing a 72.4% completion rate. The respondents' percentage at Langa High School is significantly lower in comparison to that of Pinelands High School. One reason for this discrepancy is the lack of resources at Langa High School. As indicated in the preceding chapter, Langa High School's lack of Wi-Fi/internet in their computer laboratories and the inability to host over 50 students in one sitting became a hindrance for students wanting to complete the school climate online survey at the school and within the allocated timeframes. As a result, other alternative venues, such as the University of Stellenbosch computer laboratory and Old Mutual learning facilities, had to be used.

Even with these alternative arrangements for students to complete the online survey, most students were not able to join in as transport to these venues was only arranged from Langa High School. Most students who live outside of Langa were not able to travel to the school on Saturdays due to unavailability of funding for transportation to the school. These challenges were unique to Langa High School and did not present themselves during the facilitation of the survey at Pinelands High School. Nonetheless, 72.4% is sizable enough to provide insights on the problem statement investigated.

The descriptive results are presented in Table 7-1. The summary shows students' gender and grades.

Table 7-1: Summary Statistics for Langa High School

Attribute	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	69	38%
	Female	110	61%
	Unknown	2	1%

Grade	09	12	7%
	10	48	27%
	11	41	23%
	12	60	33%
	Unknown	20	11%

Out of the total of the research population in Langa High School, 110 were females, representing 61%, 69 were males, representing 38% and there are 2 students who opted to not indicate their gender, representing 1%. In the Grade section, 12 were found in Grade 9, representing 7%, 48 in Grade 10, representing 27%, 41 in Grade 11, representing 23%, and 60 in Grade 12, representing 33%. There is a total of 20 students who did not indicate which grade they fall under, with a representation of 11%.

The next section details the results of Langa High School and are split into the different dimensions of school climate, starting with safety.

7.2 School safety

This section reports on the students' perception of 'safety and security', at Langa High School, as one of the measures of school climate. The study considered all the three elements of safety and provides students' perception on each, and the overall perception on safety at the school.

The results indicate that the general perception of safety at Langa High School is neutral at a median score of 3.33. Looking at all the categories of safety, it can be observed that some elements are perceived by students as positive, some negative, and others simply neutral on the dimension.

Table 7-2: Summary of respondents' perception on Safety at Langa High School

Safety	**Median**	**Percentage score (%)**		
		Negative	Neutral	Positive
Rules and norms	3.60	8	36	56
Physical security	3.25	13	57	23
Social-emotional security	3.33	6	71	23

From table 7-2 above, it can be observed that the students' perception of **rules and norms** around the maintenance of safety has a higher mean score of 3.60 compared to the physical and social-emotional security elements. As depicted in the table above, the positive rating on rules and norms has been influenced by a 56% respondents rating it positive, 36% rating it neutral and only 8% perceiving it in a negative light. From the results, it can be observed that students (68%) at Langa High School (80% and above) believe that the school has clear rules against hurting other people (for example, hitting, pushing, tripping, etc.), while 54% of them also believe school has clear rules against insults, teasing, harassment, and other verbal abuse.

Furthermore, over 60% of students of Langa High School believe that adults in the school are fair about making sure that all students follow the rules against physical and verbal harassment and that these adults will stop students if they see them physically hurting each other (for example, pushing, slapping, beating each other up, etc.) or insulting, teasing, harassing, or otherwise verbally abusing other students.

While a positive trend with regards to rules and norms around maintenance of safety at Langa High School can be observed, social and emotional security is not viewed in a positive light and is rated neutral at a 3.33 score. The neutral mean score on social-emotional safety is a reflection of the 6% negative rating, 23% of positive rating, and the 71% neutral rating provided by the respondents.

Interestingly, while only 29% of students at Langa High School say they have been insulted, teased, harassed or otherwise verbally abused more than once in my school, over 60% of them say they have seen other students insulted, teased, or otherwise verbally abused more than once by other students in their school. Furthermore, over half the number of students (54%) say that

there are groups of students in the school who exclude others and make them feel bad for not being a part of the group. However, Langa High School students (57%) believe that students at the school will try to stop students from insulting or making fun of others if they witness it happening, they also say that most students in the school try to treat other students the way they'd want to be treated.

Students' general feeling of physical security is the lowest of all the categories of safety; this is indicated by a median score of 3.25 and a neutral rating. This neutral rating on physical security is influenced by 57% respondents rating this element as neutral, whereas only 13% of them rated it negatively, and 23% rated it positively. The perception of physical safety at Langa High is also concerning. Although over 71% of students at Langa High School say that they feel physically safe in all areas of the school building (for example, classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, restrooms, etc.) only 48% of them say they feel physically safe in the area outside the school (for example, schoolyard, on the bus, walking to and from school, etc.).

Furthermore, students (71%) of Langa High School say that they have witnessed other students who have been physically hurt at school more than once by their peers in the school (for example, pushed, slapped, beaten up, etc.). However, although students show real concerns around physical safety as the school, only a small percentage of them (25%) say they have been physically hurt at school more than once by other students (for example, pushed, slapped, beaten up, etc.).

The detailed rating of the elements of the safety dimension is demonstrated in Figure 7-1.

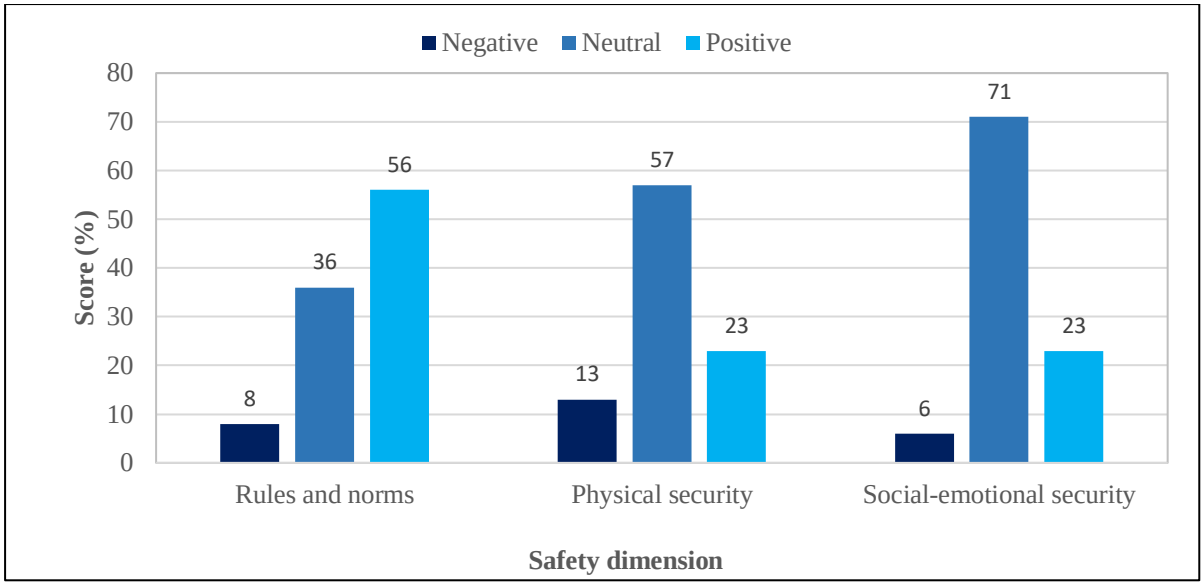


Figure 7-1: Depiction of perception on Safety at Langa High School

7.3 Teaching and learning

This section reports on a segment of a survey conducted at Pinelands High School dealing with 'teaching and learning' as one of the measures of school climate. The study looks at the two elements of teaching and learning and provides students' perception on each as well as the overall perception of it at the school.

The results indicate that the general perception of teaching and learning at Langa High School is positive at a mean score of 3.80. As indicated in Table 7-3 below, the students' perception of support for learning at their school is positive at a score of 4.00. This is the highest mean score, which suggests students receive and recognise the support from teachers, fellow students, and other staff. Social and civil learning in and outside the school is also perceived as positive at a score 3.60, which is, equally, high compared to elements from other dimensions of school climate.

Table 7-3: Summary of respondents' perception on Teaching and Learning at Langa High School

Teaching and Learning	Median	Percentage score (%)		
		Negative	Neutral	Positive
Support for Learning	4.00	3	16	84
Social and Civic Learning	3.60	6	38	56

At Langa High School, the majority of students believe that they receive good educational support from teachers in their school. For instance, 141 respondents, representing 78%, are of the opinion that their teachers encourage them to "try out my own ideas", 165 of them, equivalent to 91% of the total respondents say that their teachers let them know when they do a good job. Further details of the ratings of the elements are presented in figure 7-2. In addition, 133, representing 73% of these students, say they feel comfortable letting their teachers know if they ever feel confused about something in class, 81% of them also indicated that teachers at Langa High School give them a chance to show what they know and can do in many different ways (for example, papers, presentations, projects, tests, etc.), while 75% of them also say teachers challenge them to do more than they think they can.

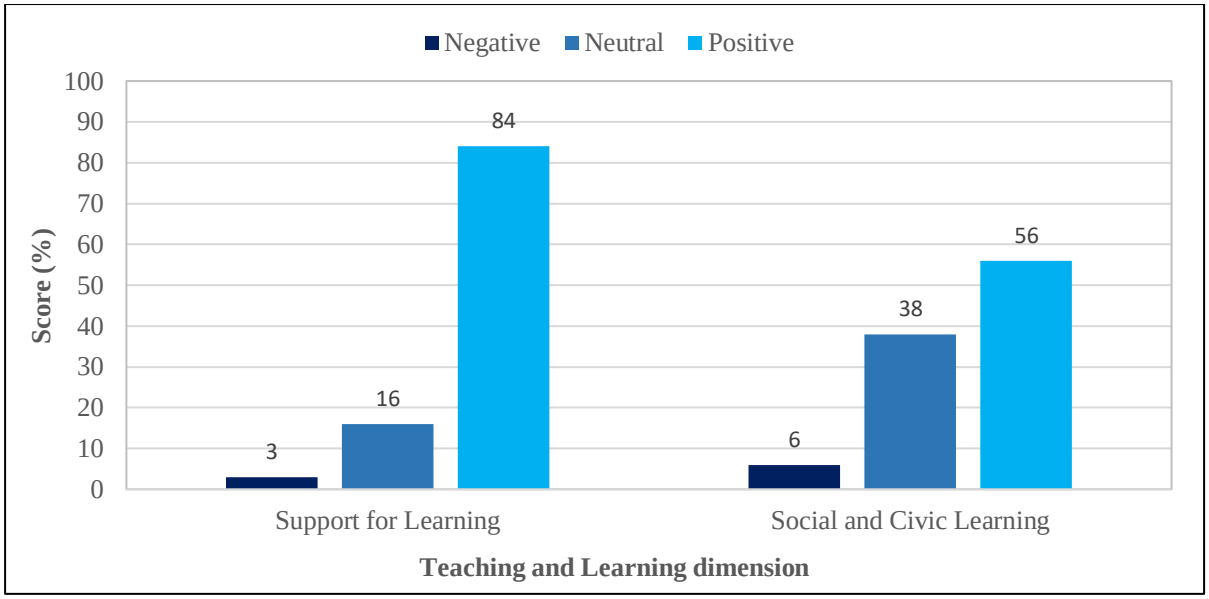


Figure 7-2: Depiction of perception on Teaching and Learning at Langa High School

Furthermore, 76% students agree that their teachers give them useful feedback on their work, and also show them how to learn from mistakes made. There is also a strong belief amongst

the students (80%) that teachers at Langa High School help them figure out how to learn best. According to the students there are afternoon classes for extra lessons or questions and answer sessions for those students who do not always get clarity during classes. The school also has a partnership with the Department of Education and Ithemba Labs, where physical science and mathematics students have the opportunity to attend extra classes and undertake science experiments.

Langa High School students (85%) also say that the school opens discussions about ways to be a good person through discussing issues that help students think about what is right and wrong. Furthermore, students (79%) say at Langa High, they learn skills that help them plan time so they can get their work done and still do other things they enjoy. Students (70%) also say at Langa High School, most students believe it is their responsibility to make the world a better place.

Also, the students say that the school opens discussions about ways to be a good person by discussing issues that help students think about what is right and wrong. Furthermore, students say at Langa High, they learn skills that help them plan time so they can get their work done and still do other things they enjoy. Students also say at Langa High School, most students believe it is their responsibility to make the world a better place.

7.4 Interpersonal relationships

This section reports on a segment of a survey conducted at Langa High School dealing with ‘interpersonal relationships” as one of the measures of school climate. With interpersonal relationship, the study looked at the following three key elements: respect for diversity, social support from adults, and social support from students.

The general perception on interpersonal relationships at Langa High School is positive at a median score of 3.71. Indeed, all the elements of the interpersonal relationships dimension of school climate are perceived in a positive light, with respect for diversity at a score of 3.67,

social support from adults at a score of 3.71, and social support from students at a score of 4.00 (see Table 7-4).

Table 7-4: Summary of respondents' perception on Interpersonal Relationships at Langa High School

Interpersonal Relationships	Median	Percentage score (%)		
		Negative	Neutral	Positive
Respect for Diversity	3.67	5	37	59
Social Support_ Adults	3.71	4	30	66
Social Support_Students	4.00	2	21	78

As it can be observed in Table 7-4, the positive feeling on respect for diversity as indicated by a 3.67 score is influenced by 59% of the respondents who have rated it positive, only 5% of them rating it negative, while 37% rated it neutral. Furthermore, it can be observed that the perception on social support from adults is influenced by a positive rating of 66% of students, 30% rating it neutral and only 4% rating it negative. The overall rating on interpersonal relationships is also influenced by ratings on social support from students score of 4.00, has been influenced by a 78% of students rating it positive, 21% of them rating it negative and only 2% rating it negative. A graphical depiction of the results is presented in Figure 7-3.

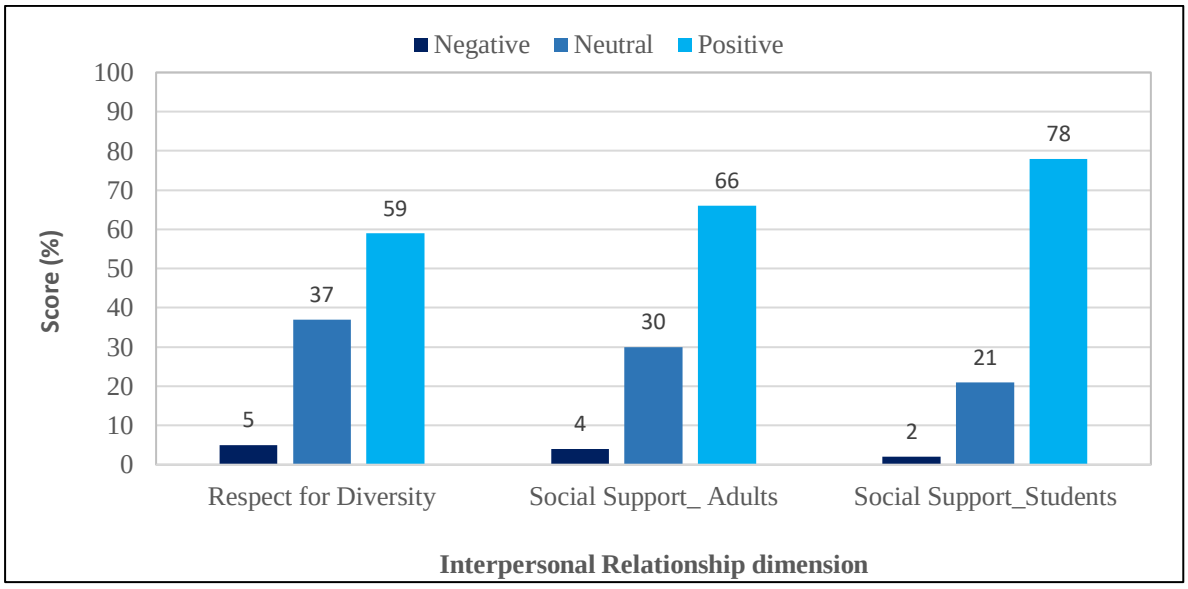


Figure 7-3: Depiction of perception on Interpersonal Relationships at Langa High School

The results indicate that the majority of students at the school believe that people in the school respect one another despite their differences, such as race, gender of physical appearances. Students at this school also believe that the adults at this school are supportive. Furthermore, these students say they have good supportive relationships with their peers at the school.

Langa High School students believe that diversity is well respected at the school by adults and most importantly, by the students. According to the majority of students (83%), Langa High School welcomes and accepts people from diverse backgrounds, while 85% also say that they like working with someone who is different from them (for example, another gender, race, culture, disability, sexual orientation, learning differences, etc.). In addition, students (59%) believe that adults in the school respect differences in students (for example, gender, race, culture, disability, sexual orientation, learning differences, etc.). A similar percentage of students also say adults in their school respect each other's differences (for example, gender, race, culture, disability, sexual orientation, learning differences, etc.). Furthermore, students (54%) also say students in this school respect differences in adults such as gender, race, culture, disability, sexual orientation, and learning differences.

The students' perception of the level of support they receive from their fellow students at Langa High School influences how they relate with one another. At Langa High School, students' perception of level of support they receive from their fellow students is positive. This can be observed by the significant mean score of 4.00, which has been influenced by a 78% of students rating it positive, 21% of them rating it neutral and only 2% rating it negative. The results indicates that majority of students at the school believe that people in the school respect one another despite their differences such as race, gender of physical appearances. Students at this school also believe that the adults at this school are supportive. Furthermore, these students say they have good supportive relationships with their peers at the school. As it can be observed, students (81%) believe that they have friends at school they can turn to if they have questions about homework, 75% of them also say that in the school, students have friends at school they trust and talk to when they have problems.

In addition, the majority of students (85%) at Langa High School say they have friends at school to eat lunch with, and generally work well with each other even if they are not in the same group of friends. Furthermore, students (73%) at Langa High School say most students make every effort to make new students feel welcome in the school.

The students' general feeling around the social support they receive from adults in the school is also positive, at a significant score of 3.71. Interestingly, these students also view this support in line with the level of expectation the adults have of them. As indicated in the results, students at Langa High School believe that teachers in the school have high expectations for students' success. It can also be observed that over half the number of respondents (69%) believe that adults at Langa High School are good examples of the values the school teaches (like respect, responsibility, and fairness), 66% of them also say that the teachers seem to work well with one another and that they help each other with work.

Furthermore, students (67%) believe that adults in Langa High school are interested in getting to know them, while 63% of them also say adults in the school listen to what students have to say and also say that if students need to talk to an adult in school about a problem, there is someone they trust who they could talk to. What is revealing is the students' perception on the level of support they receive from their teachers/adults. They also believe that teachers in their school have high expectations for student's success.

7.5 Institutional Environment

This section reports on a segment of a survey conducted at Langa High School dealing with 'Institutional Environment' as one of the measures of school climate. Here, the study looks physical layout of the school as well as the level of connectedness amongst the participants in the school.

The results indicate that the general perception of institutional environment at Langa High School is positive at a mean score of 3.65. The school connectedness and engagement element is at a mean score of 3.86 and is largely rated positively. This is higher in comparison to a

neutral rating of 3.50 on physical surroundings. At Langa High School, 76% of the respondents believe they are fully engaged at the school and feel a great level of connection with the activities of the school, 22% have a neutral view of it, while only 2% of them feel they have no real connection to the school (see *Table 7-5*).

Table 7-5: Summary of respondents' perception on Institutional Environment at Langa High School

Institutional Environment	**Median**	**Percentage response (%)**		
		Negative	Neutral	Positive
School connectedness engagement	3.86	2	22	76
Physical surroundings	3.50	13	47	40

Even though the general perception with regards to school connectedness and engagement is high, that of physical surrounding is neutral. This can be observed by a 40% positive rating, 47% neutral rating, and 13% negative rating. Figure 7-4 below provides a clear depiction.

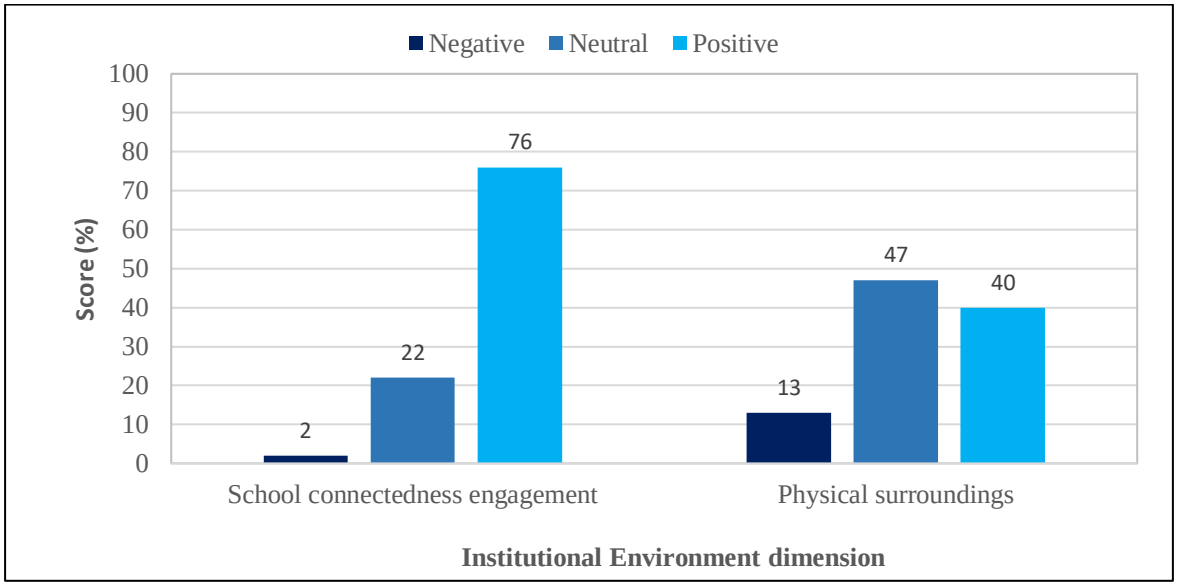


Figure 7-4: Depiction of perception on Institutional Environment at Langa High School

Based on the results of this study with regards to school connectedness and engagement, students (83%) say the school tries to get students to join after school activities, students (60%) say the school tries to get all families to be part of school events, students (73%) say that the school tries to let their families know about what is going on in school. Furthermore, students

(73%) say that their parents and family members feel comfortable talking to their teachers and they also say that their parents/guardians 'feel welcome at my school'. In addition, there are students (74%) who feel as if they belong at the school while 86% feel good about what they do in school. Although school connectedness and engagement at Langa High School is perceived by students in a positive light, the physical surroundings are not perceived in the same way(3.50 score).

Students at Langa High School do not have a positive feeling about the school's physical layout and facilities, but they do not raise significant concerns around it either. The majority of students at Langa High School say they are satisfied with the physical layout of the school, 58% of them say the school building is clean, 40% believe that the school has up-to-date computers and other electronic devices available to students, 68% of them also say the school looks good (for example, enough space, nicely decorated with student artwork, etc.). Furthermore, 66% of the respondents say the school building is kept in good condition (for example, when something is broken, it gets fixed) while 54% also say they have enough supplies in school (for example, books, paper, and pencils). 47% of students also say they have enough space and facilities for extracurricular activities at my school.

7.6 Social media

Langa High School students have a neutral perception on social media in relation to how it affects their school climate. The social media dimension has a median score of 3.5. This score is influenced by students' 39% rating that is positive, 58% neutral rating and only 3% negative rating (see *Table 7-6*).

Table 7-6: Summary of respondents' perception on Social Media at Langa High School

Social Media	**Median**	**Percentage response (%)**		
		Negative	Neutral	Positive
Social media	3.50	3	58	39

The reason for the neutral perception might be attributable to socio-economic factors that limit their access and exposure to social media. Further depiction of this dimension is in Figure 7-5.

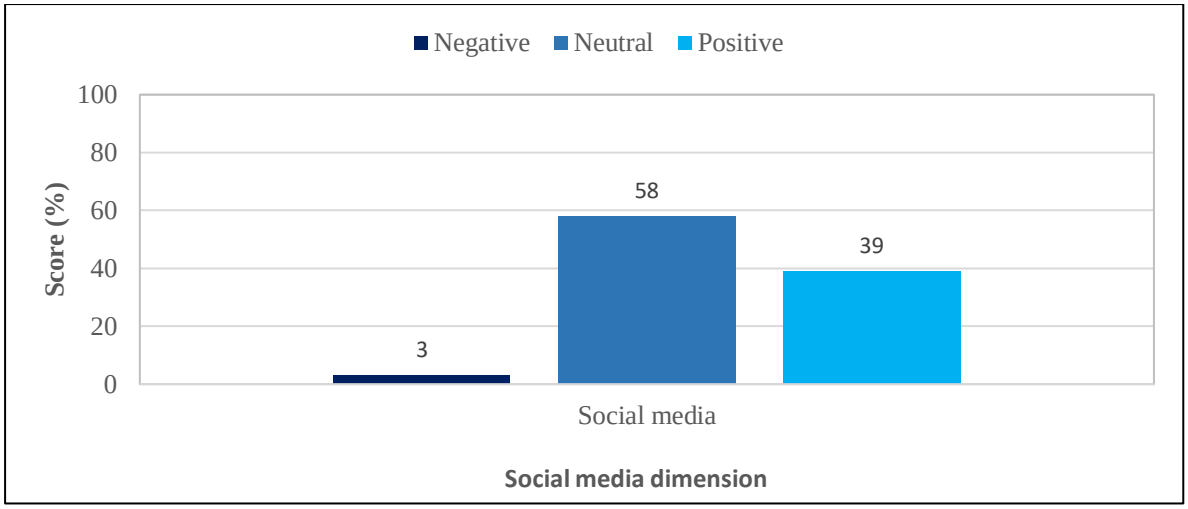


Figure 7-5: Depiction of perception on Social Media at Langa High School

As observed, the majority of students have rated this dimension of school climate neutral. However, not many students raises concerns around the other's student's behaviour on social media. The results on this element shows that only 33% of students disagree that many students in the school will try to stop other students from threatening or harassing others using social media. Additionally, a relatively small number (22%) raises concerns that students in the school do share inappropriate information (including personal information) on social media. These students (26%) also disagree that most students in the school use social media in ways that support one another (e.g., emotionally, academically, etc.), while only 11% of them also say they can't use social media without being harassed by another student. There is also a relatively small number of students who disagree that in their school, students will seek help from an adult in the school if they have been harassed on social media.

The general feeling (57%) is that it is safe to use social media without being harassed by other students. The majority of students (75%) say they haven't been threatened or harassed on social media more than once by a student in their school.

7.7 Additional qualitative data from focus group session.

7.7.1 Safety – Physical safety

Physical safety is an issue of concern at Langa High School for students. This is the students' general feeling. The students highlight theft of personal items such as school stationery and cell phones as an issue. "*We've had cases of theft of school property and in most cases, these items are stolen by known members of Langa or nearby townships, who later, sell them in the same community*", a grade 12 student recounted. Another student adds "*A few teachers lost their cell phone inside the class and I believe these were stolen by the students*".

"*The feeding scheme facility was broken in to and groceries and equipment were stolen. Sadly this did not only happen once*", this is as narrated by another student. To add to this, another student say "*Even our school tuckshop was broken in to and those people stole everything in there*". The students highlight lack of security measures which has resulted in these break-ins. As noted by a grade 12 student "*We do not have security guard at the gate, our gates do not lock at night and the fence around the school is not electric, which makes it easy for criminals to break-in*"

Although the students are concern with theft at school, they are even more worried in a case an attack to the school or at school during normal school hours. One student explains "*There has been xenophobic attacks which in our provinces, resulted in foreign nationals retaliating by attacking schools. In such instances, our school would be vulnerable and expose, lack of proper security measures here is worrying*". What form of protection do they have? Another example comes from a grade 12 student who recalls "*A few years ago a student was stabbed at our school during normal school hours. This just shows are exposed all of us are. As you have seen, entrance to our school is not properly secured, we don't have trained security officials at the gate or within the school grounds*".

One student further elaborate "*I have witnessed people budging in our school to looking for a guy whom they had a fight with outside of the school the previous night. In this instance, anyone close to this situation at the time in practically in harm's way". These guys had knives with*

them and weren't afraid of teachers, at that moment, the students had no form of protection. These are some of the worrying factors with lack of security at the school" The general feeling at Langa High School is that students do not feel physically safe at school and this is seen in both quantitative and qualitative data.

7.7.2 Social media

The feedback from a focus group session suggest that students at Langa High School are not impacted by cyber-bullying. As explained by a grade 11 student "*I think cyber-bullying does happen in our school, but we do not know about it. In the age of technology, it is impossible to even think that it isn't happening*". Another student adds to this by saying "*Maybe it doesn't happen as much because it requires one to have data and we know data is expensive and that most of us do not have money for data*".

7.7.3 Interpersonal Relationship

Interpersonal relationship at Langa High School is rated highly. Both quantitative and the qualitative feedback from students supports the rating. According to students, it is easy to relate to people who have the same 'way of life'. In explaining 'way of life', a grade 12 student say "*It is people from same background, similar upbringing, societal values, and religious affiliations". She further adds "This makes it easy to understand each other and respect each other, because these are the things we are taught at home*".

Although generally, students and teachers get well with each other, there are students who are seen to be disrespectful to teachers, often, this happens to female teachers. This is highlighted by a grade 10 female student "*Ma'am, there are some boys who disrespect female teachers and want to scare them, but we then report them to male teachers and the principal to sort them out*".

The general feeling around how students relate and support each other socially and academically is positive. The students agree that they enjoy good support from their peers,

regardless of gender. The same feeling is also with the level of social support they receive from their teachers, both male and female. These students see teachers in the school as their parents. As explained by one students "*Most of our parents live in the Eastern Cape, so we see out teachers as our parents*". Additionally, a grade 10 student adds "*We respect our teachers the same way we are expected to respect our parents, no one wants to have to be reported to their parents for disrespecting another parent or an older person*". At Langa High School, the level of support socially goes beyond school grounds, this is explained by a grade 11 female students "*You know Ma'am, our teachers even buy us food, give us transport money sometimes and also helps us with the sanitary pads every month, this helps a lot*". Students at Langa High School appreciates the support the receive from their teachers.

7.7.4 Teaching and Learning

The results on teaching and learning as an element of school climate at Langa High School are the highest of all elements that were measures. This is contradictory the personal observation and doesn't support or align with the school's academic achievement overtime. Clarity on this issue became necessary. According to a grade 12 student "*The school has, in recent years, introduced programmes to support students academically and with that, we have a sense that teachers in this school are prepared to do whatever it takes to help us succeed, especially academically as well as be great people in the society*

Another student, a grade 10 explain it in this way "*The school has started introducing maths extra lessons at school, this is additional to the extra maths lessons organised by the Department of Education*". Another student adds, "*We also have extra science lessons, which we never used to have before*". Apart from these, students say they can see that the school and teachers are really doing their best in class to ensure that the students' results improve. "*Our teachers always talk to us about the importance of getting educated so we can look after our families*", narrated by another student.

Although the students also say it is not all teachers who show commitment to improving performance of the students and the school holistically, the general feeling is that there is more dedication from most teachers and the administration staff. And "*You can see how the school*

performed in 2018, the teachers commitment to helping us is starting the show better results.", this is statement by a grade 12 students, who further reminds us "*Look at Lukhanyo, he was on of top students in the country in 2018, got excellent matric results from this school, this is because of our teachers. The results of what our teachers are doing to help us succeed are starting to show"*

7.7.5 Institutional Environment: Physical layout and school connectedness and engagement

The results of this study with regards to school connectedness and engagement and physical layout and facilities at Langa High School appear to be contradictory to personal observation. This raised an important question which needed to be addressed during the focus group session. The first question was to ascertain whether the students used other schools as reference to compare their own physical layout. The second question was around the initiatives taken by the school to promote school connectedness and engagement, for parents and students.

With physical layout of the school, Langa High School students do acknowledge that their school is less attractive to the schools situated in the suburbs. They are aware that their school is much smaller than schools like Pinelands High. As described by a grade 12 student who once had the opportunity to attend open day at Pinelands High School "*That school has everything, their library is big and comfortable and has so many book, it is way better than ours. The school also has lost of computers and a beautiful music room full of instruments. Those are the things we do not have here*" She further adds, "*We do not have even just a netball court, even a small one*". These students also acknowledge that the school lacks great facilities like those found in "good schools". They have highlighted that the school has operated without a resourced library for a long time. To explain this, a grade 10 student noted "*Some of us love soccer but have not had the chance to actively participate in school soccer purely because the school doesn't have fields that we could use for soccer, we also do not have soccer equipment*" A grade 12 student also highlight "*Many years ago, Langa High School used to be known for rugby and marathon, however in recent years, we do not even play rugby due to lack of facilities*". According to the students, sport is not given attention at the school and it is not

because of lack of interest from their part, or support from their teachers, it is purely because of lack of resources.

Students are aware of other lacking resources such as musical facilities and equipment, or the swimming pool for those students who would like to participate in water sports or art room for those who love art. A grade 10 student say "*The only musical instruments at the school is marimba, which was donated to the school"*. Lastly, the students also touched on the issue of computers and Wi-Fi within the school grounds. Explained by a grade 11 student "*Although we have computers, they are not always allowed to use them, we only use them during a computer lesson, so I can't just go to computer room to use them for research purposes, for instance. Also, WIFI is also a problem as it is limited, basically, .9 out of 10times we do not have access to these computers*"

However, the students of Langa High School explains the positive results in this way. "*We know and understand the struggle of black schools in the township and rural areas. We can never compare ourselves with 'white' schools. They will always have better facilities than us*", explains a grade 11 student. Another student adds with a some nervousness laughter that "*Our school environment is not the best, but we are grateful because we have a school and clean toilets*"

On the issue of school connectedness and engagement, the results from quantitative data are far different from the researcher's observation of the school, over a period of time. As a result this became an important issue/question to address. The question that was posed to students were to understand how the school promotes the students' involvement with the activities of the school in that they feel engaged. Additionally, there question was also to ascertain the link between available facilities at the school and the level of connectedness and engagement of students.

With these two elements, an interesting perception surfaced. According to the students, explained by a grade 10 student "*Our teachers do their very best to get our parents involved in the activities of the school, however, our parents are also extremely tied up in other*

responsibilities, trying to put food on the table, it is not easy for them:. A grade 12 student also adds "*You know ma'am, our parents and grandparents are not educated, so they work for 'Abelungu' and they can't just ask for leave to attend a meeting at school*. *So it is not our teachers fault that the parents are not active at the school. It is also not our parents' fault that they are not able to participate in the activities of the school*", he adds.

When it comes to students, a grade 12 students note "*Mr. Magugu encourages to us to get involved in the activities of the school, even to a point of getting us involved in decision making processes, which is very empowering. We have our fellow students representing us at the school governing body*". Another student also add "*It is great to know that the teachers and the principal sees us as participants and not dictating things to us. It is a consultative process, although most times we lose on votes*", she add jokingly.

7.8 Summary on Langa High School

The overall perception of school climate at Langa High School is positive. While most elements are perceived in a positive light, with a significantly higher score, the mean score of other elements highlights some concerns and need intervention. Safety is one of the concerning elements of school climate at Langa High School, and the majority of safety issues pertains to physical violence and theft.

Institutional environment is also another element of concern, this despite the overall positive perception attributed to it. With this element specifically, the issue is the contradiction in the results as against personal observation. Langa High School does not have good facilities to support teaching and learning, yet the results seem to suggest that the school is well equipped. One possible reason for this discrepancy could be that students at Langa compare their school to similar schools in the townships, these are the only school environments these students have access to as they have not been exposed to school environments such as that of Pinelands High School. Secondly, most students at Langa High School originate from the rural Eastern Cape where conditions in schools are worse than what can be observed in the urban townships. In the other words, the point of reference for comparison is likely other township schools and not

the privileged white schools outside of their range or experience, schools like Pinelands High School.

The other two elements of school climate, namely; interpersonal relationships and teaching and learning, are seen in a positive lights. According to the results of the study on these two elements, students in this school express their satisfaction and happiness about the conduct of the adults in the school. They also highlighted the significant support they felt they received from the adults at Langa High School.

8 CHAPTER EIGHT: COMPARITIVE KEY FINDINGS FROM THE TWO SCHOOLS

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to investigate the perception of high school students of school climate in two very different high schools in South Africa, through the lens of students. This study examined 5 dimensions of school climate and their sub-elements. Two schools with very different racial and resource histories, Pinelands High School and Langa High School, were used as the case studies. The study initially sought to sample 500 students, 250 each from the two schools. However, a total of 420 students, representing 84% of the intended sample were surveyed for the analysis. Table 8-1 below is a summary of the students who participated in this study. This is presented by grade and gender.

Table 8-1: Combined Summary Statistics for Land and Pinelands High Schools

Attribute	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	192	46%
	Female	224	53%
	Unknown	4	1%
Grade	09	12	3%
	10	129	31%
	11	139	33%
	12	108	26%
	Unknown	32	8%

In the next sections, I present the results of the study, starting with a graph (figure 8.1) which reflects all the elements of school climate for Langa High School and Pinelands High School in a comparative manner and a brief explanation of what each score represents. This will be

followed by highlighting and discussing the main findings of this study. Below is the overall results of this study on school climate in the two high schools are summarised in figure 8-1 below.

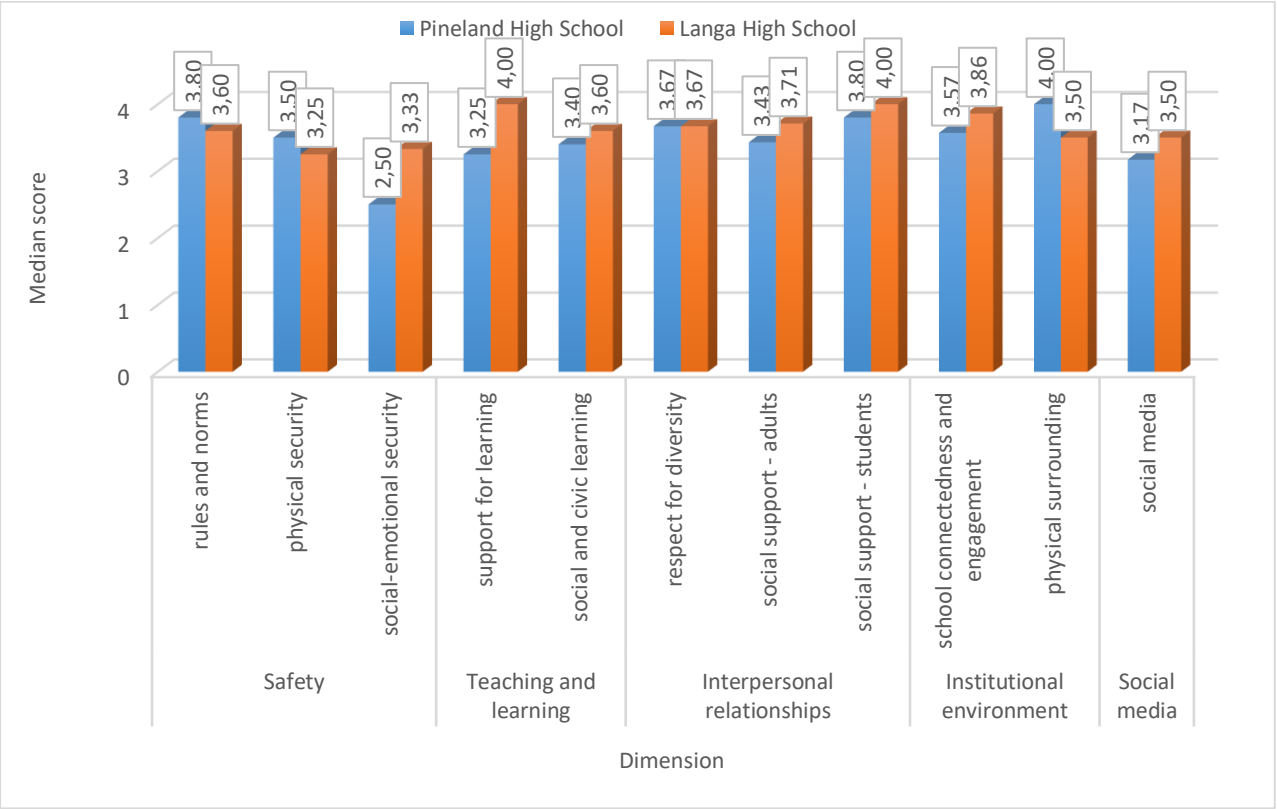


Figure 8-1: Median scores of school climate dimensions for Pinelands and Langa High Schools

In Figure 8-1, the measures for Pinelands High School are presented in blue while Langa High School measures are depicted in orange. Furthermore, the scores, indicated in the graph are grouped as follows: a positive score is considered any score higher than 3.50, while a negative score is a score lower than 2.5. Anything between 2.5 and 3.50 is considered neutral. The next section is the presentation of the main findings of this study. In total, this study has established 10 main findings which will be discussed in the section below.

8.2 Discussion of the main findings of this study

This section of the study discusses the main findings on school climate in the two schools and these findings spread across the 11 elements of school climate. The findings of this study have proven the correlation between the elements of school climate, and this will be highlighted in the discussion below.

Main finding 1 - Discussion

The first main finding of this study is that students do not feel safe in schools. This is also found in Thapa et al. (2013); Cohen et al. (2009); Cohen (2012); Moloi (2010); Le Roux & Mokhele (2011); Masitsa (2011) and The Center for Justice and Crime prevention (2012 & 2017). As a result, the student perception of safety as an element of school climate in both schools is not positive. However, the students in the different schools experience and articulate issues of safety in different ways. Table 8-2 below is the representation of the student perception of safety dimension of school climate in their respective schools.

Table 8-2: Comparative results on Physical security and Social-emotional security as elements of safety dimension

	Pineland High School				***Langa High School***			
		Percentage response (%)				**Percentage response (%)**		
Dimension	**Median**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Positive**	**Median**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Positive**
Safety								
Physical security	3.50	9	57	34	3.25	13	64	23
Social-emotional security	2.50	47	44	9	3.33	6	71	23

As presented in table 8-2 above, it can be observed that the two schools experience safety concerns in a different way. The students at Pinelands High raise social-emotional safety as a big concern, with physical bullying as a key issue in their experiences; while on the other hand, students at Langa High School raise theft and physical safety as a key issue in their experience.

Issues of safety at Langa High School.

In chapter 6 of this study, the researcher describes the lack of appropriate safety measures at Langa High School. This is because the school does not have the necessary means to keep the school safe, e.g., funds to hire trained security officers this or to install cameras or high-tech security measures such as an electronic fence. It is not surprising that the students in the school do not feel safe. Lack of safety in schools contributes to the feeling of feeling unsafe in schools. This is also noted by Barnes et al. (2012). Lack of safety in schools contributes to learners experiencing higher levels of violence and theft in their schools and this is true in a case of Langa High School.

What is also found is this study, which highlights the unique differences of the two schools of interest, is that physical safety is uncommon in schools located in disadvantages communities such as Langa Township. This links to the physical safety and **physical location** of the school. This is also found in Xaba (2006); Masitsa, (2011); Moloi (2010) and Equal Education (2014). In their view, which is also observed in this study, schools located in poorer communities experience theft of school property, personal property (cell phones and money) and are exposed to physical violence perpetrated by students and members of the same community.

A grade 12 students at Langa High School explains, “Most of the break-ins that we’ve experienced at the school were either to steal food at the tuckshop, or at the school storage for the feeding scheme. This explains that people steal because they are hungry and are looking for food”. Another grade 12 student at Langa High School also added, “If it is not the food that these thieves are looking for, it is school equipment and stationery so they can sell them and make some money to feed their families”.

Furthermore, research also highlights (Masitsa, 2011; Moloi, 2008) that a school is an extension of its community. The violence experienced in the community will often be experienced at the school. This is the same sentiment shared by a grade 11student in this study. She explains, “There are a lot of drug smoking youth in our community and they will steal anything to make small cash to buy drugs and when they are drunk, they starting fighting. Most of the fights I have witnessed at the school over the years were not fights that started between

people (mostly boys) at the school. They were all fights that started outside of the school at some event or a pub".

Langa High School is situated in one of the poor townships of Cape Town called Langa. A township that is impacted by unemployment and poverty. The majority of residents in this township live below the poverty line. As elaborated by Masitsa (2011), poverty is associated with increased school crime and this has been found in this study.

Issues of safety at Pinelands High School

At Pinelands High School, social-emotional security is an issue of concern and viewed in a negative light by students in this school. The students are concerned about bullying and subsequent physical altercations as a result thereof. In recent times, 2018/2019, there've been escalated and seemingly uncontrollable incidences of bullying, which, in most cases, resulted in physical fights in the school. According to a grade 12 student, in 2018 alone, there were about 10 unreported incidences of bullying at the school. Additionally, the student further highlights three of incidents which were officially reported to the school.

These three reported incidences resulted in physical violence between students, while one of these cases involved a father of the child that was bullied. In the latter case, the father and a brother of a grade 8 student, who was being bullied by a fellow grade 9 student, took matters into their own hands and assaulted the bully inside the school grounds. According to a grade 11 students at the school, in this specific case, the matter was reported to the school and no action was taken which led to the father taking matters in his hand.

In 2018, with all known and reported cases of bullying, there was no communication from the school to the parents, highlighting this concern and a spike in reported cases of bullying. In January 2019, within the first month of school opening, Pinelands High School experienced yet another episode of physical violence resulting from a bullying incident, a student respondent noted. In this particular case, a grade 12 student, who took it upon himself to defend another student who was being bullied by a grade 10 student, approached the grade 10. This

grade 10 student in turn invited his gang, which attacked a group of grade 12 students, followed by counter reprisal. The greater concern with this incident, specifically, is that it has taken a different and more worrying shape, transforming into gang related violence, with the possibility that this offers for the violence spilling over from the school into the community. This incident has inspired the creation and increased involvement in gangs within the school.

In a conversation with a grade 8 student at Pinelands High School, he raised concerns of safety at the school. “You know, I chose and liked Pinelands High School because I thought it was a safe school. Now I am scared”. This is the similar view shared by a group of grade 10 and 11 students during a focus group interview session, in which they express their fears with regards to safety within the school premises. In this session, the students claim that there is a group of grade 9’s boys which they deem dangerous. The general perception of the students in a racially diverse school, is that a group of Coloured males is violent and dangerous in the school environment. It is found that the majority of bullying incidences which led to physical altercation happened between the coloured males.

It is the view of the students that the school does not know how to deal with these dangerous group of students. The students claim that the school deliberately ignores these issues and pretend that they are not happening as they have negative impact on the school’s brand. According to a grade 11 student, “the school’s principal only cares about the image of the school and not about the safety of students in the school”. In 2019, the school has noted 11 reported bullying cases.

At Pinelands High School, there is a clear link between social-emotional security, interpersonal relationships, particularly issues of diversity and social support by teachers. Students of colour do not believe that they receive the appropriate level of social support from white teachers. In turn, this creates high levels of emotional fear and distrust towards their teachers, and the whole school environment.

Main finding 2

It is also found that the perception of the students on the levels of bullying as a safety issue is different to that of the teachers or school councillor. According to school records in 2019, they were 9 verbal bullying, 5 cyberbullying and only 3 physical bullying known cases while according to focus group session data from the students, 6 physical bullying cases and over 15 verbal bullying cases. This qualitative data supports data extracted from the quantitative data where it is shown that over 47% of students' raise concerns of socio-emotional safety within the school. The National School Climate Council (2007), National School Climate Centre (2011) and Thapa et al. (2013) also has found that students' experiences of lack of safety at schools is severe while parents/guardians and school personnel believe it to range between mild to moderate. Often, this is because a lot of cases goes unreported, for fear of victimisation and further bullying.

Main finding 3

Students in both schools believe that their schools have clear rules and policies around maintenance of safety in schools. They do not believe, however, that these rules and policies are enforced in a consistent manner. Table 8-3 below is a representation of student perception of rules and norms around the maintenance of safety in their respective schools.

Table 8-3: Comparative results on safety dimension

	Pineland High School				***Langa High School***			
		Percentage response (%)				**Percentage response (%)**		
Dimension	**Median**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Positive**	**Median**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Positive**
Safety								
Rules and norms	3.80	4	27	69	3.60	8	36	56

Although the rules and norms with regard to maintaining safety in school are in place, verbally or in documents, there is no consistency in how these rules are enforced. As a result, students at Pinelands High School and Langa High School feel unsafe in school. This can be observed in the results of this study and the supporting feedback from students during focus group interview sessions. The account of a grade 11 student at Pinelands High School clarifies this

disconnect “we agree that there are school rules around safety, both physical and emotional, however, these rules are not enforced. There are no consequences for those who break the rules”. “Some teachers do try to enforce rules and apply the applicable fines associated with specific rules, however, I feel the majority of teachers are not doing the same, hence the escalation of safety issues at the school”, another student added. According to Thapa et al. (2013), one of the reasons students and educators feel unsafe in schools is the failure by schools to demonstrate safety variables, which amongst others, include the consistent enforcement of rules. What is surprising about this key finding is that for both schools, students believe that the schools have clearly stated rules and norms around the maintenance of safety in their schools. They do not, however, trust that this rules are sufficiently and consistently enforced.

This is also found in Gregory, Cornell, and Fan, (2012), who conducted a regression analyses in a state-wide sample of 280 high schools in the United States of America, in which it was revealed that in schools where there is structure, that is, where schools rules are clearly documented, communicated and understood by the schooling community, and where these rules are enforced in a consistent manner, teacher and students victimisation and violence was lower. At the two schools in this study, the inconsistencies in the application and enforcement of schools rules in evident in the student perceptions of safety in their schools.

Main finding 4

The fourth main finding of this study is that, overall, both schools report positively on ‘respect for diversity’ in their schools (See table 8-4 below). Although, their interpretations of diversity are different.

Table 8-4: Comparative results on interpersonal relationships dimension

	Pineland High School				***Langa High School***			
		Percentage response (%)				**Percentage response (%)**		
Dimension	**Median**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Positive**	**Median**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Positive**
Respect for diversity	3.67	4	44	53	3.67	5	37	59

At Pinelands High School, students observe diversity in the context of the differences in race and less about social standing, religion and gender. Pinelands High School, as a multi-racial school, experiences challenges when it comes to interpersonal relationship in school as a result of differences in race. Difference in races also has an impact the student perceptions of the

level of social and academic support they receive from their teachers. This will be discussed in main finding 5 and 9.

Another dynamic observed regarding issues of diversity is that students in this school also have a distinction on how they experience diversity between teachers and their fellow pupil. A majority of students see diversity in a positive light when it comes to how they relate to their fellow pupils. However, when it comes their relationships with their teachers, they have a negative perception, particularly with teachers of the different race.

At Langa High School, students understand diversity not in a racial context but in social context, e.g., living under similar circumstances of poverty and struggling with the same social issues and gender.

Main finding 5

The fifth main finding of this study is that students in a less multiracial school enjoy better support, socially, from teachers in their school, in comparison to those students in a multiracial school.

Table 8-5: Comparative results on interpersonal relationships dimension

	Pineland High School				***Langa High School***			
	Percentage response (%)				**Percentage response (%)**			
Dimension	**Median**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Positive**	**Median**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Positive**
Social support – adults	3.43	6	49	45	3.71	4	30	66

Data in table 8-5 above suggests that only 45% students at Pinelands High School believe themselves to be receiving the expected levels of support from the adults in the school. They raise concerns of victimisation if and when they raise their concerns with the behaviour of a specific adult, particularly if the concern is with a teacher of a different race During a focus group session, students say although there is a process to raise concerns with regards to a specific behaviour of a teacher, they claim that the school always favours the teacher. As a result, most of the discomfort the students feel with regards to certain teachers are not reported for fear of victimisation. This is the view of a grade 11 student, who claims to have been victimised by a teacher after they spoke against ill-treatment and favouritism in classroom.

In this incident, the student who classifies herself as Coloured felt she was treated differently by a white teacher while white students would be allowed to behave in a manner that is deemed 'inappropriate' if done by a student of colour. This is one example, which the majority of Coloured and Black African students raised as a serious concern

The findings of this study is similar to that highlighted by Thapa et al. (2013); Watkins and Aber (2009); Schneider and Duran (2010); Slaughter-Defoe and Carlson (1996; Mattison and Aber (2007); Shirley & Cornell (2012) and Griffin & Allen (2006) that race in itself is a significant factor in explaining the variation in student perceptions of school climate.

It is also noted by Cohen et al. (2009) that of the aspects of school climate that have been shown to affect students' self-esteem and the ability to perform well at school and in life generally (Jansen (2018 & 2019 – personal conversation), the most important is positive feedback from teachers. The less favourable relationship between teachers and students at Pinelands High School is visible in the results of this study.

Main finding 6

The students in both schools believe that they have the necessary support, socially and academically, from their peers. This is presented in table 8-5 below.

Table 8-6: Comparative results on interpersonal relationships dimension

	Pineland High School				***Langa High School***			
		Percentage response (%)				**Percentage response (%)**		
Dimension	**Median**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Positive**	**Median**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Positive**
Social support – students	3.80	3	26	71	4.00	2	20	78

The general feeling, in both schools, is that students have good relationship with their fellow students and these relationships are beneficial both socially and academically. National School Climate Council (2007); National School Climate Center (2011) also highlighted that students are able to benefit socially and academically if they felt included and respected by other students and hence the positive results on this element of school climate. This highlights the

critical role of peer relationships in the well-being of students with differences (socially, physically and racially).

Main finding 7

The seventh main finding of this study is that the students in the two schools have rated physical layout of their respective schools differently. Table 8-7 below presents a comparative view of this finding.

Table 8-7: Comparative results on institutional environment dimension

	Pineland High School				***Langa High School***			
		Percentage response (%)				**Percentage response (%)**		
Dimension	**Median**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Positive**	**Median**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Positive**
Physical surroundings	4.00	2	25	73	3.50	13	47	40

Physical surroundings, which encompasses the general impression of the school and facilities, is rated highly by students of Pinelands High schools (73%), while only 40% of Langa High School have rated the same element positively. The rating by students of Pinelands High School is however not a surprise. Historically Pinelands High School was one of the privileged schools which received more funding for facilities, infrastructure and the general appearance of the school (refer to chapter 4 which details background of the school). Pinelands High School still enjoys the benefits of this environment. Although post-1994, as a result of the quintile system, the school no longer receives preferential treatment when it comes to the allocation of funds, the school is able to raise sufficient funding for maintenance of the existing facilities and the general appearance of the school.

Apart from funding from Department of Basic Education, the school has two main funders, (1) The parents in the form of school fees and from (2) the school funders, which is a group of the school's alumni who commit to assisting the school with on-going maintenance of school facilities (see chapter 4, background of Pinelands High School).

While Pinelands High School students enjoys a school situated in a great location and has state of the art facilities, this is not the same at Langa High School. This is also highlighted by Moloi, (2010). In her work, speaks of challenges faced by some of the most disadvantaged, ill-resourced schools. These are schools that work without libraries, computer or internet facilities, and in some instances without electricity, while working alongside some of the well-resourced schools from the previously advantaged communities.

In a focus group session, while the students of Langa High School are grateful to have a school that has a roof, they appreciate that their school do not have the same facilities are other schools. They speak of the lack of facilities for sports, music, drama and a much needed resourced library. According to Paton-Ash and Wilmot (2015), a significant number of schools in South Africa do not have fully resourced and functional libraries.

The students of Langa High School are also aware that their school grounds are far smaller than that of schools in the suburbs and that teaching equipment that the privileged schools have is far better than what their school is using, e.g. interactive boards. Historically, Langa High School was not resourced sufficiently to support teaching and learning, Langa High School was intentionally deprived in order to constrain teaching and learning. This deprivation can still be observed even in 2018. As indicated in Chapter 6 of this study, which details background and the current environment of the school, the school does not have great facilities.

Main finding 8

At both high schools there is a sense of connectedness and identification with the school. This feeling of connectedness to the school is stronger at Langa High School than it is at Pinelands High School.

Table 8-8: Comparative results on institutional environment dimension

	Pineland High School				*Langa High School*			
		Percentage response (%)				Percentage response (%)		
Dimension	**Median**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Positive**	**Median**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Positive**
School connectedness engagement	3.57	5	38	57	3.86	2	22	76

The finding of this study contradicts the findings in research. For instance The National School Climate Center (2011), Thapa et al. (2013), Cohen et al. (2009) suggests that physical layout and facilities of a school may have an influence school connectedness. However, in this study, it is found that in comparison, in a school with better physical layout and facilities, students feel less connected to the school as compared to students in a school with less favourable school facilities.

In focus group sessions with these students, it is found that at Langa High School, students believe that the teachers go over and above their normal duty to get them to participate in the activities of the school. A grade 11 student explains it in this way "Although our school is poor and have less resources, the teachers still do encourage us to be involved in school activities. For instance, Ms Ndlovu continues to encourage us to partake in school choir and to play instruments such as marimba". Another students, who is a member of the Representative Council of Learners (RCL), agrees by saying "Teachers at our school even encourages us to always have a full representation at RCL in order to influence decisions made for and about our school, even when they know that we often disagrees with them". As a result, the students at Langa High School feel positive and connected to the activities in their school.

In a focus group session with students of Pinelands High School, they highlight their dissatisfaction with how things are done at the school which has affected their level of connectedness to the activities of the school. A grade 11 students explains "Some sports are regarded by the school higher than others. For instance, hockey is supported and always made certain that infrastructure for it is of the highest standard, this includes game time and tournaments. This is not the same for netball for instance". Another grade 10 student also highlights how the school focuses less on tennis in comparison to the attention given to soccer.

Students in this school also highlights that, while there are forums for students to get involved and that the school does encourage this, they feel that the parents in the school are not ready and willing to listen to their opinions. Often, they have resorted to not voicing out their opinions in fear of being victimised. As indicated in research, emotional and physical safety are the most important characteristics of high-quality schools as students feel a sense of belonging and are free to engage in activities of the school.

Feeling unsafe in schools often results in lower levels of school engagement and connectedness (Arseneault et al. 2006; Astor et al., 2010; Bowen and Bowen, 1999; Chen 2007; Henrich et al., 2004; Juvonen, et al., 2000; Mayer & Furlong, 2010). This finding is similar to what is observed in this study, particularly in relation to the perceptions of students of Pinelands High School.

Main finding 9

Another interesting finding of this study is that the students rating on social and academic support they received from teachers in their school, did not reflect in their academic results.

Table 8-9: Comparative results on teaching and learning dimension

	Pineland High School				***Langa High School***			
		Percentage response (%)				**Percentage response (%)**		
Dimension	**Median**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Positive**	**Median**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Positive**
Teaching and Learning								
Support for learning	3.25	16	48	36	4.00	3	16	81
Social and civic learning	3.40	10	53	37	3.60	6	38	56

Another main finding that the study is the results with regards to the students rating on social support_teacher and support for learning. While the student of Langa High School, have rated social support_teacher and support for learning in and outside the classroom, this perceived support did not reflect in their academic results. The students in this school have rated social support_teacher and support for learning positive yet, the school has consistently performed poorly for over a period of 10 years (see the results of the school in Chapter 6), within performance ranging between 30% and 65%.

It must however be noted that the school performance has seen a steady growth since 2017, with 2018 showing better improvements in the matric results (78.1%). Seobi & Wood (2016) argue that instructional leadership, when it is effective, can promote the manner in which teaching and learning happens in schools. This is the feeling of students at Langa High School. A grade 12 students agrees that although the school hasn't been performing well over a period of time, things are turning around and we are seeing the positive results. In his view, it is through the leadership of the principal at Langa High School and his commitment to improving the quality of teaching that the school is seeing a positive change.

The findings of this study supports the findings of Berkowitz et al. (2017) that positive school climate has the ability to reduce academic achievement gaps between students and schools of different socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds.

This contradiction can also be observed in the case of Pinelands High School. While the students of Pinelands High School express their unhappiness with the level of social and academic support they receive from their teachers, on the other hand, they consistently performed well academically. Teaching and learning as a dimension of the school is one of the badly rated dimensions of school climate at Pinelands High School.

Pinelands High School. Pinelands High School is regarded as one of the top performing school in Cape Town and in South Africa. The school has consistently performed well and attained over 98% pass mark since inception. Therefore, this performance mirrors the perceptions of students that they receive the required level of academic support to achieve good academic results.

Main finding 10

Social media rating at Pinelands High School and Langa High School is neutral. A very few number of students have raised concerns around cyberbullying. Results of a survey (quantitative data) show that students have very few concerns around this element of school

climate (see table 8-6 below). This is further supported by the qualitative feedback from the students.

Table 8-10: Comparative results on social media dimension

	Pineland High School				*Langa High School*			
	Percentage response (%)				**Percentage response (%)**			
Dimension	**Median**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Positive**	**Median**	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Positive**
Social media	3.17	13	63	24	3.50	3	58	39

At Pinelands High School, the majority of students have indicated less concern around cyberbullying. A grade 11 student explains, "Although almost all students at the school have a social media account, they, like myself, do not accept school peers as friends on social media. They keep to a small group of friends, which in most cases, are people outside of the school environment. That is why most students in our school do not experience social media bullying by students in our school".

Another grade 11 student also explains, "I think the reason most student responded neutral is that there do not worry much about social media bullying as it doesn't happen as often as physical bullying does". "You see, social media bullying is easy to prevent from happening, you just need to choose who you engage via social media and who to avoid", she adds.

In the case of Langa High School, quantitative data shows that only 3% of the students have a negative perceptions of social media. In a focus group session, the majority of students say they do not have concerns around social media bullying, especially from their peers in the same school. They however acknowledge that cyberbullying is a global challenge and that they see it happening to a lot of people, especially, the local celebrities. A grade 12 student at Langa High School also shares an interesting perspective. In his view, a lot of students from Langa High School do not engage on social media for two reasons: (1) they are from poor families and do not have money for data; (2) although the school has computers, these computers are not accessible to them outside of the normal curriculum schedule, with the authorisation and monitoring of the teachers, as a result, students are not able to access their social media accounts. These limitations could explain the limited exposure to social media by the students.

Although the study by CJCP (2012) has found that almost 50% of young people between the age of 12 and 24 had experienced some kind of cyberbullying, the results of this study suggest that students in these two schools are more worried about physical bullying than they are about cyberbullying. However, a growing body of knowledge sounds cautions around the seriousness of bullying and the serious physical, psychological and emotional harm that it can cause.

9 CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

9.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a summary of the findings, outlines the significance of the study by stating the theoretical, policy and practical implications of the findings, and specifies research limitations and recommendations for future research.

9.2 Summary of the findings

The research problem was stated as follows: "How do the students experience and/or perceive school climate in their respective schools?" with special a particular focus on the following elements of school climate: (1) safety – which includes bullying in the physical form; (2) interpersonal relationships – which also includes issues of diversity; (3) the conduct of teaching and learning in and outside the classroom ;(4) physical layout and facilities to support (or not) the objectives of the school; and lastly, a special focus on (5) social media and its influence on cyberbullying.

In answering this question, it became clear that the overall student perceptions of school climate varies depending on a number of factors, the main one being how safe they feel in school. It is obvious that safety is the primary need for all students (Maslow, 1943), however, students expresses their safety concerns differently. Schools situated in disadvantaged areas, i.e., Black townships, experience physical safety as a bigger issue, while the schools situated in privileged areas (suburbs) experience social and emotional safety concerns, particularly issues of bullying. However, it is also became clear that in most cases, bullying in this instance is more prevalent in the physical form as opposed to social media bullying. While in developed countries bullying in schools happen mostly via social media, in the South African context, we learn that it mostly happen in the physical form.

Furthermore, it became clear that physical layout and facilities, as a privilege or disadvantage, do have an influence on the perception of school climate, particularly, with regard to the

‘environment for Teaching and Learning’ and physical layout of the school. In schools where there are great school facilities, such as fully fully-resourced libraries, music rooms, fully fully-functioning computer laboratories, fully resourced and functional science laboratories, classrooms fitted with equipment that aids teaching and learning and good sports facilities, it is found that students have a positive perception of school climate, particularly around physical layout as one of the important elements of school climate. The opposite is also true. In schools where there are no facilities as stated here, the student perceptions is not positive. It became clear that a position of privilege or disadvantage does play part in student perceptions of school climate.

It also became clear that multiracial schools are impacted negatively by issues of diversity. In these schools, it is clear that students of colour, particularly ‘Black’, do not feel they have the required level of social support from their ‘white’ teachers. They also believe that they are treated differently than their white peers.

While in the study has identified areas of concern, it has also acknowledged positive aspects of school climate, one being that the majority of student perceptions on how they relate to other students socially in schools is positive. It is also clear that schools have clear rules and norms around the expected level of conduct within school environment; this is seen in the positive students’ feedback around this element of school climate. However, while the schools have clear rules for good conduct, these rules are not always enforced or there is not consistency in how they are enforced.

The findings of this study highlights the need to understand school climate as a pro-social and data-driven means to improve the well-being of students, eliminate school dropouts, reduce absenteeism in schools, improve academic performance of the school in general and that of students in that school, prevent psychological issues caused as a result of bullying and physical violence in schools. School climate research is critical. The next section will highlight the significance of this study from theoretical, policy and practical points of view.

9.2.1 Theoretical significance

There is a growing body of knowledge on school climate, mainly in the developing countries such as the United States of America. There is also a deliberate drive by researchers and academic institutions such as the National School Climate Council and National School Climate Center to make researched material available to policy makers in order to inform school climate improvement strategies, on a national and provincial level. To date, research has looked a number of policies that should be included in school policies, for the whole schooling community—educators, parents, students and the school governing body. There is, however, limited knowledge of school climate in the South African context.

This study adds to the existing body of knowledge by providing a unique context, the perception of students from two very different South African high schools – a privileged and a disadvantaged school. This is a gap in the literature and something that has not been looked at sufficiently, especially in South Africa. Furthermore, in this study, a thoroughly reviewed, tested and trusted school climate inventory, which hasn't been explored in South Africa, was used. It is therefore expected that the findings of this study will supplement the growing body of knowledge in South Africa in the general field of education, both on a theoretical as well as methodological level, especially in assessing school climate.

9.2.2 Policy significance

This study is anticipated to produce suggestions for school improvement policies and strategies that the policy makers within the Department of Basic Education and those who are responsible for policy making can use. As noted by Cohen et al. (2009), there is an obvious gap between research findings on school climate policy, practice and suggested guidelines and what is seen in terms of teacher education practice. This requires attention. This study highlights and adds to the body of knowledge on the importance of school climate and the necessity for alignment between policy and practice, particularly teacher education on this subject. Education is a right and formulation of education policies that support that is required. The lack of these policies is socially unjust and a violation of children's rights to quality education. This gap, as alluded to by school climate researchers, undermines students' ability to learn and develop in healthy ways (Cohen et al., 2009).

This challenge does not only present itself in South Africa, it is also observed in countries like the United States of America where there has been steady focus on school climate, yet the education departments have not yet responded adequately to school climate findings.

9.2.3 Practical significance

As indicated in the literature review, school climate can help or hinder school success, and the academic achievements of students. There are a lot of researchers and educators who are committed to improving the conditions at poorly performing schools by changing a 'negative' school climate to a positive school climate. The findings and suggestions of this study highlights areas that could be targeted in setting focus for school improvements. Furthermore, the results of this study provide evidence for the need for schools to be concerned about the student perceptions of school climate in their institutions and perhaps to consider implementing measures to address all elements of school climate.

This study also provides evidence that students do not feel safe in schools, especially around issues of bullying, which mostly happens in the physical form. In this study, it is also highlighted that physical safety in less privileged schools is a concern, which has an impact on the perception of school climate.

9.2.4 Significance to other stakeholders

In addition, knowledge gathered by this study and through a review of the literature either from published or unpublished material, through conversations with experts in the field of education, and through leadership practices, organisational performance, collaboration practices and collective participation is going to benefit social entrepreneurs like myself, committed to finding solutions to social ills in all sectors of the economy, in developing sustainable solutions in support of the National Development Plan 2030.

These solutions could be delivered in the form of school climate reforms, school improvement reforms guidelines/frameworks and through sustainable partnership with schools by private individuals and or companies. What is unique about the Master of Philosophy degree in Inclusive Innovation (MPhil), as compared to other master's degrees, is that it places the emphasis on the use of knowledge gathered through the conduct of the study, in order to contribute to the development of a business model and its implementation, targeted towards addressing social ills.

An interesting view by Dreyer (2017) is that legislation alone is not enough to bring about changed perspectives and the implementation of important initiatives aimed at improving the quality of education. He states at the outset, "To bring about the desired changes, it is imperative that both policies and practices become contextually responsive" (p.1).

9.3 Research limitations

This study measured the perception of students on school climate in two unique schools, but like many studies of similar nature, there were some limitations. Firstly, access to schools was limited despite the fact that the department of education granted access valid for 12 months. There was a delay from the date the access was granted by the department to the date the schools made available the relevant participants for the study. Future research should ensure that there is ample time for the research intervention to reach its intended and optimum sample size, and at a comfortable pace.

Secondly, Langa High School did not have well established and fully resourced computer labs that could accommodate 50 students in one sitting in order to complete the school climate on-line survey in a controlled environment. As a result, alternative venues were used, and students had to be transported to different venues, including Stellenbosch University computer lab, Old Mutual training room, and laptops set up at iThemba Labs, for this purpose. Future research should ensure there are adequate resources in place or employ a different method of collecting data using surveys. Alternatively, suitable and sufficiently capacitated venues would need to

be identified and transport arrangements made well in advance in order for less advantage schools to be included in surveys such as this one.

Thirdly, due to constraints in terms of time and cost, the study focussed on a limited scope by choosing only two schools from the Western Cape Province, and only measuring school climate from the perspective of students. In addition, the respondents were limited to only three grades, 10, 11 and 12, and excluded grades 8 and 9. It may be challenging to introduce sustainable school improvement processes that only address the concerns of the students and not that of the whole schooling community. It is therefore recommended that further research should include a broader range of schools across the country and of stakeholders within the school environment, including teachers and parents/guardians. The range of students should also be expanded to include lower grade students.

Lastly, the investigation of the student perceptions of school climate was only limited to the pre-defined elements of school climate and did not explore further elements that may be prevalent in the South African context. It is therefore recommended that further research studies should seek to explore school climate elements that may be unique to the South African schools.

9.4 Recommendations for further research

A review of the literature reveals a growing body of empirical research which indicates that positive school climate is associated with and/or predictive of academic achievement, school success, effective violence prevention, students' healthy development, and teacher retention (National School Climate Council, 2007; National School Climate Center, 2011; Cohen et al., 2009; Thapa et al., 2013) This study, which sets the foundation for school climate body of knowledge in South Africa, from a methodological point of view and from the perspective of the South African context, has provided valuable knowledge on school climate.

However, the body of knowledge on school climate in South Africa requires further elaboration, particularly from South African perspective, in the wake of its troubled history. As such, this study recommends that further research on school climate in the South African context should consider the following;

- Define school climate in the context of South Africa, taking in to account the school's background (socioeconomic status, impact of apartheid, limited resources and geographical location of the school, as well as changing student bodies against the background of national change).
- Extend the scope of research by studying the perceptions of the whole schooling community (Teachers, students in all grades and parents/guardians) on school climate in their respective schools (National School Climate Council, 2007; National School Climate Center, 2011).
- Extend the timeline for a school climate study to truly capture the character and feel of the school. A longitudinal study is recommended (Cohen et al., 2007).
- Focus on the obvious gap between school climate research findings on the one hand, and school improvement policies; practice guidelines, and teacher education practice of departments of education on the other. As Cohen et al. (2009) notes, this gap between school climate research, policy, practice, and teacher education is socially unjust and a violation of children's human rights.

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