

RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Case Study of Student Hooligan Behaviour during Protest Action at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

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Abstract

This article focuses on the behaviour of students during protest action at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). The objectives of the study on which the article is based were to assess factors that contribute to student hooliganism and to evaluate the effects of violent student protests on the university community. The data were collected using interviews with 25 purposefully sampled participants including 20 students and five risk management personnel. The data were analysed using descriptive writing and identifying actively generated themes from the participants' responses. The study found that a private security service and the South African police service actively instigated violence on campus as a means to disperse the crowd, and that the crowd retaliated with violence. It was also found that the university management's ignorance of students' grievances caused students to be violent and exhibit hooligan behaviour to attract management's attention. Victims of violence experienced physical injury and destruction of their property, which inevitably affected them psychologically, academically and behaviourally. It is recommended that security personnel are trained to control crowds without using violence, and that university management resolve student grievances promptly before they lead to violent protesting.

Keywords

crowd control, hooliganism, protest, riot policing, security services, student activism, students, university leadership, university management, violence

Introduction

This article focuses on violence and hooligan behaviour by UKZN students during protest actions. The study underpinning this article intended to understand what prompted the supposed future leaders to act in such a hooligan manner. The study is important because violence during student protest action has been increasing steadily, with universities, such as the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), the University of Cape Town (UCT), and UKZN, seeing exceedingly terrible student protests and hooligan behaviour, especially in

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the period of 2015 to 2017 (Stuurman, 2018). The years 2018 and 2019 continued to be a period of violent student protest actions at UKZN; property and cars were set alight, and students clashed with the police. In 2020 students protested the university's demand that students with historical debt pay a portion of their debt before they could register for the new academic year.

According to the vice-chancellor (VC) and principal of UKZN, Professor Nana Poku:

The recourse to violence which has shaped the political landscape and scarred the lived experience of the majority of South Africans is a national issue and not just specific to UKZN, though I concede that we suffer from it more than most. (2020, para. 4)

Poku's argument was in response to UKZN's experience of massive destruction to property over the years, particularly at the start of the 2020 academic year. UKZN, just like many other South African universities, has been experiencing student rioting that is violent in nature, often resulting in the destruction of property. This problem provokes a few questions: What prompts these violent behaviours? Who instigates violent behaviour? Is this hooliganism justified? What are the effects of student violence on the student body, the university community and the academic programme?

These are some of the fundamental questions we had in mind in initiating this study. The study was carried out at UKZN as a baseline. UKZN has seen a considerable amount of frequent hooligan behaviour recently which has sometimes resulted in casualties. According to Bitso (2015), the calamity of violence during student protests lies in the fact that these incidents occur regularly in previously disadvantaged communities that require the very assets that often are destroyed in the violence to free them from destitution and other social risks. Students rioted in every significant city during the #FeesMustFall student protests and hit the core of many downtown areas township protests typically do not reach (Ndlozi, 2015). UKZN property has been vandalised and set on fire on multiple occasions of protest. Kujeke (2016) and Mavunga (2019) indicate that students were violent during the #FeesMustFall campaign.

Robins (2014, p. 93) identifies changes in protest strategies in the digital era: "the post-apartheid age has witnessed the materialisation of a proliferation of media technologies as well as new forms of media-based political mobilisation". Protesting strategies have changed. Today, there is also digital protesting (Tréré, 2012); and, as previously stated, protests on university campuses appear to have become more (and more frequently) violent than they used to be under apartheid. The current generation was not part of the struggle during the era of apartheid, however; yet it exhibits a *modus operandi* similar to that of those years. According to Oxlund (2010), university students presently encounter numerous difficulties like those encountered during the apartheid era (Koen et al., 2006). Can we then say the culture of violent protest action is one passed down from generation to generation? And why is it still as violent as it used to be under apartheid? This needs to be investigated further by other scholars.

There are many reasons why student protests occur in universities and other institutions of higher learning. Nationally, the typical motives are ongoing financial exclusion, racism,

sexism, gender-based violence, and the slow rate of decolonisation (Manderson, 2016). Nakalanzi (2019) revealed numerous reasons for student protest actions including delays in the disbursement of student funds by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), tuition fee increments, lack of student engagement in and by university management, financial and academic exclusions, to mention but a few. Luescher et al. (2020) revealed that issues facing students had been recurring grievances throughout the past 25 years. If attending to these grievances is not fast-tracked in the course of the academic year, protesters often resort to violence. Can the failure to address these recurring issues be seen as fostering conditions that may lead to the violent behaviour shown by the students? If not, then why do the protests become violent? A tertiary institution is a place to learn and develop academically and be prepared for the job market. If this is the case, why do students risk a potential life of future prosperity through the job market by tainting their image and that of their institution by participating in hooliganism during protest action? Puzzled by these questions, we sought to gain insight into the problem so that it could be developed further, and further thinking and engagements on these issues could be stimulated.

Hooliganism

The definition of hooliganism is vague and broad and there are several behaviours that can be categorized as hooliganism. They include public disturbances, stone-throwing, mugging, stabbing, armed assaults, blasphemy, singing ribald songs, selling pornographic material in public, cursing at or otherwise molesting women, shoving and beating innocent pedestrians, tormenting domestic animals, destroying property, and gang-fighting (Tanner, 2000). According to Merriam-Webster, hooliganism is a term to describe any “rowdy, violent, or destructive behaviour” (Merriam-Webster, 2021). There are many different theories about the origins of the term ‘hooliganism’ (Kuru, 2009, as cited in Gumusqul & Acet, 2016, p. 32). It has been thought that the hooligan concept was derived from the *Daily News* when it gave this name to fans that fought during a sports match in 1898 because of a drunken man named Patrick Hooligan. Today, a hooligan is a person who sees violence as favourable, harms his environment, and displays wild behaviour (Sahin, 2003, as cited in Gumusqul & Acet, 2016, p. 32).

It can be argued that hooligan behaviour describes the behaviour typical of some participants when students engage in rioting protest actions. And yet, the violent student protests and demonstrations are usually not classified as hooliganism. Violence seems to have become normalised; to the extent that when students participate in violent behaviour during protests, they are regarded by some as revolutionists instead of hooligans, despite exhibiting the very same behaviour described by Tanner (2000). They throw stones at the police and security guards, mug non-protesting students, sing revolutionary songs, curse at those students and ordinary people who are not part of their protest actions, and destroy or vandalise university property. The cars of passers-by usually are also targeted. This normalisation may be an indirect consequence of South Africa’s history of protesting under the apartheid regime, when violent protest actions were part of the repertoire of liberation movements.

Therefore, for this article, hooliganism refers to disruptive or unlawful behaviour, such as rioting, bullying and vandalism, usually connected with crowds at sporting events. The term has been derived from sporting events where it describes unlawful spectator behaviour, such as rioting and vandalism. The study adopted this term as an attempt to refer to the disruptive behaviour of students exhibited during violent protest actions, whose behaviour can be likened to that of hooligans at a sporting event; since their disruptive actions often encompass vandalism of university property, rioting accompanied by revolutionary songs, arson, assaulting other students who are not part of the protest, and causing chaos and destruction. All these actions perpetrated by the students are viewed as hooliganism.

Finally, as Kuru (2000) points out, the important thing for the hooligans at a sporting event is fighting and vandalism – irrespective of whether their team wins or loses. Likewise, the students' aim during violent protest actions, irrespective of the negotiations underway with management, is to create chaos, disruption, vandalise, and raise fires, disrupting the university's normal functioning. Stuurman (2018) acknowledged that the instability among students at universities is not expected to fade any time soon in a democratic South Africa. This has been evidenced by the violent protests occurring at the beginning of every academic year.

Theoretical Framework

For this article, we adopted the social learning theory by Albert Bandura (1977) to better understand the factors that lead to student violence and hooliganism during protest action. From Bandura's perspective, social behaviour is the result of observational learning and reinforced learning. Hesselink-Louw (2009) emphasises that violent behaviour is best explained through theories because social actors select and interpret the behaviour. The theory is then applied to explain the behaviour.

Social learning theory

When looking at aggression, Bandura (1978) sought to determine how aggressive behaviours are established, why individuals behave antagonistically, and how to determine if an individual will continue to display patterns of aggression (Warburton & Anderson, 2015). According to Walinga (2019), individuals can attain new behaviour through the observational learning process called imitation. This theory is valuable in explaining how people learn by imitating influential figures (e.g. friends, family members, people they look up to with shared beliefs such as student leaders) and modelling their behaviour if it is rewarded (Sutton, 2021).

Through social learning processes such as observational learning, violence becomes used as a habitual response to conflict during some student protest actions by channels of learned behaviour (Bandura, 1983; Widom, 1989). The theory also maintains that violence is a cycle passed from one generation to another through observational learning. The theory is based on the idea that we learn from others in a social context by observing their behaviours and people then develop similar behaviours. After observing the behaviour

of others, people assimilate and imitate that behaviour, especially if their observational experiences are positive ones or include rewards related to the observed behaviour. In this study we shared the same sentiments as Bandura. We believe that during violent protest actions, students learn violent behaviour in a social context of protesting by observing the rewarded violent behaviours of influential students (student leaders), which they may perceive as rewarding as they instigate a quick response from the vice-chancellor and management. According to Bandura (1978), imitation involves the actual reproduction of observed motor activities. Imitation has also been found to be “... more important in the initial acquisition and performance of novel behaviour than in its maintenance or cessation of behavioural patterns once established” (Akers & Jennings, 2019). His major premise was that we can learn by observing others (Bandura, 1978). He considered vicarious experience to be the typical way that human beings change. He used the term “modelling” to describe the process of response acquisition by the observation of another’s response and copying it. He claimed that modelling could have as much impact as a direct experience.

Ahead of our study, we observed that students imitated the behaviour by influential students involved and modelled it during a protest action. They observed the behaviour of others, learned from it and repeated it. This meant that if student leaders acted in a hooligan manner during protest action, observing students would act as hooligans as well by imitating the same behaviour to achieve the desired effect (i.e. a response from the university management).

Social learning theory predicts that criminal behaviour is a positive function of the degree to which a person possesses favourable attitudes towards hooligan behaviour. Consequently, hooliganism during student protests is prevalent among students who possess favourable attitudes towards violence during a protest action in achieving desirable effects. These attitudes may approve, disapprove or be morally neutral towards violence. Social learning theory also predicts that individuals associate with people or other sources of information containing social meanings that directly promote hooligan behaviour.

According to social learning theory, exposure to other individuals’ behaviours and attitudes can significantly impact one’s own behaviours and attitudes. Therefore, non-violent students who associate themselves with violent students during student protests indirectly promote violence. Other students may identify with those who used violence during student protest action historically to address their issues, such as the Soweto Uprising on 16 June 1976. Consequently, some students imitate violence from other university student protests because it has historically worked and has been displayed throughout mass media. They adopt violent tactics due to how violence has seemed to work historically and how it has been effective in drawing the attention of the vice-chancellor.

Finally, social learning theory also argues that a person experiences reinforcement for criminal behaviour. According to social learning theory, an act expected to produce a greater balance of benefits than costs is more likely to be engaged in. Consequently, during student protest action, those who engage in hooligan behaviour view its effects as rewarding rather than costly. In contrast, those who do not engage in violence view it as more costly than rewarding. The cost is usually fear of arrest and injury during a violent

student protest (Risager & Thorup, 2016). These students experience a behaviour change and avoid the university campus out of fear.

Bandura (1978) used the term *motivation* to refer to rewards and punishments. The use of physical force accompanies a student belief. Would he go to jail for striking an enemy, or gain status for being an activist? In our review of the literature, we found that the leading factor for the onset of hooligan behaviour has been associated with frustrated protesting students who model violence because it has been rewarded historically. Witnessing the actions of others, especially people that are close to us, can affect our participation in both conforming and non-conforming behaviours (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, & Medicine, 2018).

Students are exposed to behavioural models that indirectly promote violent behaviour. These models are most likely to be people leading the protest action. Students observe the violent behaviour of their leaders during protest action. Should the leaders with whom they identify resort to hooliganism, they will observe the behaviour of their representatives with access to favourable definitions (e.g. yielding a quick and favourable response from the VC) to the behaviour and imitate the violence. Social learning theory provides an insight into the factors that contribute to hooliganism, and, in the present case, the effect violence has on the university environment.

Method

This study employed a case study research design. Neale et al. (2006) define a case study as a story about something unique, special, or interesting about individuals, organisations, or events. Our aim to ascertain the effects of student hooligan behaviour during student protest actions at UKZN informed the choice of a case study design for this research project. In attempting to understand the instigation and the effects of violence during protest actions at UKZN, a qualitative method seemed appropriate. This approach is deemed best when the researcher wants to explore a subject they do not know much about in advance or when they want to understand the meanings, motives, or reasons of the phenomenon in question (Cropley, 2019). We use the social learning theory by Bandura (1977) to better understand the factors that lead to student hooliganism and the effects of violence on the university community during protest action.

The research aimed to better understand the current research subject by interviewing affected UKZN participants with first-hand experiences. Kim et al. (2017) postulate that qualitative research is "... important and appropriate for research questions focused on discovering the who, what, and where of events or experiences and on gaining insights from informants regarding a poorly understood phenomenon". It is in the vein of the assertion in Kim et al. (2017) that this study embraced a qualitative approach.

Research setting

The study was conducted at UKZN, which has a rich history of hooligan behaviour during student protests. UKZN was established on 1 January 2004 when the former

universities of Durban-Westville and Natal and the Edgewood College of Education were merged. The university comprises five campuses in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, namely, Edgewood in Pinetown, Howard College and Nelson Mandela School of Medicine, both in Durban, and Pietermaritzburg and Westville campuses.

Sampling and procedure

In keeping with a qualitative research design, the study used non-probability, purposive sampling to identify research participants. In purposive sampling, research participants are chosen because they illustrate explicit features of a particular study (Vos et al., 2011), based on the researcher's judgement in selecting the sample (Neuman, 2013). We recruited members of the university community that meet the primary inclusion criteria, which was that one must have witnessed a violent student protest and been part of the university community for more than three years.

The sample of 25 participants included 10 student leaders, 10 Bachelor Honours students, and five risk management staff (RMS). All of whom were part of the university community and were affected by student hooliganism during protest actions. The participation of student leaders was secured through cooperation with the Student Representative Council (SRC), from which body student leaders were selected based on their experience and willingness to participate in the study. They represent the university student body; moreover, their opinions as members of the community who are directly involved with university management, staff and the students were critical. According to Barasa (2002), university student leaders have been seen more as abrasive young politicians critical of the existing establishment and overseeing a renaissance in progress.

We also went to a Bachelor Honours class and selected students after having asked for verbal permission from the lecturer. UKZN-registered Bachelor Honours students were selected because they had been enrolled at UKZN for more than three years. Therefore, they were more likely to have had experiences as witnesses or victims or even perpetrators of violence during student protest actions. They were selected to give clarity on the factors that contribute to student hooliganism behaviour and the effects of violent student protests on the university community.

RMS staff members were selected based on their availability and experience of the phenomenon of interest to give their opinion on student hooligan behaviour during student protest as they were directly involved with the safety and security of the university community. Only permanent UKZN RMS staff gave their opinions. They were asked to share the ideal university operations protocol during student protests and to clarify how the university as a whole is affected by the violence emanating from student protest action and the measures in place to ensure the safety and security of the university community.

The participants consented to providing detailed accounts and were also able to express their thoughts and feelings regarding the factors that contribute to hooliganism and the effects of violence during student protest action.

Research ethics and research permission

The permission to conduct this study was requested and attained from the responsible authority at UKZN, and ethical clearance was granted by means of certificate number HSS/1742/017M. We also considered the participants' indication of willingness to participate in the study.

Data collection

In-depth interviews were conducted because of their significance in allowing participants to provide detailed information. Each face-to-face interview lasted for 30-45 minutes, depending on the responses provided by participants. Interviews were conducted over a week. The participants were asked to respond to open-ended questions regarding their knowledge of student hooligan behaviour during protest actions within a university environment. The study was guided by an interview schedule to facilitate the discussion, incorporating the topic and themes to be covered. The items on the guide were generally minimal to foster opportunities for in-depth discussion.

Data analysis and trustworthiness

The interviews were transcribed and then analysed using thematic analysis. We familiarised ourselves with the collected data. This was achieved by listening to the recorded audio interviews to have a clear perspective on topical subjects under discussion. With this, we were able to extricate the themes, and also familiarised ourselves with the data by reading through the field notes recorded during data collection (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Qualitative research is reliable when it represents the experiences of the study participants precisely. Credibility, conformability, dependability, and transferability are utilized to quantify the trustworthiness of data. This study will adopt Guba's (1981) model for establishing trustworthiness. Guba's model identifies truth, credibility, applicability, transferability, consistency, dependability, neutrality, and confirmability as criteria for establishing trustworthiness (Polit & Beck 2004, p. 36; Streubert Speziale & Carpenter, 2011, p. 38).

Results and Discussion

The two main themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview material were (1) the factors that lead to hooligan behaviour during student protests, and (2) the effects of student protest action on the UKZN community.

Factors contributing to student hooliganism at UKZN

It was found that poor communication between student leaders and university management causes conflict in the university community and results in student hooliganism when student grievances are not addressed.

Before students embark on protest action, the student leaders raise student grievances to the university management, namely student academic exclusion, tuition fee increments, and lack of student engagement in running the universities. Subsequently, when their grievances are not addressed, they embark on a violent protest, which attracts sanctions from the university management (Morwe et al., 2018). The quotations below reveal that student leader efforts to communicate with university management seem ineffective:

One thing we do ... Before we embark on mass demonstration the case is always that we have tried all possible means to solve the issue without going to a strike or mass demonstration for that matter. So the university is the one that mostly provokes students by taking irrational decisions or reactional decisions to some extent or decisions that do not seek to transform the university community and then the students react on that but before they react on that through a protest they always go to a boardroom and engage and try to come up with the amicable solutions in trying to resolve that. (Student leader 1)

Student leaders don't see eye to eye with university and then the university says we know that since we don't see eye to eye you are going to the streets and then when we go to the streets they say we are ready for you and then they deploy external factors such as deploying the police, dogs and the pepper spray. For example, we ask for the roads to be fixed and they would say No, we don't have funds. (Student leader 7)

The findings also suggest that the most common factors leading to student hooligan behaviour during protests were the engagement of the services of Mi7, a private security company, and the police (SAPS) by the university management to manage and control protest actions and their use of weapons when managing crowds. The presence of violence in any community affects community members and the various community operations. Moreover, the impact of hooligan behaviour on the community is often neglected. Figure 1 illustrates the nature of student hooliganism and violence between students and law enforcement officials.

The three images that comprise Figure 1 depict the severe degree of hooliganism displayed by the students, evident in the forms of destruction of property, rioting, clashes with the police, and disturbing the university's operations.

The UKZN community has suffered violence during almost every student protest action in the last decade (Sibeko, 2016; Wicks, 2017; Singh, 2019; Nxumalo, 2020), and it is evident that hooligan behaviour during student protests affects the university community and has significant implications. Nyamnjoh et al. (2012) deduced that the interposition of the SAPS and Mi7 into the context of a student protest, breeds a dialectic of violence. Student leaders that were interviewed reported that the tactics used by the SAPS and Mi7 to control and manage the protest action instigated hooligan behaviour. Their tactics engendered hooliganism as it led to students retaliating violently to those tactics and thus becoming rebels.



Figure 1: Severity of violence during the #FeesMustFall student protests

Similarly, in this study, the participants believed that when the SAPS and Mi7, deployed by university management, used force to disperse the student crowd, the crowd used violence in return. To some extent, the students became much more violent and directed their anger towards the university buildings. Sigmund Freud referred to this as a displacement defence mechanism. Instead of channelling their anger towards university management, they channelled it to what seemed to be owned by the management.

Student leaders revealed that the university management incites violence by deploying the SAPS and Mi7. Evidently, student leaders viewed university management as the core perpetrator of violence when deploying the SAPS and Mi7. The deployment happens when student leaders and university management fail to resolve issues through negotiation.

Consequently, most participants were of the view that students always react when the SAPS are deployed. Student leaders added that the draconian policies employed by the university during student protest actions frustrated students. It was also revealed that students retaliated to measures the university deployed to curb and prevent student hooligan behaviour during protest actions. They perceived these measures as provocative and retaliated. To students, these measures illustrated the university managements intention to end the protest action without reaching a consensus. Student leaders shared:

Students, we are usually provoked by the deployment of Mi7 and SAPS because it indicates that the management would go out of its way to stop what we are doing. (Bachelor Honours student 6)

It is the university and the police that initiated the violence; these are the two people that are responsible and external forces deployed by the university they are the ones that cause the chaos. (Student leader 3)

The university is the one that mostly provokes students by taking irrational decisions or reactionary decisions to some extent or decisions that do not seek to transform the university community and then the students react on that. (Student leader 5)

Correspondingly, risk officers admitted that the members of the deployed SAPS incited student hooliganism because they used weapons in the university environment. One risk officer said:

The people with weapons initiate violence because we do not have weapons, and there is usually no violence when we are around because we do not have any weapons. The SAPS shoot the students, and the students fight back whichever way they can. Therefore, it can be the students but not us ... (Risk Officer 5)

Most risk officers reported that armed law enforcement agencies were the initiators of violence. Some risk officers argued that a university community should always be a weapon-free zone. Student leaders believed that the university management and Mi7 were the core initiators of violence because the management deployed Mi7 to manage protest action by any means necessary. Fomunyam obtained a similar pattern of results and found that one of the contributory factors towards violence during student protests in university communities were clashes with private security and police, deployed to suppress protest action (Fomunyam, 2017). In collaboration with university management, the law enforcement agents use force to manage students during protest actions, and students always react, either towards university management or law enforcement.

Most student leaders vented that the SAPS treated students like criminals by using rubber bullets and tear gas, which resulted in more violence. Student leaders also indicated that police officers targeted student leaders in their residences after the protest and sometimes during the protest. Two student leaders mentioned:

Usually, the police target people that they will arrest during late hours after the protest. These targets are student leaders, and they are fetched in their rooms by force and arrested. (Student leader 4)

We are not safe because of what usually follows after the protest and or even immediately during the protest where leaders are collected from their rooms in the night by virtue of just being leaders in the protest. (Student leader 8)

[P]olice fetch us in our rooms at night and we get arrested for leading at that moment no one can protect my safety even that RMS. It goes both ways for me. (Student leader 2)

The student leaders suggested during the interviews that the university management usually issued a list of names of student leaders to be arrested. Student leaders were very concerned with being harassed and arrested by the police in their university rooms after demonstrations ended (usually at night). They believed that the management would instruct the SAPS to arrest certain student leaders who were part of the protest or leading it. Student leaders have been apprehended at night after being victimised and interrogated (Oxlund, 2016; Thamm, 2015).

It has been shown in this study and other studies that using force (brutality) by the police creates cycles of violence when protesters react (Reynolds-Stenson, 2018; Maguire et al., 2018; Reinders, 2019). In order to break these cycles, the SAPS needs to apply certain basic principles of public policing, including containment, holding the line, facilitation, and negotiation. These principles are effective in de-escalating and managing protests as well as in maintaining public order. With this understanding, the Mi7 security company and the police should approach crowd management situations with extreme care and sensitivity because the use of unnecessary stringent measures against student protesters could be construed as denying them their right to protest.

The theory of Bandura maintains that violence is a cycle passed from one generation to another through observational learning, which can be attributed to the demonstrations that have been happening throughout South African history and could have been passed from generation to generation. After observing the behaviour of others, students assimilate and imitate that behaviour, especially if their observational experiences are positive ones or include rewards related to the observed behaviour. In this study, we believe that students observe the behaviour of others when demonstrating using violence, assimilate it and imitate it by acting violently to yield positive rewards by management agreeing to meet their grievances. This means that if other students acted in a hooligan manner during protest action, observing students would act as hooligans as well by imitating the same behaviour. Thus, the study finds that hooligan behaviour is learned through observing other students acting violently through modelling.

Moreover, management usually positively reinforces this student hooligan behaviour by acquiescing to the demands of the protesting students. To break the cycle, management should be dealing with the issues at hand before they instigate the violent student protest actions.

The effects of student protest action on the UKZN community

This study found that the community was susceptible to academic, psychological, and behaviour-related effects. Similarly, Glewwe and Kremer (2006) found that individual academic achievement can be influenced by several factors such as personal, household and school characteristics as well as local and national socio-economic conditions. Kallsen et al. (2020) also obtained similar results, showing that no matter how it enters the building, violence simply stands in the way of having an environment conducive to education.

This study found that protesters disrupted classes using pepper spray, burning buildings, and clashing with SAPS and Mi7, resulting in slow academic progress. The quotes below capture the student's sentiments about the effect of violence on academic progress:

For students that are just starting, it is their first protest and it is violent it is going to affect even their performance at the end of the day. So personally, I am one person who is not entirely bothered by what happens because I have witnessed many and I know as student you are going to have to bounce back but then I fear for those who are seeing the violent protests for the first times because I remember for me the first one shook me and it took a while for me to get back on track with my academic studies. (Student leader 9)

You cannot even study, how will you study when you are in fear? And while you are attending you will most likely be chased out of the lecture venue by protesters, and lecturers are forced to stop lecturing. (Bachelor Honours student 3)

The above reveals that student protest actions affect academic performance because protesters often disrupt classes. It was also revealed that first-year students exposed to a violent protest action for the first time face a greater burden to catch up on their studies. Antunes and Ahlin (2017) indicated that exposure to community violence, either as a witness or as a victim, has been found to produce negative learning outcomes for students.

Student protest actions have affected the university operations and its community to the extent that the university management can choose to suspend operations. This has resulted in the university's closure at times. Students have been faced with the burden of having to catch up on lectures and tests when university operations resumed. Therefore, the outcome of a protest is also associated with increased academic workloads for students.

Bacchini and Esposito (2020) highlight that any form of violence, such as family violence, community violence, or child maltreatment, could have different effects (i.e. psychological, behavioural effects) on those exposed to it. Esposito et al. (2017) indicate that victimisation during a violent student protest action had been found to compromise a person's ability to regulate their emotions. In contrast, exposure by witnessing community violence might lead to depression and increased anxiety (Bach & Louw, 2010) due to feelings of insecurity and perceptions of being unworthy of protection. Per Mitchell et al.:

Exposure to violence involving highly lethal weapons is associated with higher trauma symptoms, over and above exposure to all other types of violence, making it a strong contributor to depression, anxiety, and aggression. (2015, p. 11)

Correspondingly students reported being anxious in the presence of SAPS and Mi7 due to the violence that occurs during protest action. It was found that members of the UKZN community, specifically Bachelor Honours students and student leaders, feared going to campus, thinking they might be the next victim after experiencing violence and hooliganism during previous student protests. Kallsen et al. (2020) indicated that regardless of whether a learner's fear of violence is real or exaggerated, it is often stimulated by previous exposure. It was found that some experienced a change in behaviour by withdrawing from attending classes because of previous exposure to violence. A synopsis of their expressed fear is provided by the quotes below:

Anything can happen during the student protest such as when police throw tear gas and there is usually a stampede and you find that some students get hurt in the process, therefore you always have to be cautious around me because anything can happen at any moment. Sometimes you end up getting hurt when you are not even part of the protest. (Bachelor Honours student 4)

[F]irstly what you think about if you live in off-campus residences ... once there is something that says there is a protest on campus and then you get those who will say to each other they will not go to campus because they do not want to get involved because

the police don't come to campus to see if people are getting mugged, instead they are on the lookout of those who will be deviant in the protest. Then when there is a quarrel between the protesters and law enforcement, even when you are not part of the protest you get affected. Even the lecturers, when lectures are being disturbed with pepper spray and everything that is not right, the sticks that students are carrying that you have no clue who they are going to hit. (Bachelor Honours student 9)

The presence of SAPS is for the purpose of instilling fear on us, we are threatened for being leaders and jailed for fighting for what is right. (Student leader 10)

The majority of the participants shared the same sentiment of fear of harassment on campus, even as bystanders. As a result, they chose to avoid the university environment. Students shared their fears of the chaos on campus because students get injured when they clash with armed police and private security personnel and attending classes because they are sensorily disturbed when pepper spray is used by security officials to disperse protesters. Moreover, SAPS and Mi7 had difficulty identifying who was and was not protesting within the university community, resulting in all members of the community becoming potential victims of violence.

Richmond (2014) revealed that students exposed to violence are vulnerable to psychological effects, especially when there is a lack of support services. Similarly, this study found that student leaders and students do not have adequate counselling services to help and/or cope with community members exposed to violence.

... no, the one that we have is not effective in assisting those who are traumatised during the violent protest. (Student leader 8)

Our counselling services need to be protested even... that department is very understaffed. We need adequate support structures here at UKZN; what is happening is a joke. (Student leader 6)

Student leaders reported a lack of counselling services to cater for university community members affected by violence during student protests. This indicated that students become psychologically affected by violence and need adequate counselling services to ease traumatic experiences of the university community. Students stated that the counselling services are short-staffed to assist 15 students daily.

The participants identified the university environment as a community that wreaks fear of victimisation and property damage. The fear manifests through anxiety and concentration problems. It can also affect their daily functions. For example, the traumatised may avoid the spaces where the traumatic incident happened, which will hinder the academic progress of the students and affect the functionality of the university.

With SAPS and Mi7 carrying weapons and often using force to manage protestors, the data gathered revealed that the academic, psychological, and behaviour-related effects of violence are prevalent in the university community, and significantly impact the community's sense of safety on campus and learning outcomes. Due to previous exposure to violence (Kallsen et al., 2020), students avoid the university campus and have observed

that anyone can be victimised (i.e. injured) during student protest action because law enforcement fails in distinguishing protesting students from non-protesting students. These students learn through observing the cycle of violence (Bandura, 1983) during protest actions and decide to avoid the university environment, believing that the act of avoidance will save them from the effects of violence (i.e. being a potential victim).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study found that the different factors that contribute to student hooliganism include poor communication between student leaders and university management regarding student grievances, the presence of SAPS on campus, SAPS being armed and shooting rubber bullets at students, and the presence of private security/Mi7. Some of the students who engage in violent student protest actions do so because they perceive university management as irresponsible to their grievances. The finding revealed that violence during protest actions has become not only the problem-solving mechanism, but it has also become the language of the protesters. Students use hooliganism as a language through which to be heard and the language the university management uses to signal attentiveness to the protesting students. The violent acts perpetrated by students during the demonstrations can influence other students to become violent in a process of modelling. Students will become hooligans simply because other students act in a hooligan manner. The operating assumption seems to be that to achieve goals, they need to be violent. Such violent acts can be assimilated and performed by other students, whether on the same campus or another campus.

This study found that the university community has been affected by violent protest actions in several ways, psychologically, emotionally, and behaviourally, resulting from the fear of violence. Some community members felt they could not freely access the university environment because they constantly feared what could happen to them. Some protesters underwent a behaviour change by withdrawing from the university environment, for example, while others became violent or irrational during students protest actions. The exposure to violence or being a victim was found to be an experience that left most community members vulnerable and feeling unsafe within the UKZN environment. These community members avoid the university environment as a response to fear during a student protest action. Students who have been adversely affected by violence or threats of violence need psychological support. However, the UKZN counselling service has a limited number of professionals, being able to assist only about 15 students per day. As a result, when students are faced with such difficulties, they may become fearful and frustrated. And while some students may end up tending towards avoiding the university environment, others may resort to participating in the violent protests. UKZN needs to immediately address student issues, cater to student needs and implement safety and security measures that will help the institution become safer and more secure as an essential beacon in pursuing excellence. No institution can function effectively with minimal support services.

To reduce and end hooligan behaviour during student protest action, the university management, protesters, law enforcement and the university community at large need to

understand that a university is a community where differences of opinion are common, and conflict must be managed. Moreover, a university environment should always be a space that accommodates and is conducive to the coexistence of different voices, different ideologies, several ways of being, various ways of seeing and learning, and it should not privilege one over the other when dealing with dissent. A university community is complex, and ideal methods of conflict resolution should reflect an awareness and acceptance of these complexities.

Negotiations between the university management and the protesters need to be, where possible, continuous and visible, not only “behind closed doors”. The university management and student leaders need to establish clear communication channels to avoid mistrust and conflict. The police and private security need to understand what is expected of them during student protest actions while considering the rights of the public and the protesters. The police need to manage protests without resorting to force and treat the university environment as a weapon-free zone. They need to apply certain basic principles of public policing, including containment, holding the line, facilitation and negotiation.

We maintain that peace and reconciliation initiatives need to be explored to repair relations when student protests occur at universities. It appears that some universities have been highly polarised after experiencing protest action. Genuine dialogues between university management, staff and students are needed to ensure that existing hostilities are resolved. A continuation of violent protests will be destructive and divisive, preventing the university from moving forward, united, on its path to healing.

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