

**A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH TO MANAGING BULLYING
BEHAVIOUR AMONG LEARNERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN PRIMARY
SCHOOLS**

by

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DECLARATION

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Officially captured title: A whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour among learners in South African primary schools.

I Lidzhegu Muvhoni Edward declare that the thesis whose title appear herewith above is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledge by means of complete references.



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Date: 17 August 2019

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SUMMARY

A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH TO MANAGING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG LEARNERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

by

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Department: Educational Leadership and Management

University: University of South Africa

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

Keywords: Whole school approach; Educators, Learners, bullying behaviour, Primary school, Bullies, Bullied, Bystanders, Cyberbullying

The study entitled: A Whole school approach to managing bullying behaviour among learners in South African primary schools, used a qualitative approach that was underpinned by explorative narrative design to explore the whole-school approach strategies employed by primary schools to curb bullying behaviour among South African learners. It also analysed the nature and extent of bullying behaviour among learners in primary school learners, as well as reviewed the existing knowledge system about the management of bullying behaviour thereof.

The study findings reveal that educators, school principals, learners and parents acknowledge that all forms of bullying amongst primary school learners are a serious concern that should not be shrugged off but must be addressed because ultimately negative consequences thereof effect both the bully and bullied learners. A more holistic communalitarian whole school model to managing bullying behaviour among learners in South African primary schools will need the buy in of the entire community in order effectively manage and curb the scourge.

BRIEF CURRICULUM VITAE OF LIDZHEGU MUVHONI EDWARD (3150 2741)

Mr. Lidzhegu Muvhoni Edward was born and grew up at Vuvha Village under Makhado Municipality in the Limpopo Province- South Africa. Edward Lidzhegu obtained a Master's degree in Education Management from the University of Johannesburg (UJ) in 2013. He is currently working in the Department of Correctional Services at Thohoyandou Management as an educator.

His research study entitled: **A Whole school approach to managing bullying behaviour among learners in South African primary schools**, explored the whole- school approach strategies aimed at reducing bullying behaviour among primary school learners. It also analysed the nature and extent of bullying behaviour among learners in primary school learners, as well as reviewed the existing knowledge system about the management of bullying behaviour.

The study findings reveal that educators, school principals, learners, and parents agreed that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners is a serious problem that requires serious attention. Individual approaches whereby educators act in isolation to tackle bullying behaviour, have proven short-sighted and ineffectual. A whole –school approach seeks to address school bullying in a collective manner.

Among the main recommendations proposed in this study are;

- that primary school educators be empowered through workshops and other forms of training regarding the use of the whole –school approach in managing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners.
- investigate the impact of stakeholder communication on bullying among learners.
- Investigate curriculum intervention and skills development training approaches to reduce bullying behaviour amongst primary school learner.

ABSTRACT

Bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners is a serious problem that is escalating every day. Learners who are bullied daily – on school premises as well as to and from school – have trouble in gaining confidence, forming healthy friendships, and concentrating on their education. Bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners has serious physical, psychological, emotional, social, and educational consequences. For this reason, it should not be ignored or regarded as a normal aspect of school life or as part of growing up by primary school management, the Department of Basic Education (DBE), other education agencies, and school communities. Primary school principals, educators, learners, school management team (SMT) members, and learners' parents have the responsibility to eradicate bullying actions in primary schools. Failure to stop bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners would result in high dropout rates and poor academic performance. This research study proposes a whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour. This approach involves learners' parents, educators, school communities, learners, SMTs, school-governing bodies (SGBs), education circuits and districts, as well as educational psychologists in creating a positive school environment that fosters learners' development. In this thesis, the whole-school approach is identified as the most effective method to be used by primary school authorities to eradicate or manage bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. In addition, this researcher applies the social learning theory, the socio-ecological theory, symbolic interactionism and Dan Olweus' theory in order to understand bullying actions between primary school learners. Furthermore, a qualitative method is used because it allows for an in-depth, descriptive, and contextual approach to this topic. In this research, the qualitative method involved an extensive data collection – on many variables – over a period, as the study investigated bullying in its environmental setting from a holistic perspective. The study was based on a phenomenological qualitative research design. The study used the interpretivist paradigm in order to comprehend how individuals in everyday settings construct meanings and explain

the events occurring in their world. Population for this study comprised of principals, learners, parents, educators and SMT. Thus, the study participants were purposively selected from the relevant primary schools. Focus group discussions, as well as semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with school principals, educators, learners, learners' parents and SMTs. The interviews were conducted using an interview schedule and additional probing questions. The participants' responses were transcribed; and categories, themes and sub-themes were identified.

The study's findings revealed that educators, school principals, and learners' parents agreed that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners was a serious problem that should not be shrugged off or overlooked. Instead, it should be addressed, because it has negative effects on both bullying and bullied learners. Individual approaches whereby educators act in isolation to tackle bullying behaviour, have proven short-sighted and ineffectual. For the problem to be effectively addressed, a whole-school approach strategy needs to be applied. A whole-school approach seeks to address school bullying in a collective way. It involves all members of the primary school community, learners, SMTs, educators, non-educators, school governors, and external organisations in preventing or addressing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners.

Hence, it is recommended that primary school educators be empowered through workshops and other forms of training regarding the use of the whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. All primary school stakeholders need to work together in tackling bullying behaviour. They should consider having a strong partnership with police. Working together, all relevant stakeholders could curb bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. In addition, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) should provide primary schools with an anti-bullying policy.

OPERATIONAL KEYWORDS

Whole school approach, Educators, Learners, bullying behaviour, Primary school, Bullies, Bullied, Bystanders, Cyberbullying

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Annexure 5: Ethical clearance certificate



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2017/02/15

Ref: 2017/02/15/31502741/5/MC

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A whole school approach to managing bullying behaviour among learners in primary schools

Qualifications: D Ed in education management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2017/02/15 to 2019/02/15.

The medium risk application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2017/02/15 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

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ETHICS STATEMENT

I Lidzhegu Muvhoni Edward (student number 31502741) the author of the thesis whose title appears hitherto has obtained permission and approval for the research whose narrative is detailed in this work. I, the author, declare that I have observed and complied with the ethical standards required in terms of the University of South Africa's code of ethics for researchers and the policy guidelines for responsible research.



Signature:

Date: 17 August 2019

Lidzhegu Muvhoni Edward

LANGUAGE EDITOR DECLARATION



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Signed:

2019/08/15

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my loving wife, Virginia Rudzani, and my children, Wavhudi and Wamashudu, in appreciation of their encouragement and incessant support throughout the steps of the completion of this study. This thesis is also dedicated to my dear mother, late Makwarela Lidzhegu, my brother Musiwalo, my sister Muangedzo, and my father Jack. With tears in my eyes, I saw you suffer, I watched you fade away; a part of me went with you, when God took you. I deeply miss you!

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MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL!

LIST OF FIGURES

Para	Name of table and figure	PAGE
2.1	An illustration of Bronfenbrenner's ecological system Theory	26
2.2	An adaption of The Bullying Circle	29
2.3	Factors influencing bullying behaviour	51
3.1	Phases of thematic analysis	83
6.1	Communalitarian model to curb bullying in primary Schools	180

LIST OF TABLES

PARA		PAGE
3.1	List of participants selected for the focus group interviews	
3.2	Sequential steps followed to analyse data	135
4.1	Summary of the themes and categories	

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Definition
DBE	Department of Basic Education
EST	Ecological System Theory
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SASA	South African School Act
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SMS	Short Message Services
SMT	School Management Team
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WSA	Whole School Approach

CONTENT PAGE

CONTENTS	PAGE
SUMMARY OF THE STUDY	ii
BRIEF CURRICULUM VITAE OF THE AUTHOR	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
OPERATIONAL KEYWORDS	vi
DECLARATION	vi
INSTITUTIONAL ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	vii
AUTHOR'S ETHICS STATEMENT	viii
LANGUAGE EDITOR'S DECLARATION	ix
DEDICATION	x
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF ACRONYMS	xii

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 BACKGROUND TO STUDY	1
1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY	4
1.4 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM	5
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	6
1.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	6
1.7 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	7
1.8 RESEARCH PARADIGM	7
1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	8
1.10 LITERATURE REVIEW	11

1.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS IN QUALITATIVE STUDY	12
1.11.1 Social learning theory	13
1.11.2 Dependability	13
1.11.3 Confirmability	14
1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	14
1.12.1 Informed consent.....	14
1.12.2 Preventing harm	15
1.12.3 Anonymity, confidentiality and privacy.....	16
1.13 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS	17
1.14 DEFINATION OF THE KEY CONCEPTS	17
1.15 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	24
1.16 STRUCTURE/CHAPTERS	24
1.17 PROJECTION FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER	26
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	27
2.1 INTRODUCTION	27
2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	28
2.2.1 Symbolic interactionism.....	28
2.2.2 Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system theory	29
2.2.3 Dan Olweus’ Bullying Prevention Programme theory	34
2.2.4 Social learning theory	36
2.3 HISTORICAL VIEWS ON BULLYING IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS	39
2.3.1 Introduction.....	39
2.3.2 Bullying/ a definition.....	39
2.3.3 Origins of bullying behaviour	41

2.3.4	Bullying in certain other countries	42
2.3.5	Bullying in South Africa.....	43
2.3.6	Suggested approach in managing bullying behaviour	44
2.4	DIFFERENT TYPES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS	45
2.4.1	Physical bullying behaviour among primary school learners	46
2.4.2	Verbal and non –verbal bullying among primary school learners ..	48
2.4.3	Emotional bullying among primary school learners	49
2.4.4	Psychological bullying among primary school learners.....	50
2.4.5	Relational bullying among primary school learners	50
2.4.6	Social bullying among primary school learners.....	51
2.4.7	Extortion as bullying	52
2.4.8	Cyberbullying.....	52
2.4.9	Name-calling.....	53
2.4.10	Damage to property.....	54
2.4.11	Sexual bullying behaviour.....	54
2.4.12	Other forms of bullying among primary school learners.....	55
2.4.13	Racial bullying	56
2.4.14	Convert or hidden bullying among primary school learners.....	56
2.4.15	The extent of bullying among school learners.....	57
2.5	AREAS WHERE BULLYING OCCURS	58
2.5.1	The school playground	58
2.5.2	Stairwells.....	59
2.5.3	The toilet	59
2.5.4	The classroom	60

2.6	FACTORS INFLUENCING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AMONGST PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS	60
2.6.1	Individual factor.....	61
2.6.2	The family and home factor.....	61
2.6.3	The school factor.....	62
2.6.4	Community factor	63
2.6.5	Culture	64
2.6.6	Inborn temperament.....	64
2.6.7	Environmental influences.....	65
2.7	EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE ON TELEVISION	65
2.8	CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR.....	66
2.8.1	Consequences for the bullied.....	67
2.8.2	Physical consequences.....	67
2.8.3	Emotional consequences.....	68
2.8.4	Social consequences	69
2.8.5	Educational consequences	69
2.9	CONSEQUENCES FOR THE BULLY	70
2.10	CONSEQUENCES FOR THE VICTIMS OR BULLIED LEARNER	71
2.11	CONSEQUENCES FOR THE BYSTANDERS	72
2.12	A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO MANAGING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR	73
2.12.1	Managing bullying behaviour.....	75
2.12.2	A whole school –approach to managing bullying	75
2.13	A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH INTERVENTION STRATEGIES TO PREVENT BULLYING	78
2.13.1	Anti-bullying policies.....	78

2.13.2	Using the curriculum to tackle bullying	80
2.13.3	Encouraging victims to report bullying	81
2.13.4	Peer support	81
2.13.5	Working with bystanders	82
2.13.6	Transition	82
2.13.7	Playground supervision	83
2.13.8	Circle time	83
2.13.9	Role of educators	84
2.13.10	The role of school senior managers	85
2.13.11	The role of parents	86
2.13.12	The role of learners	87
2.13.13	No-blame approach	88
2.13.14	Buddy system	88
2.13.15	Working with professionals	89
2.13.16	Role of Educational psychologists	90
2.13.17	The role of the school	90
2.13.18	Classroom level intervention	90
2.13.19	Culture	91
2.14	CONCLUSION	92
2.15	PROJECTION FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER	92
	CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	93
3.1	INTRODUCTION	93
3.2	PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTION	93
3.2.1	Ontological assumption	94
3.2.2	Epistemological assumption	94

3.2.3	Axiological assumption	96
3.3	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	96
3.3.1	Qualitative approach inquiry	97
3.4	THE NATURE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD	97
3.5	CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	98
3.6	RESEARCH DESIGN (Explorative phenomenological study).....	100
3.6.1	Research design.....	100
3.7	RESEARCH PARADIGM.....	101
3.8	POPULATION.....	102
3.9	DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT/TECHNIQUES.....	103
3.9.1	Interviews.....	103
3.9.2	Semi-structured interviews	104
3.9.3	Document analysis.....	105
3.9.4	Focus group interviews.....	105
3.10	SAMPLE	107
3.11	UNIT OF ANALYSIS	109
3.12	DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	109
3.12.1	Data analysis strategy design	110
3.13	LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS	113
3.14	TRUSTWORTHINESS.....	114
3.14.1	Credibility	115
3.14.2	Transferability	115
3.14.3	Dependability	116
3.14.4	Confirmability	116

3.14.5	Member-checking.....	117
3.14.6	Field research.....	118
3.14.7	Verbatim accounts	118
3.14.8	Mechanically recorded data	118
3.15	EMERGING DATA TREATMENT	119
3.16	RIGOUR	119
3.17	ETHICAL CONSIDERATION	120
3.17.1	Approval for conducting research.....	120
3.17.2	Informed consent.....	121
3.17.3	Preventing harm	121
3.17.4	Anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy.....	122
3.17.5	Permission to tape-record the interviews.....	124
3.18	DATA MANAGEMENT AND SAFE STORAGE	124
3.19	CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	125
3.20	PROJECTION FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER	125
	CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTEPRETATION OF RESULTS.....	126
4.1	INTRODUCTION	126
4.2	PREPARING DATA FOR ANALYSIS	126
4.3	PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS FROM SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS.....	127
4.4	PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS	128
4.5	RECORDING THE INTERVIEWS	129
4.6	THEME ONE: PRIMARY SCHOOL BULLYING BEHAVIOUR	131
4.6.1	Definition of bullying behaviour in primary schools.....	131
4.7	THEME TWO: STRATEGIES TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH BULLYING BEHAVIOUR IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS	133

4.7.1	Whole-school approach.....	133
4.7.2	Anti-bullying policies.....	137
4.7.3	Raising awareness.....	140
4.7.4	Using the curriculum.....	141
4.7.5	Role of educators.....	142
4.7.6	Role of school senior managers.....	144
4.8	THEME THREE: AREAS WHERE SCHOOL BULLYING BEHAVIOUR OCCURS.....	145
4.8.1	The school playground.....	145
4.8.2	The toilets.....	147
4.8.3	Classroom.....	148
4.9	THEME FOUR: CONSEQUENCES OR EFFECTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR ON LEARNERS.....	149
4.9.1	Educational consequences.....	149
4.9.2	Physical consequences.....	151
4.9.3	Emotional consequences.....	151
4.9.4	Consequences for the bystanders.....	153
4.10	THEME FIVE: A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH TO MANAGING BULLYING.....	153
4.10.1	Managing bullying behaviour using whole school approach.....	154
4.11	THEME SIX: FACTORS INFLUENCING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS.....	156
4.11.1	Family or home factor.....	156
4.11.2	Community factor.....	159
4.11.3	School factor.....	159
4.11.4	Poor academic achievement.....	160

4.11.5	Peer pressure	162
4.12	THEME SEVEN: FORMS OF BULLYING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS	162
4.12.1	Cyberbullying	163
4.12.2	Physical bullying behaviour	165
4.12.3	Relational bullying	166
4.12.4	Emotional bullying	167
4.13	CONCLUSION	167
4.14	PROJECTION FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER	168
	CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	169
5.1	INTRODUCTION	169
5.2	FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH	169
5.2.1	Findings from the literature review	169
5.2.1.1	Definition of bullying behaviour among learners	169
5.2.1.2	School bullying	170
5.2.1.3	A whole school approach.....	171
5.2.1.4	Whole school approach strategies	172
5.2.1.5	Anti-bullying policies and programmes	173
5.2.1.6	Involvement of all stakeholders	173
5.2.1.7	School wide intervention	174
5.2.1.8	Classroom level intervention	174
5.2.1.9	Supervision.....	174
5.2.1.10	Role of parents.....	174
5.2.2	Areas where bullying occurs	175
5.2.3	Consequences of bullying on learners.....	176

5.2.4	Strategies to reduce bullying behaviour among learners.....	177
5.2.4.1	Whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour	178
5.2.4.2	Intervention strategy	178
5.2.4.3	Role of educators.....	179
5.2.5	Factors influencing bullying behaviour among primary school learners	179
5.2.5.1	School factor	179
5.2.5.2	Family factor	180
5.2.5.3	Poor academic performance	180
5.2.5.4	Community factor	181
5.2.5.5	Media	181
5.2.6	Forms of bullying among the learners.....	182
5.2.6.1	Cyberbullying behaviour among primary school learners.....	182
5.2.6.2	Physical bullying behaviour among primary school learners	183
5.2.6.3	Verbal bullying behaviour among primary school learners.....	183
5.2.6.4	Social bullying behaviour among primary school learners	184
5.2.6.5	Emotional bullying behaviour among primary school learners	184
5.3	FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS.....	185
5.3.1	Bullying behaviour in primary schools.....	185
5.4	STRATEGIES TO REDUCE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS	186
5.4.1	Whole school approach in managing bullying behaviour.....	187
5.4.2	Anti-bullying policies.....	189
5.4.3	Role of primary school educators.....	189
5.4.4	Using the curriculum to manage bullying behaviour among primary school learners.....	190

5.4.5	Role of primary school managers	191
5.5	AREAS WHERE SCHOOL BULLYING MOSTLY OCCURS	192
5.5.1	The restroom	192
5.5.2	The classroom.....	193
5.6	CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS	193
5.6.1	Educational consequences	194
5.6.2	Social consequences	194
5.6.3	Physical consequences.....	195
5.6.4	Emotional consequences.....	195
5.6.5	Academic performance.....	196
5.7	MANAGER BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS	196
5.8	FACTORS INFLUENCING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS	197
5.8.1	School factor.....	198
5.8.2	Family factor	198
5.8.3	Community factor	199
5.8.4	Poor academic performance.....	200
5.9	FORMS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS	200
5.9.1	Physical bullying in primary schools.....	201
5.9.2	Verbal bullying behaviour among primary school learners.....	201
5.9.3	Emotional bullying behaviour among primary school learners.....	202
5.9.4	Cyberbullying.....	203
5.9.5	Social bullying.....	203

5.10 CONCLUSION	204
5.11 PROJECTION FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER	205
CHAPTER 6: OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	206
6.1 INTRODUCTION	206
6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH	206
6.3 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY	208
6.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS	208
6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS	210
6.5.1 Whole-school Approach to Managing Bullying Behaviour among Primary School Learners	210
6.5.1.1 Collaborative and Collective efforts of Combat Bullying	211
6.5.1.2 Deployment of Educators to Combat Bullying	212
6.5.1.3 Bullying awareness campaign	212
6.5.2 Recommendations for the Primary School Educators	213
6.5.3 Recommendations for Positive Learning environment	214
6.5.4 Strategies to Assist Victims of Bullying in Primary Schools	214
6.5.5 Suggestion to Help the Bully	215
6.5.6 Recommendations for Department of Education	215
6.5.7 Recommendations for the Primary School Community	216
6.5.8 Role of the Parents	216
6.5.9 Recommendations for the Primary School Management Team	217
6.5.10 A very Clear and Well-published Anti-bullying Policy	219
6.5.11 Getting Professional Help	220
6.5.12 Focus on Ways to Promote Social and Emotional Learning and develop learners' competencies	221

6.5.13	Recommendations for the Formulation of Separate Anti-bullying Policies	221
6.5.14	Provision of Training.....	222
6.5.15	Recommendations for Effective Supervision and Monitoring of Learners	222
6.5.16	Classroom.....	223
6.5.17	Partnerships with the School Community	223
6.5.18	The Whole School Approach	223
6.5.19	Communalitarian model to curb bullying in primary schools.....	224
6.6	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEACH.....	225
6.7	LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS	228
6.8	MY REFLECTION ON THE STUDY	228
6.9	CONCLUSION	230
	REFERENCES.....	231
	LIST OF ANNEXURES	251

LIST OF ANNEXURES

- 1 Formal letter of application
- 2 Permission letter from the Department of Education
- 3 Letter to Circuit
- 4 Letter to Principals
- 5 Permission letter from the Circuit
- 6 Participants consent form for interviews
- 7 Ethical clearance certificate
- 8 Bullying in primary schools

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Bullying behaviour amongst school learners is a serious problem in the 21st century, in South Africa and the world at large. Indeed, researcher's worldwide claim that it may be the most enduring yet underrated problem in schools (MacDonald and Swart, 2014:33). Clearly, bullying behaviour is embedded in the subculture of the schools where it occurs (Suckling and Temple, 2002:7). As a result, even the most violent and recurrent forms of bullying remain unaddressed – until the victim speaks out or the impact becomes apparent (Besag, 1991:10). In other words, educators, principals, and school management teams seem to take no or little notice of bullying in primary schools. Meanwhile, some learners experience fear, humiliation, and harassment at the hands of their peers (Barone, 1997:81).

As it becomes apparent, bullying is a severe problem that needs to be acknowledged and addressed by all school stakeholders (Train, 1995:26). Educators, non-teaching staff of schools, parents, school governing bodies (SGBs), local communities, and external organisations (Cowie and Jennifer, 2007:3) should tackle bullying jointly. The necessity of a holistic approach to bullying in schools is reinforced by Tattum's (1993:68) view that this scourge is best addressed through a whole-school approach (W-SA). The latter consists of the use of positive strategies aimed at confronting bullying in a manner that offers support to the bullied and counselling to the bullies, as opposed to just punishing the latter (Cowie and Jennifer, 2007:4).

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

Research reveals that bullying is insidious and, therefore, difficult to manage. Hence, a whole-school approach (W-SA) to bullying behaviour amongst primary

school learners requires that educators and education managers find an effective way of tackling this issue (De Wet, 2005:87). It must be emphasised that bullying can only be addressed effectively if the anti-bullying endeavour is supported by the education system. This means that any isolated attempts to confront bullying will be fruitless (Suckling and Temple, 2002: 340).

According to Rigby (1996:24), a whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools entail responding proactively to bullying behaviour, to prevent learners from suffering its possibly devastating consequences. This implies that schools must be able to guarantee every pupil's right to learn in a bullying-free school environment. In this regard, the whole school system should agree on the most appropriate way of managing bullying amongst learners in primary schools (De Wet, 2005:82).

The knowledge acquired from adopting a whole-school approach to bullying should, in turn, enable school management to develop strategies aimed at curbing this anti-social behaviour (Oosthuizen, Rossouw, de Waal, Smith and Huyssteen, 2008:19). Put differently, combating the scourge of bullying amongst primary school learners, through a whole-school approach, implies the formulation and development of diverse and symbiotic relationships between all school stakeholders (Suckling and Temple, 2002:34). Practically, to secure a learning-conducive school environment, a whole-approach to bullying behaviour must outline a set of procedures to be followed by staff, parents, and pupils when reporting or inquiring about bullying cases (Tattum, 1993:64).

Furthermore, research on the application of a whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour has focused on positivist or deficit perspectives that tend to establish causal links between the individual and the event (MacDonald and Swart, 2014:33). For example, Sullivan (2000:22-23) and Craig, Pepler and Atlas (2000:23) observe that research on bullying has been limited by the fact that it has focused primarily on the characteristics of victims and bullies. This has tended to

reinforce such maxims as 'once a victim, always a victim', or, 'once a bully, always a bully'. On the contrary, bullying behaviour should be systematically addressed. Indeed, from a systematic perspective, all systems pertaining to an environment are regarded as interactive and, individuals are holistically considered in their systemic contexts (Olweus, 1993:45).

Bullying should not be overlooked and left to take its own course (Cowie and Jennifer, 2007:3). It needs to be eradicated so that its painful and negative results may be prevented (Krige, Pettipher, Squelch and Swart, 2000:12). To this effect, school managers, educators, parents, and learners should work together to deal with bullying behaviour (Barone, 1997:81). In other words, all stakeholders should be involved in developing policies and strategies to manage bullying through a whole-school approach (De Wet, 2005:87).

The need to develop anti-bullying strategies is particularly pressing in primary schools where numerous unaddressed cases of learners bullying each other on school premises have been reported (*Limpopo Mirror Newspaper*, June 6:2012). Some of these reported cases make mention of the fact that some bullying victims have dropped out of school (*Sunday Times*, March 29:2009).

Thus, this study stresses the importance of involving the whole school in creating a school culture that value and implements an anti-bullying ethos. By adopting a whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour, educators, support staff, principals, and school management teams will be able to develop an approach that creates a dynamic, responsive, and safe environment for school learners. The findings of this study could ignite primary school managers' interest in using a whole school approach to bullying.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Bullying in primary schools has become a major problem in many countries (Sullivan, 2000:2). It has a devastating effect on learners in that it often has violent and disastrous consequences for both the victims and the bullies (Auma-Okumu, 2012:19). Much research is characterised by descriptions of victims and the family backgrounds of both the victims and the bullies (Olweus, 2003:50). Less research-based information about the implementation of a whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour in primary schools is available (Olweus 2001).

According to MacDonald and Swart (2004:34), literature on bullying in the South African school system also stresses the need for research on the implementation of a whole-school approach in managing bullying, because schools have thus far tended to regard it as the bullied or bullying individual's problem. Thus, this research endeavours to provide more information that would further the understanding of the whole school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools. This study could motivate prospective researchers and students of Educational Management and Governance, in tertiary institutions, to expand on the present study's scope. Furthermore, the proposed study aims to contribute significantly to the existing knowledge and understanding of the management of bullying behaviour in primary schools (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:52).

In addition to contributing to the knowledge base on the implementation of a W-SA in managing bullying behaviour in the primary school, this study also aims to aid in developing theory in this domain (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:51). What is more, a review of literature on the implementation of a whole-school approach in managing bullying could assist with the formulation of strategies aimed at combating bullying and decreasing violence levels in primary schools.

Further, this research serves as a frame of reference for policymakers concerning the implementation of a whole school approach in managing bullying in primary

schools (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:52). Finally, this research could equally serve as a data-source for primary school managers, insofar as they consider the adoption of a whole-school approach in managing bullying. In addition, the research aims to stimulate more debate and research relating to the adoption of bullying strategies and policies.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Bullying in schools infringes upon bullied learners' right to human dignity, privacy, freedom, and security (Human Rights RSA, 1996: Act 108 of 1996, Section 28(d)). However, Sullivan (2002:62) stresses that schools have tended to blame the bully and/or the bullied and/or their families for the occurrence of bullying. In addition, schools seem to believe that the 'cure' to bullying is changing the bully's behaviour through punishment, or by sending both the bully and the bullied to counselling (MacDonald and Swart, 2014:35). Bullying also tends to be normalised by the fact that learners often hear their parents and educators utter such remarks as "being bullied is just part of growing up", "you need to stand up for yourself", "boys will be boys", "you need to toughen up" and "they tease you because they like you" (Will and Neufeld, 2002:51).

These remarks result in bullying not being confronted; hence, its persistence or reappearance in different forms and at different levels of the school system (MacDonald and Swart, 2014:35). Therefore, Sullivan (2000:4) argues for a constructive perspective that will ensure a long-lasting solution to bullying. To this effect, Craig et al. (2000:23) advocate for the adoption of a whole-school approach in addressing bullying behaviour in schools.

Indeed, individual approaches, whereby the teacher acts in isolation to address bullying behaviour and its possible ramifications have been marred by a short sightedness that renders them ineffective. What is more, the rare attempts to implement strategies to manage bullying in primary schools have been partial. This

is mainly because some schools condone bullying behaviour. Put differently, the failure to reduce the frequency of bullying incidents in primary schools – through the implementation of a whole-school approach to bullying behaviour – is largely due to the lack of a pro-active approach on the part of school managers (Joubert, 2008:70). As a result, many learners are still vulnerable to the violent acts associated with bullying behaviours displayed by some learners in many primary schools (Joubert, 2008:71).

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The two main research questions that this study seeks to answer are:

1. What are the views of the school community on the implementation of a whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour among primary school learners?
2. How can the school community use the whole-school approach to manage bullying behaviour among school learners effectively?

1.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aims of this study are:

- To investigate whole-school-approach strategies aimed at reducing bullying among primary school learners.
- To analyse and understand the nature and extent of bullying behaviour among learners in primary schools.
- To analyse existing knowledge on the implementation of the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools.

To achieve the abovementioned aims, the study sets the following objectives:

- To establish how to manage bullying through a whole-school approach.
- To understand how a whole-school approach can assist in reducing bullying behaviour among primary school learners.

1.7 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2007:102) define the purpose of a research project in terms of I's dream. Thus, the primary purpose of this study is to investigate strategies that can be formulated by means of a whole-school approach to reduce bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. The secondary purpose of the study is to analyse and understand the nature and extent of bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners, as well as to review the existing knowledge about the management of bullying behaviour.

1.8 RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Babbie (2007:33), a paradigm is a model or framework for observation and understanding, which shapes both what we see and how it is understood. Nieuwenhuis (2007:243) further characterises a paradigm as a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality, which give rise to a worldview and dictate not only the kind of scientific work to be done, but also the types of theories to foreground. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006:562) define a research paradigm as an all-encompassing system of thoughts and practices. It determines the nature of a researcher's enquiry into things about the social world that tend to be taken for granted.

Thus, this research study is based on the interpretive paradigm. According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006:273), the interpretive paradigm involves three main requirements. The first is to take people's subjective experiences seriously, as these constitute the essence of what is real for them (ontology). The second is to make sense of people's experiences by interacting with them and listening carefully to what they tell us (epistemology). The third and final requirement is to use qualitative research techniques in order to collect and analyse information. Clearly, interpretivist research relies on first-hand accounts, tries to describe what it sees in rich detail, and presents its findings in engaging

and, sometimes, evocative language (Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter, 2006:274). It is important to stress interpretivist researchers' conviction that meaning is constructed by individuals and groups during their interactions with each other and based on their respective experiences through language (Geertz, 1973:3-30). Interpretive social scientists believe that reality is socially constructed. Thus, they think that the goal of social scientists is to understand the meanings that people give to reality, as opposed to determining how it works, independently from their own interpretations (Blachman and Schutt, 2014:67).

The ontological assumption of this study is that reality is fluid and subjective as it is created through human interaction, whereas the study's epistemological assumption is that something is seen as knowledge when it feels right to those being studied (Du Plooy, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:34).

The view that reality is socially constructed, and individuals perceive it differently implies the existence of multiple realities (Connole, 1998:21). Hence, the goal of my research is to understand the 'realities' of the participants, insofar as a whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools is concerned. This was to be achieved by enquiring into their varying perceptions and experiences of a whole-school approach to addressing bullying. Indeed, the interest in critically analysing and understanding bullying, as well as the assumption that an improved understanding of a situation enables the participants to take practical actions about it, require concrete knowledge (Kempner, 1992:67-80). This further reinforces the location of this research within an interpretive paradigm (Bachman and Schutt, 2014:69).

1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Bullying behaviour is a social phenomenon that can be explained through the Social Learning Theory (SLT). The latter was used as a framework that helps to establish why primary school learners engage in bullying practices (Bandura,

1977:22). In addition, I used the Socio-Ecological Theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner as a lens through which to approach this research study (Mabatha, Magano and Sedibe, 2014:235). In 1979, Bronfenbrenner stated that the Ecological Systems Theory (EST) construed all individuals as part of interrelated systems that locate the individual at the centre from which they move to include all other systems that affect the individual (Osman, 2013:16; Swearer and Espelage, 2004:3).

In this framework, I suggest that individuals interact with one another in different settings known as systems (Osman, 2013:16). This is in line with the view that bullying is a phenomenon that does not occur in isolation, that is, it is encouraged and/or inhibited by the complex relationships between the individual, their family, their peer group, their school, their community, and their culture (Swearer and Espelage, 2004:3). It is further argued that bullying and bullied learners come from homes that form the microsystem in the life of a person.

Bronfenbrenner (2005), as well as Mabatha, Magano and Sedibe (2014:235), describe a microsystem as the immediate environment where proximal processes unfold. Thus, a child's behaviour unfolds in the microsystems in which his/her development is influenced by parents, siblings, and significant others (Donald *et al*, 2006). This is reinforced by Siegel (2005: 114-115) who emphasises that people are not born with the ability to act violently; they learn aggressive behaviour through their life experiences. The latter include personally observing others act aggressively, or watching people being rewarded for violent acts (Schultz and Schultz, 1993:385).

When a child is raised in a family that is characterised by violence, he or she is likely to display violence, and may become a bully, just because he witnessed his father beat his mother repeatedly (Chabalala, 2011:16). Such a child feels nothing for other children/learners, because his father has not shown any remorse or guilt after beating his mother. It must be stressed that learners who are raised in such environments usually choose victims who are weaker than they are, in the same

way their fathers chose to beat their mothers instead of other men (Oosthuizen and Roscoe, 2009:77). Subsequently, aggressive behaviour and violent actions – which amount to bullying – occur at school, because the latter is part of the community and constitutes a mesosystem (Mabatha, Magano and Sedibe, 2014: 235). A mesosystem refers to the system in which microsystems speak to one another, for example, the interaction between the family system, school system and peer group system (Pettipher, 2011:11). The functioning of these individual systems influences the other systems they interact with. For example, the learner's home environment might affect his or her school performance or confidence with peers, which may lead to bullying behaviour (Johnson, 2014:27).

Another theory that I used as a lens for this study is symbolic interactionism (SI) (Calhoun et al (2007:70). The latter rests on the idea that individuals act towards people and things based on the meaning they attach to those people or things (Blasé and Blasé, 2004). Aggressive behaviour is further learnt during interactions with other people – outside the home – and by observing other people display it (Siegel, 2005:114-115; Schulz and Schultz, 1993:385). Hence, children who reside in areas where violence occurs daily are more likely to act violently than those who live in low-crime areas whose norms discourage aggressive behaviour (Siegel, 2005:114-115).

Symbolic interactionism rests on the idea that individuals act towards people and things according to the meanings that they have attached to those people or things (Blasé and Blasé, 2004). Those meanings are derived from the social interaction that occurs between individuals. The assigned meanings are handled and subsequently modified through an interpretive process used by individuals to make sense of things and the people they encounter (Binduko, 2013:33).

Another theoretical framework that is also used in a study that adopts a whole school approach to managing bullying behaviour is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme. Dan Olweus's theory offered a theoretical framework that helped me

to understand the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools as well as the causes and consequences of bullying behaviour amongst learners. In addition, Olweus's theory helped educators to gain a deeper understanding of how to manage bullying actions in primary schools, as well as how to create safe and bullying-free classrooms and schools.

1.10 LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review involved searching for, reading, critically analysing, evaluating, and summarising as much of the published materials that related directly or indirectly to the research topic as possible (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014: 101). For Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006:561), a literature review consists in identifying and analysing or reviewing information related to what is being studied. Hence, a review of relevant international and local sources – such as books, journals, reports, discussion papers, magazines, theses, and media – was conducted. Clearly, the literature study helps one to become familiar with the work that has already been done on the research topic. The literature review enabled me to understand the nature and scope of the topic better (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont, 2007:127).

In this study, the literature review was conducted in order to critically analyse the existing works, to identify a gap in the current knowledge, and apply this to a whole school approach to the management of bullying. The existing knowledge is also used to test and verify the findings of this study (De Wet, 2005:87). Put differently, the literature review aimed to critically analyse strategies that could form a whole-school approach to managing bullying in schools in terms of its nature, extent, and effects on learners (De Wet, 2005:83).

It is undeniable that bullying occurs in every school (Thamm, 1997:54). Therefore, educators should investigate instances of bullying, so that effective strategies and policies – based on a whole-school approach – can be developed and

implemented to combat this scourge (Train, 1995:164). Bullying behaviour is influenced by various factors, which include the self, the family, the school, and the society (Fried and Fried, 1996:7). It must be stressed that bullying has painful effects on the bullied learner who eventually loses confidence and self-esteem (Smith and Thompson, 1991:7). Thus, a whole-school approach to dealing with bullying implies that parents, educators, school managers, learners, and non-teaching school personnel play complementary roles in fighting bullying in order to create a safe school environment (Olweus, 2003:50).

In the light of the above, a whole-school approach is a joint effort by all members of the school community – it integrates various strategies to manage bullying. As such, a whole-school approach can only be effective if its aims are clearly communicated to all stakeholders. Some of the envisaged anti-bullying strategies include the use of the curriculum, management initiatives, playground supervision, the elaboration of an anti-bullying policy, and the implementation of an induction programme during the transition phase (Olweus, 2003:51).

In short, although the nature, extent, forms, and consequences of bullying on learners, as well as the strategies to manage it were discussed, the literature review focuses mainly on the strategies that could constitute a whole school approach to managing bullying behaviour in schools (Du Plessis and Conley, 2007:51-52).

1.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS IN QUALITATIVE STUDIES

Qualitative researchers do not use numbers as evidence. Instead, they use different criteria to determine the trustworthiness or credibility of their research findings. Trustworthiness includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:258). Credibility, according to Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014:258), refers to the accuracy with which you interpret the data that was provided by the participants.

Credibility, as described by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:486), is the extent to which the results of a study approximate reality and are thus judged to be trustworthy and reasonable. Credibility, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:391), addresses the following questions:

- Do researchers observe what they think they observe?
- Do researchers really hear what they think they hear (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:391)?

Concerning this study, school principals, learners, parents, educators, and SMTs are expected to furnish me with enough information pertaining to the use of a whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour in primary schools.

1.11.1 Transferability

Transferability refers to the fact that the findings of research can be applied to a similar situation (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:258). Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014:259) further characterise transferability as the degree to which the results and analysis techniques can be applied beyond a specific research project.

1.11.2 Dependability

Dependability relates to the quality of the integration process that occurs between data collection and analysis and theory-generation (Collis and Hussey, 2003:278-279). Dependability is also the degree to which the reader can be convinced that the findings were indeed generated as indicated by the researcher (Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter, 2006:93). Dependability is achieved through rich and detailed descriptions that show that certain actions and opinions are rooted in and derived from contextualised interactions (Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter, 2006:93-94).

1.11.3 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to how well the data collected support my findings and interpretation, as well as how these findings flow from the data (Du Plooy, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:259). Confirmability requires me to have described the research process fully and to assist others in scrutinising the research design (Collins and Hussey, 2003: 278-279).

1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research ethics is generally concerned with beliefs about what is right or wrong, from a moral perspective. It also focuses on what is morally proper or improper, when engaging the participants, or when accessing archival data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:117). Babbie (2007:62) notes that, in most dictionaries as well as in common usage, ethics is typically associated with morality, that is, it deals with matters of right and wrong. According to Neuman (1997:445), ethical research requires the balancing of the value of advancing knowledge and that of non-interference in the lives of others.

Research ethics can be specifically defined as researchers' responsibility to be honest and respectful towards all individuals participating in a study (Gravetter and Forzano, 2003:59). Thus, a researcher should not release sensitive, intimate, and innermost information that may humiliate or harm the participants. The most common aspects of relevance to ethics are informed consent, prevention of harm to the participants, anonymity, confidentiality and privacy, and avoiding deception (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:264).

1.12.1 Informed consent

Informed consent, as described by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:487), consists in obtaining permission from individuals who are willing to participate in

research, before the research begins. Informed consent, according to Babbie (2007:64), means that subjects participate voluntarily in research projects, with a full understanding of the possible risks involved.

In the present study, the potential subjects were not coerced into participating in the interviews, they did so voluntarily. The participants were formally informed of the study and gave their consent (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:264). This is consistent with the requirement that participants be briefed about the purpose of a study as well as the time length needed (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:119).

Written permission to conduct the study, obtained from the district office and circuit office, were also presented to the participants. Finally, I informed the participants about the purpose and significance of using such devices as audiotape-recorders in the interview process.

1.12.2 Preventing harm

In the context of social science, harm may include things that are impossible or more difficult to eliminate. Examples include causing participants to recall emotionally painful memories or creating situations where a participant's prospects may be harmed (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:266). Babbie (2007:63) emphasises that social research should never injure the people being studied, regardless of whether they volunteered to participate in the study. Harm, according to De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2007:58), is usually of an emotional nature, although one cannot completely exclude physical harm.

To ensure that the participants in the present study were not harmed, they were informed beforehand about the potentially harmful impact of the investigation. Subsequently, the participants were provided the opportunity to withdraw from the investigation, if they so wished (De Voss, Strydom, Fouché and Delport, 2007:58).

Clearly, I ensured that this study never resulted in physical or mental discomfort, harm, or injury to the participants. This included not revealing information that might cause embarrassment or danger to home life, school performance, friendships, as well as direct negative consequences (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:119). In brief, I followed all ethical principles (Anderson, 2007:28).

1.12.3 Anonymity, confidentiality and privacy

Anonymity compels a researcher to protect the participants' (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:121). For Babbie (2007: 64), anonymity is guaranteed in a research project when neither the researcher nor the readers can link a given response to a respondent. De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont (2007:62) stresses that anonymity means that no one, including the researcher, can identify any subject afterwards.

To guarantee the participants' anonymity in this study, I did not record their names at any stage of the research process. Thus, it was impossible to match their identities to their responses in any way (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:267). To further ensure anonymity, the participants were not required to write their names on the questionnaire. Similarly, schools where the research was conducted were referred to as School PA/PB/PC and so forth, to protect their identities (Anderson, 2007:29).

For Babbie (2007:65), anonymity is linked to the pledge to not identify participants' responses publicly. To Neuman (1997:453), the term confidentiality means that information may have names attached to it, but the researcher holds it in confidence or keeps it secret from the public. In the context this study, information was not released in a manner that links it to specific respondents. Thus, the collected Information was only handled by me. The identities of the participants remained a secret to the public (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:268).

As for privacy, it means that access to participants' characteristics, responses, and behaviours is restricted to the researcher. The latter guarantees privacy by ensuring the anonymity of the participants and the confidentiality of the information they provide, as well as the appropriate storing of the collected data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:121). Throughout this study, all collected information and the subsequent findings were subjected to privacy, until the publication of the actual report.

1.13 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Limitations can be construed as the constraints or limits of a research study that are out of one's control; such limitations relate to time, financial resources, access to information, and so on (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:275). In the current study, school administrators, support staff, and educators might be reluctant to provide me with the data relating to the implementation of a whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour. In addition, budget limitations may prevent one from covering the entire research site successfully. Other potential limitations include bridging language and/or cultural barriers and overcoming the shifts in environmental conditions during the study.

As for delimitations, they are parameters or borders of one's research (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:276). This study was limited to understanding the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools situated in the Vhembe district of the Limpopo Province. This is because of their accessibility and proximity, since they are under one district and they all experience bullying amongst learners.

1.14 DEFINITION OF THE KEY CONCEPTS

The following key concepts feature prominently throughout the research study as they assist in focusing and shaping the reach of the study and constitute the

framework within which the research is embedded. I used the following operational terms throughout the study:

(a) Whole –school approach to managing bullying behaviour.

A whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour requires that all school staff, school managing bodies, and the school community take responsibility for the behaviour of learners. To put it in another way, teachers, principals, parents, governors, support staff, administrators, and community members should show concern about learners' behaviour at home, within the community, and at school (Du Plessis and Conley, 2007: 51-52). A whole-school approach seeks to address school violence in a collective way. It involves all members of the school community, namely, learners, school management, teaching and non-teaching staff, school nurses, lunchtime supervisors, parents and guardians, school governors, local communities, and external organisations (Cowie and Jennifer, 2007:21).

(b) A whole School Approach

A whole school approach is a notion that seeks to address school violence in a collective way. It involves all members of the school community, including learners, school staff, school management team, teaching staff and non-teaching staff, school governors, parents/guardians and the broader community (Pepler and Craig, 2014:5; Cowie and Jennifer, 2007:21; Pillay, 2007:5). A whole school approach to bullying implies that all members of the staff, including the school management and community, accept responsibility for the behaviour of learners (Du Plessis, 2011: 6).

(c) School Management Team

School management team includes heads of the schools, deputy principals and heads of the departments. The role of the school management teams is to ensure an effective daily functioning of schools, insofar as curriculum, discipline and administration are concerned (South African School Act, 1996:9, Lidzhegu, 2012:11)

(d) Learner

In this study, learner means any person receiving education or obliged to receive education in terms of Section 46 (SASA 84 of 1996).

(e) Bullying

Bullying is the act whereby one or more individuals inflict physical, verbal, or emotional abuse on another. This includes the threat of bodily harm, intimidation by means of weapons, extortion, civil rights violations, assault and battery, gang activity, attempted murder, and murder (Fried and Fried, 1996:5).

In the light of the above, bullies are persons who use their strength or power to frighten or hurt weaker people (Hornby, 1989). In the context of this research, the term 'bullies' refers to learners who perpetuate bullying (Hornby, 1989:149).

(f) Educators

Educators in South Africa refer to all persons whose work involves educating learners at all education levels, in any type of education or training context. In other countries they are referred as teachers. According to National Education Policy Act No .27 of 1996 (Brunton and Associate, 2003:3, Pillay, 2007:8) an educator means any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons at an

educational institution or assists in rendering educational services or educational auxiliary or support services provided by or in an educational department.

(g) Strategic Intervention

Strategic intervention refers to the designing of curriculum materials, the formulation of programmes, and the implementation of campaigns aimed at preventing or managing the effects of bullying behaviour in schools (Smith and Sharp, 1994).

(h) School

School refers to a public or an independent school that enrolls learners in one or more grades, from Grade R to Grade12 (Schools Act, 1996). According to the Employment of Educators Act (RSA, 1998), the concept 'school' refers to an educational institution or such an institution at which education as well as training (including pre-primary education) is catered for and which is sustained, managed and controlled or subsidised by a provincial department.

(i) Axiological assumptions

Axiology is the branch of philosophy that focuses on the study of the nature of values and value judgment (Ryan and Cooper, 2010:293). It is the study of human values (Wagner, Kawulich and Garner, 2012:268). Mertens *et al.* (2009:88) state that the axiological assumption asks, "What is considered ethical or moral behaviour?"

(j) Ontology

Ontology is defined as the nature of reality (Merriam, 2009:9). It is the science of the nature of being. It attempts to answer questions such about the nature of reality

(Wagner, Kawulich and Garner, 2012:272). It is a body of formally represented knowledge based on a conceptualisation of objects and other entities assumed to exist in some area of interest as well as the relationships among them (Nyoni, 2007:13). Ontology represents our views about what constitutes the social world as well as our approach to studying it (Barbour, 2008:295).

(k) Epistemology (theory of knowledge)

Epistemology is defined as the nature of knowledge. It indicates our theories of knowledge, how we come to know the world, and our ideas about the nature of evidence and knowledge (Barbour, 2008:294). Epistemology is the philosophy or theory of knowledge (Wagner, Kawulich and Garner, 2012:270). Epistemology is the study of the valid forms of knowledge; it comes from the Greek 'episteme' which means knowledge (Dworking, 1986). It relates to what we know about reality and how we come to know it (Willies, 2007:10).

(l) School community

School community is defined as that section of the population with some kind of common interest in what is going on in the school or an assemblage of the people intimately attached to a school – its teachers, administrators, learners, and the learner's families (Sharma, 1992:14). Furthermore, school communities are learners, educators, other school staff, governing bodies, and parents or guardians (SASA: 1996:98). School communities are collections of individuals bonded together by natural will and in relation to a set of shared ideas (Sergivanni, 1993:15).

(m) Collaborative efforts

Collaborative efforts mean working together towards a common goal or the degree to which people work together, share information and instructional strategies.

Collaborative efforts can also refer to the extent to which people are encouraged to have constructive discussions and debates.

(n) Interpretivism

In the interpretivist methodology, the key is to understand, not to explain and predict, as is the case in the naturalistic methodology. Understanding must begin with the presupposition of the existence of some common ground between the researcher and the researched. Understanding implies a consideration of commonality, particularly the shared experience that requires me, as the researcher, to empathise with something from my own lived experience (Nyoni, 2007:13).

(o) Bullies

The term bully refers to a learner who is bullying other learners. According to Sehunoe (2002: 9), bullies are persons who use their strength or power to frighten or hurt weaker people. For this research study “bullies” refers to the learners who are perpetuating the bullying behaviour (Hornby, 1989:149).

(p) Bullied

The term bullied refers to learners who are defenceless and therefore bullied by other learners (Lidzhegu, 2012: 11). In this research study, bullied designates learners who are victims of the bully (Michele, 1991:16).

(q) Electronic bullying

Electronic bullying, also referred to as cyber bullying, can be described as any communication activity using electronic or cyber technology that could be considered harmful to individual or collective well-being. It involves aggressive

behaviour by means of e-mail, instant messaging, in a chat room, on a website, or through digital messages or images to a cell phone (Oosthuizen et-al.2008:16).

(r) Primary school

Primary schools vary in grades that they accommodate. It usually caters for the elementary grades. According to Allen (1993:946), a primary school is an institution where young children below the age of eleven receive basic instruction. In this research project, primary school refers to a school that has reception grade up to grade seven. Most primary schools in this study have a foundation phase, intermediate phase and grade seven (grade R-to grade seven (Pillay, 2007:10).

(s) Primary school learner

Du Toit and Kruger (1994:103) define a primary school learner as a child between the ages of nine and thirteen who attends an instruction for the purposes of learning. Learners in grade R to grade 3 are in the junior phase, the intermediate phase has learners from grade 4 to grade 6 and grade 7 learners are part of the senior phase. For the purpose of this study, a primary school learner is a child, between the ages of five to thirteen (Grade R to grade 7) who needs instruction and who attends a school for that purpose (Pillay, 2007:10).

(t) Bystander

A bystander, according to Salmivalli et al. (2005:467), is someone who witnesses the bullying but does not do anything to stop it. Boyd (2011:117) defines a bystander as someone who observes an act of bullying but is not the initiator of the behaviour.

1.15 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Bullying behaviour among primary school learners is a serious problem that can affect their ability to progress academically (McDonald and Swart, 2004:33). This scourge could be addressed through the implementation of a whole-school approach that requires that all members of the school system accept responsibility for learners' behaviour (Sullivan, 2004:4). As such, educators should have a clear understanding of bullying so that they can use positive strategies to intervene when bullying occurs in schools. They should be able to prevent the negative results of bullying incidents by developing policies – based on a whole-school approach – that can reduce or prevent the occurrence of bullying in schools (Thamm, 1997:54).

Chapter one provided an introduction which includes the research background, the statement of the problem, the aims of the research, and the research questions. It also outlined the theoretical framework, the methodology, the data collection and analysis methods, as well as the study's ethical considerations.

1.16 STRUCTURE/ CHAPTERS

Chapter 1

This chapter describes an introduction to the premises of the study and the structure or design of the whole study. In this chapter, I provided the study's background, the problem statement, as well as the aim and rationale for undertaking this study. Furthermore, the research purpose, research objectives, research questions, research methodology, significance of the study, study limitation, delimitations, ethical considerations, trustworthiness, and definitions of the operational or key concepts were covered.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 provides a literature review pertaining to the key concepts of the research project. This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the theoretical framework of this research study. It also discusses the literature strategies that could form part of a whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools and the consequences of bullying amongst the learners.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 deals with the study's methodology, methods and techniques, including data validation and ethical considerations. The study uses a qualitative research method to unearth and understand the whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour in primary schools.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 focuses on the qualitative data analysis and research findings that were in the form of themes emerging from the interviews conducted with school learners, educators, principals, and the school governing bodies.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 presents the research findings and provides interpretations.

Chapter 6

The chapter summarises the study's findings and recommendations for further study.

1.17 PROJECTION FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER

Chapter Two provides an overview of the existing literature on the topic of whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour in primary schools. It focuses on a broad definition of school-based bullying and the adoption of a whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter one provided the background to this research study on a whole school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools. It stated the study's aim, objectives, and research problem. Chapter Two will review current literature on the use of a whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour in primary schools. The purpose of this literature review is to put the current research into perspective, by determining what previous scholars have already written on the employment of a whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour, and by identifying the main models and theories of relevance to this research study (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:101).

In other words, the literature review will help to identify any relevant theories, models, case studies, and journal articles that support the argument I put forward (Du Plooy-Cilliers Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:102). De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2007:123) indicate that a literature review contributes to a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem.

Furthermore, this chapter intends to determine – based on the literature review – the strategies that could form part of a whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools. This is subsequent to the establishment of the nature or types of bullying, its causes, its extent, as well as its effects on and consequences for the involved learners (Sehunoe, 2002:11). In this literature review chapter, the characteristics of the bullies and their victims as well as the strategies for managing bullying behaviour will be discussed (Du Plessis, 2011:3).

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research study is underpinned by four theories, namely, Bronfenbrenner ecological systems theory, the social learning theory of Albert Bandura and Dan Olweus, the bullying prevention programme theory, and the symbolic interactionism theory. Before discussing each theory, it is essential to start by defining the term “theoretical framework”. The latter is a specific collection of thoughts and theories guiding the investigation by providing a frame which ensures that the study is focused (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:55). A theoretical framework is the structure or scaffolding of one’s study, that is, it is one’s stance on the issue forming the basis of the study (Merriam, 1998:45).

2.2.1 Symbolic interactionism

The first theory that applies to this study – as a lens through which to consider bullying in primary schools – is the symbolic interactionism or social theory of George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) and his student Hebert Blumer (1900-1987). Symbolic interactionism can be described as an approach or theory that focuses on the interaction amongst human beings and the roles they assume (Holloway, 1997:150). Similarly, Blumer (1973:98) defines symbolic interactionism as a micro-level theory that focuses on the relationships among individuals within a society. In symbolic interactionism, human behaviour is understood as a social behaviour comprising of social acts (Calhoun et al, 2007:70). This simply means that primary school bullying learners are moulded by and emulate either their parents’ or society’s behaviour. For primary schools to be able to manage bullying behaviour, educators and the entire school community need to understand the relationship between learners and their community. Hence, this study is based on symbolic interactionism. The latter refers to the peculiar character of interaction as it occurs amongst human beings. The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or define one another’s actions, instead of merely reacting to them (Calhoun et al., 2007:70).

Symbolic interactionism rests on the idea that individuals act towards people and things according to the meanings that they have attached to them (Blasé and Blasé, 2004). Those meanings are derived from the social interaction that occurs between individuals. The assigned meanings are subsequently modified through an interpretive process used by individuals to make sense of the things and people they encounter (Binduko, 2013:33).

In symbolic interactionism, human action has little inherent meaning. However, humans can read meanings into one another's actions, because they share a meaning-making system such as language (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:28). Symbolic interactionism also hinges on Hegel's view that humans can only understand the world as it appears to them – not as it really is (Van Rensburg, 2001:16). Based on the reviewed literature, I deemed that the theoretical framework developed by Blumer (1969) was best suited to this study. This is because the management of bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners could only be possible through understanding the relationships amongst people with whom learners interact.

2.2.2 Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory

The first theoretical framework on which this study is based is Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. This theory is valuable as it helps to understand how individuals relate to their social contexts. Individuals are regarded as simultaneously shaped by and active shapers of their social contexts (Donald et al., 2006:33; De Wet 2007:191-208). To understand the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools, it is helpful to consider the complex relationships, different social contexts, influences, and interactions within which individuals' function – through the ecological system perspective (Monks and Coyne, 2011:1). In 1979, Bronfenbrenner stressed that the Ecological Systems Theory (EST) construed all individuals as part of interrelated systems that

locate the individual at the centre from which they move to include all other systems that affect the individual (Osman, 2013:16; Swearer and Espelage, 2004:3).

In line with this framework, I suggest that individuals interact with one another in different settings known as systems (Osman, 2013:16). This is congruent with the view that bullying is a phenomenon that does not occur in isolation, that is, it is encouraged and/or inhibited by the complex relationships among individuals, their families, their peer groups, their schools, their communities, and their cultures (Swearer and Espelage, 2004:3). It is further underscored that both bullying and bullied learners come from homes that form the microsystem in the life of a person.

Because a whole-school approach was emphasised in this research study, the ecological system theory was used as the theoretical framework. This theory could provide a deeper understanding of the adoption of a whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour in primary schools. The ecological system theory emphasises the view of groups of people as interactive systems where the functioning of the whole depends on the interaction amongst all parts of the system (Donald et al., 2010). In the context of this study, managing bullying behaviour effectively in primary schools is dependent on the interaction amongst the school management team, educators, learners, parents, and the entire community (Venter, 2013:242).

The concept of whole-school approach means the development of a school community that includes all staff, learners, parents and other stakeholders in every facet of the school life (Venter, 2013:242). Phillipson and Forlin (2011:2, in Venter, 2013) regarded bullying actions as no longer dyadic interaction between perpetrators and victims, but rather as a problem situated within the larger social system. If one assumes that bullying is a systematic problem, then the whole-school approach will most probably be the most suitable solution (Smith et al., 2005:741-742).

Bronfenbrenner's theory locates child development at four different interaction systems and stresses that what happens in one-system affects or is affected by the other systems (Johnson, 2014:27). These four different systems are the microsystem, the mesosystem, the ecosystem, and the macrosystem. The illustration of the fact that whatever happens in one system affects or is affected by the other systems is provided by Figure 1.2. This model is an illustration of the ecological systems approach that highlights the relationship among different role-players in a child's or any human being's development or life (Johnson, 2014:27). This agrees with Maraise and Meier's observation (2010, 41-57, in Johnson 2014) that bullying behaviour in primary schools is another disruptive behaviour that affects learners' emotional and physical experiences at school.

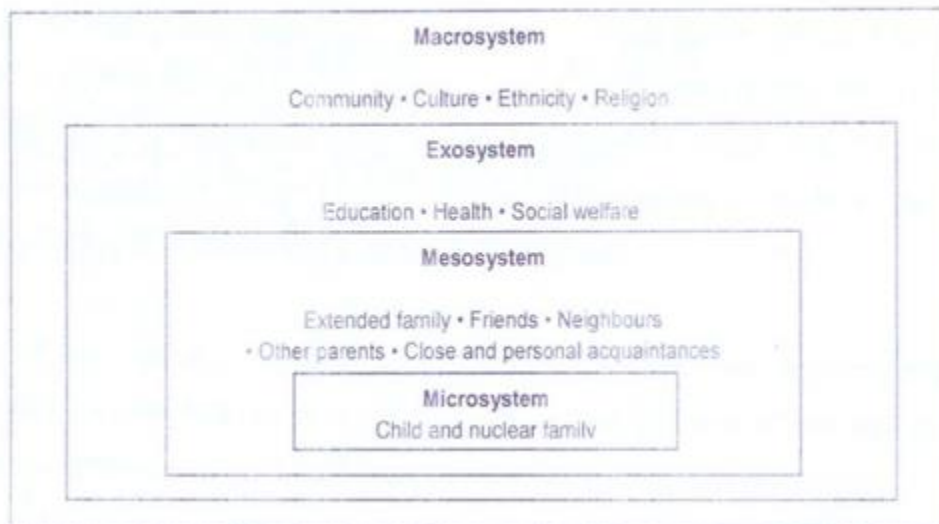


Figure 2.1: An illustration of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Swart and Phasha, 2005:215, in Johnson, 2013:28). Donald et al. (2006:41, in Kruger, 2013:4) note that these four systems are also in constant interaction with the chronosystem.

(a) Microsystem

The microsystem is described as a pattern of activities, social and symbolic features that invite or prevent engagement in sustained and progressively more

complex interactions with and activity in the immediate environment (Louw, 2015:13). Bronfenbrenner (2005), as well as Mabatha, Magano and Sedibe (2014:235) describe a microsystem as the immediate environment where proximal processes unfold. Thus, a child's behaviour unfolds in the microsystems in which his/her development is influenced by parents, siblings, and significant others (Donald et al., 2006). The microsystem level is closest to the child and contains the structures with which the child has direct contact. It encompasses the relationships and interactions a child has with his/her immediate surroundings (Berk, 2000). Structures in the microsystem include the family, the school, the neighbourhood, or the childcare environment. One microsystem for all learners may be a home setting with parents and siblings, while another microsystem may comprise of schoolteachers and peers (Lerner, 2005:12). Thus, changes in the home or school environment may prompt children to start displaying bullying behaviour (Johnson, 2013:28). The way in which these microsystems interact with one another or with the social environment is referred to as the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977:515).

(b) Mesosystem

The mesosystem refers to the relationships amongst the elements of the microsystem and their influences on one another, for example parents and peers (Louw, 2015:13). Johnson (2013:28) conceives of the mesosystem as one in which the microsystems speak to one another. An example of this is the interaction between the family system, the school environment and the peer group system. The functioning of each of these individual systems influences the other systems that it interacts with (Johnson, 2013). For example, the quality of a learner's home environment might affect his or her school performance or confidence around peers, which may lead to bullying behaviour. Swart and Pettipher (2005:11) posit that a learner may develop bullying behaviour from a variety of factors experienced in any dimension of his/her microsystem.

(c) Exosystem

An exosystem is defined as the larger social system in which the child does not function directly (Berk, 2000:38). It is suggested that a parent's tense relationship with their employer may not affect the learner directly but could hinder the quality of the parents' relationship with their child/the learner. Examples of environment in the exosystem include the education system, health services, social welfare, media, support groups, recreation centres, housing, and workplaces.

A situation in the economic exosystem may influence the learner indirectly and cause bullying behaviour. Learners may steal the lunch or belongings of other learners, or be jealous of their more privileged peers and, as a result, develop bullying behaviour (Weeks, 2005:38).

(d) Macrosystem

A macrosystem refers to the cultural values, customs, laws and beliefs of a society. These are influenced by and have an impact on the other systems (Swart and, Pettipher, 2005:12). The macrosystem helps us to understand the complexity of the family as a system as well as how the child functions within the family and society (Johnson, 2013:29). Societies where learners are exposed to violence and upheaval encourage violent behaviours in the learners from an early age, which may lead to bullying behaviour (Weeks, 2005:39).

The core principle of an ecological system is that various systems or levels interact and influence one another, and the role-players involved in them. Bronfenbrenner's theory views the development and behaviour of the child as key points of the interacting systems. These systems are in continuous interaction but are, in turn, affected by the child's behaviour (Johnson, 2014:27).

2.2.3 Dan Olweus' Bullying Prevention Programme theory.

This research study was developed through examining the internationally recognised Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme. Dan Olweus's theory offered a theoretical framework that helped me to understand the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools as well as the causes and consequences of bullying behaviour amongst learners. In addition, Olweus's theory helped educators to gain a deeper understanding of how to manage bullying actions in primary schools, as well as how to create safe and bullying-free classrooms and schools.

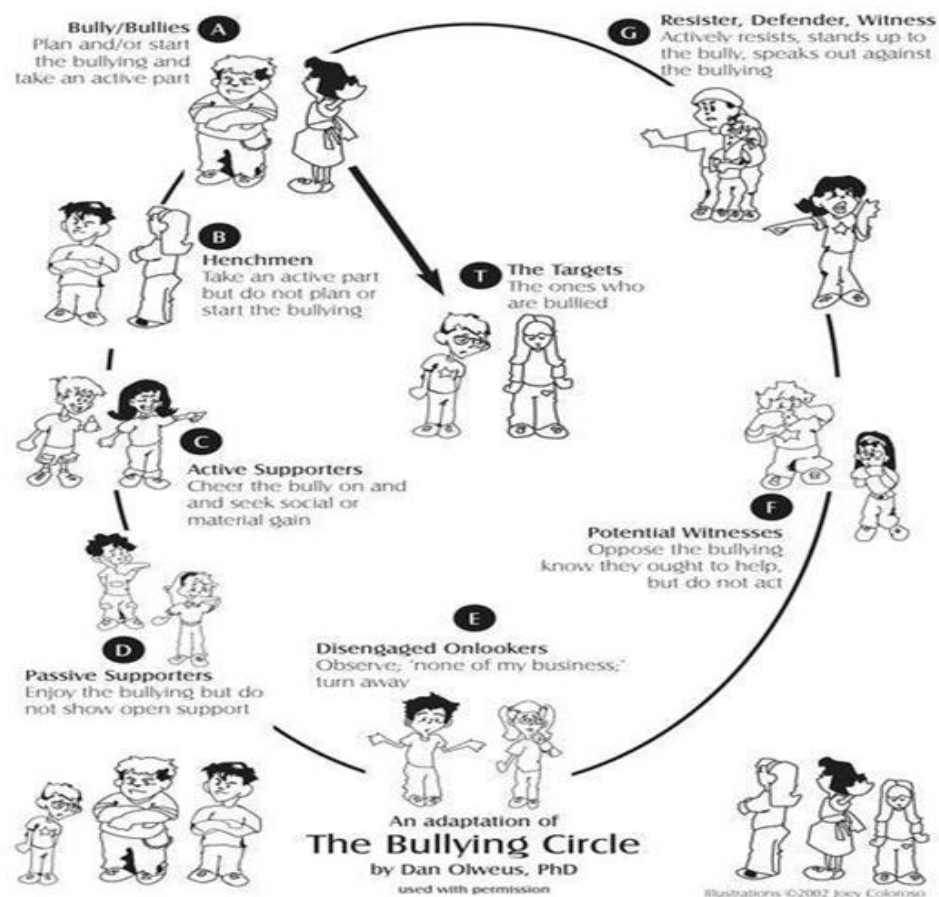


Figure 2.2 Outlines the Bullying Circle developed by Olweus in 2002. It displays different ways in which primary school learners are involved in or affected by bullying.

Point A in Olweus's Bullying Circle (2002) refers to the bully as the one who starts the bullying, that is, the perpetrator who takes an active leadership role. Olweus (2002:13-15) noted that bullies are often popular and like to be seen in a core group. They hardly ever bully on their own and they prefer other bullies to be present when they act in order to boast their confidence. Bullies, in the Bullying Circle, who take an active part in the bullying incident often blame others and show very little remorse for their behaviour.

Point B in the Bullying Circle shows that lead-bullies often have followers or henchmen who usually do not start the bullying but are helpful to the lead-bullies and participate in it. Henchmen are clearly actively involved in the bullying incident, although they are not the ones who plan it.

Point C indicates the active supporters who applaud the bullying and simultaneously look for social or material gain. Indeed, as active supporters, they expand their group of friends.

Point D shows that there are also passive supporters in the Bullying Circle who endorse the bullying by enjoying the spectacle and cheering. Although they do not join in, they watch as the incident unfolds, without openly supporting the bullies.

Point E in the Bullying Circle refers to disengaged onlookers. These onlookers are not with the bullies, they play the role of spectators in the bullying incidents. They turn away because they believe that the argument or fight has nothing to do with them.

Point F shows that the Bullying Circle also includes potential witnesses who are against the bullying and know that they are supposed to help. However, these potential witnesses do not act.

Point G relates to the resister who actively refuses to go along with the fighting or argument, as well as the defender who stands up to the bully. This point also refers to the witness who does not hesitate to speak out against the bullying. The bullying perpetrated by the role-players characterised in the Bullying Circle may involve physical behaviour such as hitting or kicking, as well as non-physical acts such as stealing from the victim, verbal abuse that could take the form of name-calling, insults, racist remarks,

and threats. More indirect bullying includes spreading true or untrue stories about the victim or excluding them from peer groups (Griffiths and Jones, 2006:94).

2.2.4 Social Learning Theory

The social learning theory that focuses on learning and social behaviour proposes that new behaviour can be acquired by observing and imitating others. It underscores that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can therefore occur through observation or direct instruction, even in the absence of motor production or direct reinforcement (Bandura, 1969). As a result, I elected to employ the social learning theory of Albert Bandura as a framework to elaborate on why primary school learners engage in bullying actions in schools (Bandura, 1969:22). In the social learning theory view, man is neither driven by inner forces nor buffeted helplessly by environmental influences. It is further stated that human behaviour is the product of directly experienced circumstances (Bandura, 1969:2). According to the social learning theory, new patterns of behaviour can be acquired through direct experiences or by observing others' behaviour. In other words, in the context of the social learning theory, Albert Bandura (1977:22) argues that aggressive behaviour occurred because of direct experiences and observation. Children observe how adults behave and then they imitate the behaviour that has been displayed. Bandura (1977:22-24) further argued that most behaviour displayed by people is learnt by observation, through modelling or copying from other people. From observing other people, a person can internalise new behaviours, and, on later occasions, the coded information is used as an action guide (Chabalala, 2011:16).

Siegel (2005:114-115, in Bandura, 1971:114) posits that people are not born with the ability to act violently but learn aggressive behaviour through their life experiences. The latter includes personally observing others act aggressively or watching people being rewarded for violent acts on television. Similarly, for Chabalala (2011:12), children learn to act aggressively by modelling their

behaviour or watching people being rewarded for violent actions or behaviour. Bandura (1971:114-115), in his social learning theory, posits that a person's violent tendencies are activated by factors in the environment. Some examples of such include specific forms of aggressive behaviour, the frequency of the latter, and the situation in which the aggressive behaviour is displayed (Siegel, 2005:114-115). When a child is raised in a family that is characterised by violence, he/she is likely to display such violence at school. In addition, a male child may engage in bullying behaviour because he has witnessed his father repeatedly beating his mother. As a result, the child feels nothing for other learners, because the father did not show any remorse or guilt after beating his mother. Clearly, the father beats this child's mother because he has more power and physical strength. Learners who are raised in such environments choose victims who are weaker, just as their fathers choose to beat their mothers instead of other men (Chabalala, 2011:18).

Furthermore, Bandura (1977:25) states that, because of repeated exposure to violent behaviour, modelling stimuli eventually produce enduring, retrievable images of modelled performance. People can observe and learn diverse lifestyles and modes of conduct through mass media. The models presented on television are so effective in capturing the attention of the viewers who learn much from what they see. Therefore, I deduct that learners who watch violent movies on television – where the villains are never punished for their actions – are most likely to engage in aggressive behaviour that equates to bullying.

Siegel (2005:114-115) and Schultz and Schultz (1993:384) emphasise that the social learning theory views violence as something learnt through a process called behaviour modelling. Aggressive behaviour is modelled in three main contexts.

- Family interactions: Siegel (2005:114) notes that studies of family life revealed that aggressive children generally have parents who use similar tactics in dealing with others. For example, female the children are more

likely to use aggressive tactics – to solve problems – than are their peers from violence-free families (Chabalala, 2011:12).

- Environmental experiences: people who reside in areas where violence occurs daily are more likely to act violently than those who live in low-crime areas whose norms stress non-aggressive behaviour.
- Mass media: television films commonly portray violence as acceptable behaviour, especially for heroes/villains who never have to face the legal consequences of their actions. Children who watch these films are most likely to act aggressively towards others as they imitate the behaviour of their heroes in these films (Chabalala, 2011:17).

In this regard, this study is based on symbolic interactionism. The latter refers to the peculiar character of interaction as it occurs among human beings. The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or define one another's actions, instead of merely reacting to them (Calhoun et al., 2007:70). Symbolic interactionism rests on the idea that individuals act towards people and things according to the meanings that they have attached to those people or things (Blasé and Blasé, 2004). Those meanings are derived from the social interaction that individuals have with one another. The assigned meanings are subsequently modified through an interpretive process used by individuals to deal with things and people they encounter.

According to the above highlighted theory, bullying behaviour is a phenomenon that does not occur in isolation but rather in complex relationships among individuals, families, peer groups, as well as school community members and can be dealt with by the whole school community, namely, parents, educators, learners, school governing bodies, and other related stakeholders (Osman, 2013:16).

2.3 HISTORICAL VIEWS ON BULLYING IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS

2.3.1 Introduction

This section discusses the historical views on bullying behaviour in public primary schools. It also provides a definition of bullying behaviour among primary school learners and highlights its origins. Furthermore, the history of bullying behaviour in certain countries and in South Africa is outlined. An appropriate approach to managing bullying behaviour in public primary schools is suggested

2.3.2 Bullying, a definition

The word “bully” can be traced back as far as the 1530s. (Harper, 2008). In its most basic sense, bullying involves two people, a bully or intimidator and a victim. The bully abuses the victim through physical, verbal, or other means in order to gain a sense of superiority and power. These actions may be direct (i.e. hitting, verbally assaulting face-to-face, etc.) or indirect (i.e. rumours, gossip, etc.). Bullying is defined as any kind of on-going physical or verbal mistreatment based on dominance and control. It is a conscious and willful act of aggression against or manipulation of one person or more by one or more people (Auma-Okumu, 2012:22). Nesor *et al* (2003:139) define bullying as intentional, repeated hurtful acts and words, name-calling, and threats directed at a child or group of children by another child or other children. Mac-Donald and Swart (2004:34) describe bullying as a repeated psychological or physical act of aggression, which causes embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another. It can assume many forms that range from gestures to verbal or physical abuse (Sullivan, 2000:11).

Olweus (1994:9), the leading figure in research on bullying, suggests that a student is being bullied or victimised when he or she is repeatedly exposed, over time, to negative action on the part of one or more students. For Olweus (1994:9), a negative action is when someone intentionally attempts to or inflicts injury or

discomfort to another. A negative action can be verbal, or may consist in threatening, teasing, ridiculing, or swearing at someone (De Wet, 2005:82).

Bullying is further characterised by De Wet (2005:83) as physical aggression, sexual harassment, social isolation, degrading looks (faces), crude language, spreading rumours about someone, as well as refusing someone's requests. For Du Plessis (2011:1), bullying consists in an aggressive behaviour that involves forceful attacks on people, over a period. The abusive relationship between the bully and the bullied is based on an imbalance of power (Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2008:140). Bullying is a particularly vicious kind of aggressive behaviour that is distinguished by repeated violent acts against the victims who cannot defend themselves (Schneider, Smith and Ananiadou, 2004:547). Zeelie (2004:12) views bullying learners as motivated by a deliberate desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. Roland (2002:56) defines bullying as a long-standing, negative behaviour directed by an individual or a group towards a helpless victim.

Bullying behaviour is to intimidate through domineering or threatening behaviour (Pillay, 2007:9). The acts of bullying are characterised by six defining factors (Naser, et al, .2003:129; Pillay, 2007:9).

- Intent to harm, in which the bully finds pleasure in taunting others.
- Intensity and duration, in that bullying continues over a long period of time.
- Power over the victim because of the bullies' age, size, strength or gender.
- Selection of victims who appear vulnerable due to their apparent inability to defend themselves.
- Lack of support experienced by the victim, causing under reporting of incidents of bullying.
- Long lasting consequences – the victim may withdraw from school activities (Pillay, 2007:9).

From the above definitions, it is clear that bullying always includes three elements: the intentional use of aggression, an unbalanced power relationship between the bully and the bullied, and the infliction of physical pain and/or emotional misery as well as unjust use of power and the intent to harm (De Wet, 2005:82; Langevin, 2000:1). Learners can be directly and/or indirectly bullied – verbally or physically. Indeed, the aim of the bully is to gain control over another person by means of physical or verbal aggression (De Wet, 2005:83). As such, bullying is an intentional or unintentional abuse of power perpetrated by individuals or groups (MacDonald and Swart, 2004: 33).

For the purposes of this study, bullying is construed as a repeated or persistent hurtful or violent act that takes the form of physical, verbal, psychological, and emotional abuse (Lidzhegu, 2012:14).

2.3.3 Origins of bullying behaviour

The desire to survive is instinctive and common among all living things (Espelage and Swearer, 2009:659). Survival, according to Donegan (2012: 34), is associated directly with competition, due to the multitude of species and the limited natural resources on the planet. Since the beginning of time, there has been a constant drive to out-perform others and overcome obstacles (Hinduja and Patchin, 2009). These survival instincts, along with a competitive atmosphere, have remained the same, although humanity has evolved. Both forces have flowed over into the education, social, and economic realms which are known as a competitive hierarchy, or in capitalists' ideological terms "social Darwinism" (Allanson, Lester and Notar, 2015:32).

This competitive hierarchy, though prevalent in most societies, varies across cultures depending on their ethical systems, traditions, and the type of control exerted by the government. The USA capitalistic society pushes the belief that success and wealth go together or that success is equal to wealth. This ideology

instills the message that the rich are superior and identifies bullying as a form of survival tactic in a competitive capitalistic society (Donegan, 2015:34).

From a very young age, children are conditioned to believe this ideology to get ahead, especially once the child enters elementary school. Pressure to attend the best college or to earn scholarship may lead to such bullying tactics as cheating or spreading rumours about classmates (Poland, 2010:55).

Other historical factors that have induced bullying practices include informal rites of passage into adulthood, rituals, bigotry, religious intolerance, hazing, and sexual identification (Donegan, 2012:32). Bullying, therefore, as viewed in terms of peer victimisation, is symptomatic of these aggressive social interactions, or lack of tolerance for differences.

2.3.4 Bullying in certain other countries

According to Furniss (2000:23 in Pillay, 2007:24) school bullying is a prevalent problem in many societies across the world. For as long as schools have been in existence, bullying behaviour has been the most prevalent form of violence (Allanson, Lester and Notar, 2015:33). Indeed, bullying behaviour, in its many forms, is experienced in schools worldwide. During the 2007-2008 school years, in the United State of America (USA), 32% of learners around the age of 12 reported being bullied and, out of this number, 21 indicated that they were bullied twice a week or month. In the United Kingdom (UK), bullying behaviour in schools is recognised as a troubling factor.

A recent study of 1041 learners in four Toronto area schools (grade K-8) showed that the proportion of children who reported being victimised more than once or twice over the term was between 12 and 15 percent. The proportion of students who reported having bullied others more than once or twice over the term ranges

from 7 to 49 percent (Pepler, Craig, Ziegler and Charach, 1994:102, Pillay, 2007:24).

Furthermore, Professor Dan Olweus – the first Scandinavian researcher who began to conduct research on bullying behaviour in 1969 – influenced other states to consider bullying behaviour in schools seriously (Sampson, 2002:2). Olweus (2005:389) conducted his systematic study in Norwegian and Swedish schools and found that many learners experienced bullying at school. The findings showed that approximately 7% of Scandinavian learners engaged in bullying at school, and between 5% and 15% of learners, in various grades, reported being bullied (Moon et al, 2008:8). Because of Olweus's research work, other studies concerning school bullying have been conducted in various countries such as Austria, Canada, China, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. These studies have found similar or even higher percentages of learners who engaged in bullying (Olweus and Solberg, 1998; UNESCO, 2017:22). In this regard, Olweus (2001:320) states that bullying behaviour in school cannot continue without any intervention or eradication strategies that can enable the creation of a safe learning environment for all learners.

2.3.5 Bullying in South Africa

Studies conducted in South Africa by De Wet (2005) revealed that 60.9% of the participants in the Gauteng province reported to have been victims of bullying, and 21.76% reported having been bullied once/twice per month. Studies undertaken in Limpopo, the Western Cape, and Kwazulu Natal indicated the prevalence of bullying behaviour and therefore the need to address it (Kruger, 2010). Another study undertaken in Gauteng, South Africa suggests that a high percentage of children in South African schools are being bullied and bullying occurs at all schools, rich or poor, state and independent (Behr,2000:47).

According to Squelch, violence, abuse, crime-ridden society, an authoritarian learning culture, poverty and racism are among the main catalysts of bullying actions in South African primary schools (Behr, 2000:47; Pillay, 2007:28). It was also found that 45,5% of 608 learners experienced bullying at least once a year.

According to Roper (2002:68, in Pillay, 2007:28) high levels of racially motivated violence amongst learners in formally White, Coloured and Indian schools that have been racially integrated have been reported (Pillay, 2007). The study also revealed that 62% of the cases reported were about a racial incident or racism in school, including derogatory and racial name calling and various forms of racial harassment often resulting in physical altercation.

According to Thamm (1997:54) bullying behaviour does not only occur in economically disadvantaged schools or poverty-stricken communities. Bullying behaviour occurs in all schools and no matter where they live, bullies find one place especially congenial to their nefarious activities- the school (Pillay, 2007:29). It is further stated that South Africa is no exception as the culture of violence has permeated society to such an extent that children often do not realise that what they are doing has negative consequences (Douglas, 2002:4). From the above discussions, it is apparent that bullying is a serious and widespread problem in South African schools (Pillay, 2007:30).

2.3.6 Suggested approach in managing bullying behaviour

Bullying behaviour in schools has now been internationally recognised as a serious problem that needs to be rooted out of schools. It is also regarded as a systematic, sociological phenomenon that can be best addressed by means of a system, hence the adoption of a whole-school approach system (Bold, 2011:34). In the endeavour to combat this phenomenon, many countries suggested two effective programmes that could decrease bullying behaviour in schools by 20-30% and victimisation by 17-20% (Farrington and Ttofi, 2009). Norwegian schools favoured

Dan Olweus's Bullying Programmes while other countries like New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United State of America and Australia prefer a whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour. The whole-school approach was scholarly described as that which involved the whole school community: learners, educators, parents, and the entire community (Swearer et al., 2010).

In the light of the above discussions, a whole-school approach is the more commonly used strategy for school anti-bullying activities. (Macfarlane, 2009). It has achieved a tremendous reduction of bullying behaviour in schools (Veeman and Carroll, 2007: 86). Historically, a whole-school approach has been most effective in addressing bullying behaviour. Many international studies suggest that whole-school approaches show more successes in reducing bullying behaviour in schools than other approaches. The whole-school approach requires the involvement of the whole school community, namely, learners, educators, parents, school principals, and the school management team in designing and implementing anti-bullying strategies (Bold, 2011:99).

2.4 DIFFERENT TYPES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

In schools, bullying takes various forms (Auma-Okumu, 2012:22). Olweus (1997:37) makes a distinction between direct and indirect bullying, where the former implies relatively open attacks such as pushing, kicking, shoving, hitting, and tripping someone, and the latter consists in social isolation and intentional exclusion from a group (Du Plessis, 2011:3). Furthermore, direct bullying behaviour includes physical aggression, offensive words, and degrading looks and signs; while indirect bullying consist of ignoring someone, isolating a person, spreading rumours about someone, and declining someone's requests (De Wet, 2005:82-83).

Originally, researchers thought that only physical acts of violence could be classified as bullying (Anderson, 2007:40). The stereotypical understanding of bullying was of a big, tough kid who has repeated grades several times threatening other students with beating, unless they do what he says (Pearson, 2005:10). In this research study, different types of bullying behaviour occurring in primary schools were mentioned, namely, physical bullying, verbal bullying, relational bullying, emotional bullying, sexual bullying, racial bullying, and electronic bullying (Neser *et al.*, 2003:128; Behr, 2000:48; Smit, 2003:27; Kowalski and Limber, 2007:22).

2.4.1 Physical bullying among primary school learners

Physical bullying among primary school learners includes punching, poking, strangling, kicking, hair-pulling, beating, biting, tripping, excessive tickling, racketeering (demanding money or protection fees), violent assault, and damaging of property (Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2008:15). Physical bullying, according to Baier (2007:9), encompasses such behaviour as choking, hitting, destruction of property, theft, physical threats, obscene gestures, exclusion from a group, and manipulation of friendship. Auma-Okumu (2012:22) further emphasises that physical bullying often causes visible hurt, notably cuts and bruises.

In other words, it is tangible and very easily identifiable. In some extreme cases, physical bullying among primary school learners has resulted in severe injury or death (Auma-Okumu, 2012: 23). It can include biting, hair pulling, kicking, locking someone in a room or outside, pinching, punching, pushing, scratching, spitting on, or any other form of physical attack (Entenman, Murnen and Hendricks, 2006:353-346). For Neser *et al.*, (2003:1) and De Wet (2005:707), physical bullying among primary school learners consists in excessive tickling, poking, burning, stabbing, tripping, taking other learners' money, being physically threatened, taking other learners' lunch or homework, vandalism, being shoved against desks

and walls, being tackled to the ground, being locked in a dark room, and theft of personal belongings.

Barone (1997:81) stresses that boys mainly experience this direct form of bullying. Seunoe (2002:15) notes that both boys and girls experience physical bullying in primary schools. Smith and Sharp (1994:6) further notes that physical bullying is easier to detect, because it involves both sexes: both girls and boys can be physically bullied or be the perpetrators. Torrance (1997:152) supports Seunoe's view when he states that nine out of 13 girls have been bullied verbally, physically, or by exclusion. Conversely, 10 out of 12 boys have been physically bullied. Physical bullying may also include initiation rites, where senior learners pick on new learners, push them in corridors and stairwells, lock them in toilets, and force them to do things (Seunoe, 2002:15-16; Krige *et al.*, 2000:20). It is clear from the above that both boys and girls experience physical bullying (Smith and Sharp, 1994:6). Physical bullying amongst primary school learners is direct and therefore easier to detect (Smith and Sharp, 1994:6).

Learners who bully others physically use various weapons such as pens, scissors, and knives (Mabatha, Magano and Sedibe, 2014: 238). Some bullies eventually kill other learners (Sowetan 15 April 2009). For Larson (2005), physical bullying challenges schools' ability to maintain safety and an orderly learning environment.

Coloroso (as cited by Anderson, 2007:42) explains that learners who physically harm others are troubled and are more likely to commit crimes that are more serious. Garrett (2003:54) reinforces this view when he notes that physical bullying among primary school learners is a moderate risk factor for serious violence, between the ages of 15 and 25. He underscores that bullies are four times more likely to be convicted of crimes by the age of 24 than the other learners.

2.4.2 Verbal and non-verbal bullying among primary school learners

Some learners experience verbal and non-verbal bullying in schools. These forms of bullying, according to De Wet (2000:19-22), are the most frequently experienced by girls and boys in primary schools. Verbal bullying amongst primary school learners includes hate speech, persistent insults, and the use of derogatory names referring to colour and race (Selekman and Vissey, 2004:246-249; Bidwell, 1997).

Verbal and non-verbal bullying amongst primary school learners are non-physical forms (Sullivan, 2000). Verbal bullying includes such behaviour as making abusive telephone calls, extortion of money or possessions, intimidation or threats of violence, taunting, name-calling, sexually suggestive language or gestures, abusive language, spreading false and malicious rumours, humiliating, degrading, teasing, sarcasm, staring, and sticking out of the tongue (Auma-Okumu, 2012:23). Non-verbal bullying includes put-downs, eye rolling, silent treatment, manipulative friendships, and ostracising others (Clark and Kiselica, 1997).

For Harris and Hathorn (2006:52), verbal bullying often involves name-calling, abusive comments, and the uttering of insulting words and sounds directed to other learners with the aim of hurting them. Verbal and non-verbal bullying further includes degrading remarks concerning someone's appearance, verbal threats, threatening or offensive signs, insulting someone's family, or gender, or race, or religion, as well as name-calling, and writing degrading letters to someone (De Wet, 2005:83; Booyens, 2003:38).

The technological era has created new possibilities for verbal bullying; victims are reached via email and cellular phone messages (De Wet, 2005:83; Beckerman and Nocero, 2002:38). It must be stressed that email and cellular phone messages are often more vicious than face-to-face bullying.

According to Krige *et al.* (2002:2), verbal bullying can happen directly or indirectly, and can result in physical bullying. Verbal bullying is difficult to deal with, even if it is reported. This is because the bullies usually deny having done it, in the absence of tangible evidence (Harris and Hathorn, 2006:52).

Primary school learners are mostly bullied verbally, by means of graffiti on bathroom walls. Here, the bullies write the names of other learners and call them nasty names (De Wet, 2005:713). For example, bullying learners may write that a certain learner is a thief. This is done with the intention of hurting the feelings of the learner in question. The learners who write these graffiti are aware that their messages will hurt the intended victim (Chabalala, 2011:24).

Plank, Mac Dill, Macpartland and Jordan (2001:512, as cited by Chabalala, 2011: 25), observe that swearing is used as an offensive weapon or instrument to humiliate, hurt, or ridicule other learners and destroy their self-confidence. Van Niekerk (1993:35, as cited by Lidzhegu, 2012:16) underscores that its subtlety makes verbal bullying difficult to deal with, even when reported.

Verbal bullying is the most hurtful form of bullying in that some of the things said by bullies are more damaging than physical bullying (Chabalala, 2011:31).

2.4.3 Emotional bullying amongst primary school learners

Emotional bullying encompasses spreading rumours, intentionally excluding someone from activities, influencing someone into disliking a person, making a fool of someone, and trying to dominate someone (De Wet, 2005:83). According to Naser *et al.* (2003:129), emotional bullying includes terrorising, extorting money from someone, gossiping about a person, defaming, humiliating, blackmailing, the rating or ranking of such characteristics as race, disability, and ethnicity, as well as manipulating friendships, ostracising, and exerting peer-pressure.

Mabatha, Magano and Sedibe (2014:238) consider emotional bullying as aggression without words. An example of emotional bullying is when a learner is called names such as “darkie” or “blacky”, and “fatty boom-boom” – to mean that the learner in question is too dark or too fat, respectively. This hurts the emotions of the intended victim (Whittered and Dupper, 2008:336). Emotional bullying is uncommon and difficult to detect, compared to verbal and physical forms of bullying (Seals and Young, 2003).

It is threatening or obscene gestures, excluding others from a group, manipulation of friendships, threatening e-mail and telephone calls. It involves shunning or excluding the victim from social or group activities (Pillay, 2007:32).

2.4.4 Psychological bullying amongst primary school learners

Psychological bullying, according to Zeelie (2004:14), encompasses spreading rumours, intimidating someone, stalking, giving someone dirty looks, making a fool of someone, and causing a person to feel scared. Krige *et al.* (2000) and Thamm (1997:56) stress that psychological bullying mainly occurs indirectly: victims are excluded from the group of peers or friends, or they are isolated during play and work activities. Whittered and Dupper (2008:336) as well as Whitney and Smith (1993:11) construe psychological bullying among primary school learners as the deliberate leaving of a learner out of games and social activities, spreading rumours and gossiping about other learners, making a fool of someone, intimidating, scaring someone by staring at them, and hiding someone’s belongings or property.

2.4.5 Relational bullying amongst primary school learners

Relational bullying occurs where a victim is deliberately excluded from activities or groups (Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2008:15; Naser *et al.*, 2003:123; Greef, 2004:13; *Sunday Times* 20 March 2016). Relational bullying between primary school

learners often happen during breaks (Mollo, 2009:18). One good example of relational bullying is when the captain of a netball team dislikes a teammate. Thus, she excludes this mate from the team and encourages other members of the team to dislike the victim (Chabalala, 2011:26).

Similarly, Selekman and Vessey (2004) conceive relational bullying as saying things that would cause other learners to dislike a learner, as well as manipulative friendships where a given learner is deprived of his or her best friend. Relational bullying also occurs when some learners try to turn another learner's best-friend against him or her. The learner to whom the negative behaviour is directed suffers emotionally (Harris and Hathorn, 2006:52). Evidently, relational bullying is intended to hurt the feelings of the target-learners (Greef, 2004:13).

2.4.6 Social bullying amongst primary school learners

Lee (2004:10, as quoted by Lidzhegu, 2012:17), defines social bullying as the deliberate exclusion of a learner from a social group, or a learner's intimidation by a given group. Coloroso (2003:170) construes relational bullying as the systematic diminishment of a bullied child's sense of self. Social bullying is difficult to detect from outside; it may manifest itself through the victim's experience of exclusion, being ignored, and being isolated or shunned (Lidzhegu, 2012:17). Indirect forms of social bullying include the secretive exclusion of the victims who are unaware of the conspiracy against them, until they attempt to join a group but are rejected (Lee, 2004:10).

Social bullying amongst primary school learners, according to Coloroso (2003:17) as well as O'Moore and Minton (2004:72), often consists in such subtle actions as aggressive stares, rolling of eyes, frowns, sighs, sneers, and snickers. To this list, Sampson (2002:2) adds such acts as tripping, intimidation, rumour spreading, demanding money, as well as the theft of valuables.

2.4.7 Extortion as bullying

This type of bullying consists in bullies taking the money or personal property of the bullied. Sometimes, the bullies would force their victims to steal things for them, or to break or vandalise another people's property. Thereafter, the bullies would threaten, "to tell" on the persons they forced to steal or break things (O' Moore and Minton, 2004:72).

2.4.8 Cyberbullying

In this cyber generation era, cyberbullying has emerged as the latest form of harassment of school learners through the misuse of technological devices. This type of bullying is increasingly common and continuously evolving. Cyberbullying is defined as the use of electronic forms of communication by an individual or group to engage repeatedly in sending or posting content about an individual or group that a reasonable person would deem cruel, vulgar, threatening, embarrassing, harassing, frightening, or harmful (Snakenborg, Van Acker and Gable, 2011:90).

Cyberbullying is further defined as the willful and repeated harm inflicted using computers, chat rooms, SMS, instant messaging, cell phones, e-mails, and other electronic devices. Examples of cyber bullying include sending hurtful or threatening text messages, spreading rumours through cell phones or computers, circulating private information about a child, creating web pages, videos or profiles on social networking sites to make fun of others, or taking inappropriate photos and posting or spreading them online (Hinduja and Patchin , 2006).

According to Baron and Branscombe (2014:376), cyberbullying is growing and exceeding the immediate boundaries of the school environment. Cyberbullying occurs at any time of the day or night. Despite occurring in and out of school, cyberbullying impacts negatively on school safety as well as learning and teaching within the school environment (Bissonette, 2009:8). Cyberbullying mostly involves

conflict between learners who know each other from school (Hinduja and Patchin, 2011:25).

Furthermore, cyber bullying extends to a vast number of bystanders, within a peer group, the school context, and the wide community (Venter, 2011). Cyberbullying is viewed as vicious because the victims receive offensive messages or images about themselves that spread quickly and can be seen by many people (James, 2010). It is noted that individuals who engage in this type of bullying have a certain degree of anonymity and imperceptibility that protects them from being linked to the cyberbullying (Cowie and Jennifer, 2008:10).

Research shows that cyberbullying is more prevalent among secondary school learners than primary school learners. However, because of the latest technological advancement, younger age groups are quickly becoming involved in this type of bullying behaviour (Slonje and Smith, 2008:153). Cyberbullying is a serious problem that can dramatically affect learners' ability to progress academically and socially. Yet, many school learners do not report incidents of cyberbullying (Juvonen and Gross, 2008:496).

Cyberbullying, unlike any other form of bullying behaviour, inflicts greater damage to the targeted school learners. Hence, every attempt must be made to eradicate it in schools; this can be done by using a whole-school approach strategy (Banks, 1997:4). A whole-school approach can promote a safe learning environment for learners.

2.4.9 Name-calling

Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) that hurts insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour in the primary school environment. Often, name-calling of this type refers to physical appearances, for example size or clothes worn (Scileanna, 2013:11-12). Accent or distinctive voice

characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name –calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme, there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted (Scileanna, 2013).

2.4.10 Damage to property

Personal property can be targeted by bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks or other learning materials, or interference with bullied pupils' lockers or bicycles. The contents of school bags and pencil cases, for instance, may be scattered on the floor.

2.4.11 Sexual bullying behaviour

Sexual bullying behaviour in primary schools can take place in the form of verbal, physical or relational acts (De Wet et al, 98-99). It includes unwanted sexual jokes, taunts about sexual body parts, sexual comments, teasing about sexual orientation or starting rumours about sexual activities, advances, and the display of sexual material (Kruger, 2011:34; Pillay, 2007:32). Teasing regarding someone's sexual orientation or starting rumours about their sexual activities, as well as the passing of unwanted notes or pictures about sex is also seen as forms of sexual bullying (Wilson, 2008:2; Kruger, 2011).

In addition, physically intrusive behaviour such as brushing up against, or grabbing, someone in a sexual way, forcing someone to engage in unwanted sexual behaviour, pulling at clothing in a sexual way or pulling clothing down or off, and flashing or mooning frequently occurs within primary school premises (Prinsloo, 2006:306-307; Wilson, 2008:3).

Female learners that endure sexual harassment are less confident, more self-conscious, shamed, and embarrassed. Sexual bullying can be physical, verbal, or psychological in nature. It humiliates, degrades and demeans an individual (Pillay, 2007:32).

2.4.12 Other forms of bullying among primary school learners

Bullies can use many other ways to bully other learners, in addition to those discussed above. De Wet (2005:707), Smit (2003:27-33), Kuther (2006:1), Selekman and Vessey (2004:246-249) and Seabi (2009:23, as quoted by Chabalala, 2011:45) identify the following forms of bullying as common amongst school learners:

- Taking, stealing, or damaging another learner's belongings;
- Making rude gestures and mean faces at another learner;
- Sending nasty messages to other learners;
- Writing or drawing nasty things about someone;
- Ignoring someone, or always leaving them out of things;
- Threatening or intimidating the victim by uttering words like "we will get you after school";
- Intimidation;
- Unpleasant insults;
- Offensive and sneering comments;
- Making up things to get the targeted learner into trouble; and
- Being held at knifepoint, or with any other weapon (O'Moore and Minton, 2004:72 and Seabi, 2009:24).

An example of making up things to get the targeted learner in trouble is that, while the teacher is in class, the bully may make noise and point the victim as the culprit, when the teacher inquires (Pauw, 2007:1). Nonetheless, Levison (2002:135:137) and Neufeld (2002:51) highlight the fact that some adults regard bullying as one of

the stages of a child's development. Consequently, when some learners report that they are being bullied, these adults do not intervene, as they do not see anything wrong with it.

2.4.13 Racial bullying

Ethnic minorities are generally at risk of racial bullying. Name calling is one of the most common techniques used in racial bullying. Most racial bullies pick up prejudices and racism from their parents and or communities, In South Africa in particular, because racial divisions were previously artificially entrenched, learners indulging in derogatory name-calling and racial incidents in schools have been on the increase ever since schools became racially intergraded. This has been influenced by the fact that many South African children have grown up in a racially divided country (Pillay, 2007:32).

2.4.14 Covert or hidden bullying amongst primary school learners

Covert or hidden bullying is often harder to identify; and, it can be perpetrated behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or humiliate them (Atlas and Pepler, 1998). Covert bullying includes:

- Lying and spreading rumours;
- Negative facial or physical gestures;
- Menacing or contemptuous looks;
- Playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate;
- Mimicking someone;
- Encouraging others to socially exclude someone; and
- Damaging someone's social reputation or compromising his or her social acceptance (www.kidshephon.com).

2.4.15 The extent of bullying among primary school learners

Various reports and articles establish that approximately 15% of learners, either are bullied regularly, or are initiators of bullying (Du Plessis, 2012:2). Nine percent of this statistic comprise of victims, whereas the remaining six percent represent regular bullies (Olweus, 1997:13). Leach (1997:53) reveals that 63% of learners admit to having been bullied at some point, whereas 10% acknowledge having been bullied weekly or more often. These statistics reinforce the existence of bullying in South African primary schools. However, its extent could be higher than the figures provided by Leach (Du Plessis, 2012:2). Indeed, bullying amongst primary school learners is a secretive activity. As such, it is difficult to detect. Moreover, learners do not report bullying incidents to educators, school principals, or SMTs – except in serious cases (Smith and Sharp, 1994:5). Moreover, most bullying amongst school learners often occurs in areas where there are no educators in sight (Lidzhegu, 2012:14; Barone, 1997:87).

What is more, bullying amongst primary school learners occurs in various ways that are hard to detect, namely, verbally, emotionally, and psychologically (Byrne, 1994:46). According to Smith and Sharp (in Lidzhegu, 2012:14), bullying between primary school learners is a wilful, conscious and purposeful act. This suggests that bullying is planned and intentional behaviour: it does not happen accidentally. This is reinforced by the fact that it is repeated over a period (Smith and Thomson, 1991:). The deliberate, purposeful and abusive nature of bullying proves that it is not a response to provocation. Its aim is to hurt a person or make him/her feel unhappy and unsafe (Squelch, 1998:4).

Bullying among primary school learners persists because learners often hear normalising statements from their parents and educators. Such statements encompass “Being bullied is just part of growing up”, “You need to stand up for yourself”, “Boys will be boys”, “You need to toughen up” and “Don’t be so sensitive” (De Wet, 2005:83), as well as “They tease you because they like you” (Will and

Neufeld, 2002:51). These statements – made by adults whom learners respect – imply that bullying is part of the developmental process.

2.5 AREAS WHERE BULLYING OCCURS

Bullying amongst primary school learners occurs more in certain areas than in others. It mainly occurs secretively, out of educators' or adults' sight. This makes dealing with bullying amongst primary school learners difficult (Train, 1995:16). It happens predominantly in such areas of the school environment as toilets, stairwells, and classrooms (Thamm, 1997:58).

De Voe, Kaffenberg and Chander (2005:195) as well as Lee (2004:68) stresses that bullying amongst primary school learners occurs in such unsupervised areas of the school as corridors, halls, parking lots, in taxis or buses, and outside the school – especially during break time, organised sporting events, extra-mural activities, and the assembly. Byrne (1994:9) reinforces this view by noting that bullying does not only happen and end around school premises, it extends to local shops and the way to and from school.

2.5.1 The school playground

The school playground is the most common setting where bullying occurs (Seals and Young, 2003:735-747). Clearly, the school playground is the place where most learners feel unsafe. Indeed, when no sporting activity is taking place at school, the playground is unsupervised and as a result, bullies use this opportunity to victimise other learners (Chabalala, 2011:45). On the school playground, it becomes easy for the bully to intimidate other learners (Greef, 2004:16). According to Potter (2002:1), parents who express their frustration and stress in the form of aggression, anger, and swearing set a negative example for their children. Bandura (1977:22) underscores that bullying behaviour is learnt through observing others. When children are raised in families where parents swear or use other

forms of aggression, these children tend to display the observed bullying behaviour at school. The school playground becomes the ideal location to practice bullying.

2.5.2 Stairwells

Chuenyane (2008:5) identifies stairwells as places where groups of boys harass other learners verbally and physically in-between classes and during breaks. Greef (2004:16) underscores the fact that many learners are bullied in stairwells, although this often goes unnoticed.

2.5.3 The toilet

Chabalala (2011:46) identifies school toilets as the most dangerous places where severe bullying occurs. Indeed, in many primary schools, some boys and girls gather in toilets, where they threaten and intimidate other learners. This is corroborated by Prevent (2016) who indicates that restrooms are the places where significant bullying occurs, simply because groups of bullies lie there, waiting for preys – without any fear of being confronted by an adult.

Some male learners prefer to use the toilet as a place where they victimise others, because teachers and learners do not use the same toilet. Because of the lack of supervision by school educators and supporting staff, it becomes easy for bullies to unpunishably intimidate others in the toilets (Chuenyane, 2008:5). However, the main reason bullying occurs frequently in learners' toilets is because it is not often reported to educators and/or parents (Chabalala, 2011:46). Finally, restrooms constitute places where certain learners fall victim to the oppression perpetrated by disciplinarian peers.

2.5.4 The classroom

Bullying amongst primary school learners also occurs in the classroom, especially in the absence of the educator (Greef, 2004:16). Indeed, when educators are not in class, there is no one to intervene in bullying situations. Bullies are aware of and take full advantage of the educator's absence.

2.6 FACTORS INFLUENCING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AMONGST PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

Bullying and other aggressive behaviours of the bullies towards their peers can be construed as perpetrators' reactions to their frustrations and failure at school. These reactions are the direct consequences of the competition for good marks (Mollo, 2011:18). Hence, Sehunoe (2002:16) states that bullying between primary school learners do not occur randomly; it is not only purposive but also influenced by various factors. Fried and Fried (1996:6-8) suggest that learners who perpetrate bullying are influenced by such factors as culture, the community, the school, the family, and the individual (Du Plessis and Conley, 2007:47-48). These five factors are best represented as four concentric circles, starting with the individual learner who is embodied by the innermost circle (Fried and Fried, 1996: 6-8; Lidzhegu, 2012:18). The following is a schematic representation of the four concentric circles corresponding to the factors influencing bullying behaviour, according to Fried and Friend (1996:7) and Sehunoe (2002:17).

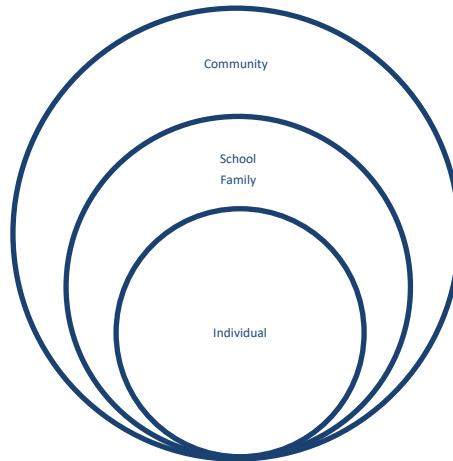


Figure 2.3: Factors influencing bullying behaviour (Fried and Fried, 1996:7; Lidzhegu, 2012:19; Sehunoe, 2002:17).

2.6.1 Individual factor

Learners' personal qualities, habits, behaviours, and physical features (Fried and Fried, 1996:7) influence the relationships and interactions between learners. Some learners have irritating personal habits that may cause others to view them negatively (Nkosi, 2002:19). The best-documented individual-related source of bullying amongst children is temperament; active and impulsive children may be more inclined to becoming bullies (Brown, 1997)

In the case of boys, the superiority in physical strength vis-à-vis relatively younger and less strong peers may result in bullying tendencies (Lidzhegu, 2012:20). However, it suffices to stress that many physically strong and adept boys never bully others (Olweus, 1993).

2.6.2 The family and home factor

Fried and Fried (1996:7, as cited by Lidzhegu, 2012:19) note that several child-rearing styles have been found to produce children who grow into aggressive bullies. These children's experienced lack of attention and warmth, the modelling

of aggressive behaviour at home, and poor supervision create the perfect conditions for their developing aggression and bullying behaviour (SAHRC, 2007:6). The modelling of aggressive behaviour includes parents' use of physical and verbal aggression towards each other.

A family background characterised by negative attitudes between parents and children can also foster bullying amongst primary school learners (Leach, 1997:30; Batsche and Knoff, 1994:169)). This means that children whose parents are violent and abusive are more likely to become bullies (Lidzhegu, 2012:19), as children copy and display the attitudes and behaviour portrayed by their parents. Consequently, learners raised in loveless, unsupportive, abusive, and disrespectful families grow into intolerant individuals who are unable to show empathy, respect, and positive attitudes towards other learners (Brown, 1997:19). Thamm (1997:58) adds that traumatic events also lead to learners becoming bullies. For example, parents' separation may lead to a learner being doubtful about the future and resorting to stubbornness or bullying.

Learners whose parents' income or socio-economic status is low generally resort to bullying at school. Serious illness in the family, accidents, foster-care, drug abuse, and sexual assault also lead learners to engage in bullying behaviour at school (Mundberg Ericksen et al., 2012:8). Poor family resources and strains, as well as individual characteristics such as personality traits, disabilities, low level of parents' education, physical appearance, and physical strength could lead learners to anti-social behaviours (Farrington and Ttofi, 2009:6).

2.6.3 The school factor

The social context, notably the supervision or lack thereof at school, plays a major part in the frequency and severity of bullying incidents (Olweus, 1993). While teachers and administrators do not have control over individual and family factors, the severity of bullying incidents can be significantly reduced through appropriate

supervision, intervention, and the creation of an anti-bullying climate at schools (Leach, 1997:3; Olweus, 1993). Furthermore, Squelch (1998:30) stresses that schools that ignore bullying – and may or even condone it in any form – contribute to its prevalence. Conversely, schools that adopt an anti-bullying strategy and empower school staff to detect and deal with bullying are more likely to reduce its occurrence and be able to create a relatively safe learning environment (Lidzhegu, 2012:20).

Similarly, Fried and Fried (1996:8) note that the school environment may influence some learners' bullying behaviour. Indeed, educators' ability to appropriately deal with their own aggressive feelings, their discipline or lack thereof, and their willingness or unwillingness to solve learners' conflicts help to create a school climate that either discourages or promotes bullying. Roland and Munthe (1989:107:108, in Sehunoe, 2002:19) add that learners also become bullies if they are subjected to enormous pressure to succeed, especially if they feel no sense of accomplishment in relation to their peers.

Teachers' attitudes have a significant influence on learners' behaviour. The latter can be worsened by the instruction method or the educator's attitude towards learners. Teachers' lack of motivation, enthusiasm, and interest in the learners encourages such negative behaviours as bullying at school (Prinsloo, 2005:455).

2.6.4 Community factor

Leach (1997:32) maintains that societies promote various levels of interpersonal violence, which, in turn, affects the acceptance of some bullying behaviours. Nkosi (2002:20) adds that community conditions and attitudes can also contribute to the promotion or discouragement of bullying behaviour. Smith and Thomson (1991:246, as cited by Sehunoe, 2002:19) identify the level of socio-economic stress on families, the amount of violence shown by the media, as well as the level

of violence, racial, and sexual harassment in a society as the fundamental factors that determine the levels of bullying behaviour in schools.

Children raised in a community where violence is common tend to become bullies. This is because they are exposed to or witness aggressive behaviour and are themselves subjected to some form of abuse of power. As a result, they learn to settle differences through violent and aggressive means (Krige, Pettipher, Squelch and Swart, 2000:7). Children from violent communities are also more likely to develop patterns of bullying behaviour that are carried into schools (Fried and Fried, 1996:7).

2.6.5 Culture

For Nkosi (2002:21), culture is an essential factor in the development of bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. Fried and Fried (1996:8, as cited by Lidzhegu, 2012:21) emphasise that cultures that are indifferent to violence, sexism, and racism negatively influence children's behaviour and attitudes towards others.

For instance, people from certain cultures believe that the only way to solve conflicts is through violent confrontation.

2.6.6 Inborn temperaments

Coloroso (2003:18, as cited by Anderson, 2007:50) suggests that certain children's inborn temperament is a significant determining factor in their becoming bullies. Bonds and Stoker (2000:24) corroborate that the fact that certain children are born with more aggressive and impulsive dispositions makes them prone to bullying behaviour. Parsons (2005:12) extends the genetic reasoning by suggesting that some bullies are born with what is commonly called a behavioural control disorder. This means that they have emotionally raw nerves and misunderstand interaction

with others. Such children justify their behaviour as a reaction to perceived threats (Anderson, 2007:50).

2.6.7 Environmental influences

Various environmental factors influence whether children become bullies (Anderson, 2007:50). Certain child-rearing practices and aggression degrees may foster bullying behaviour. The lack of supervision, using harsh and inconsistent disciplinary methods, and parents' lack of involvement in their children's lives contributes to the development of bullying tendencies (Bonds and Stoker, 2002:24).

Bully-children are usually difficult to their parents; these children often become masters at justifying their behaviour. This is because of their incorrect thinking patterns that were not corrected at an early age. The fact that these parents often believe their children enhances these unhealthy thought processes. This, in turn, leads to their children becoming bullies (Bonds and Stoker, 2000:25; Anderson, 2007:50). In addition, when a child observes bullying, by either adults or other children, they reverse the power and influence which form the basis of the bullying act. The more a child is exposed to bullying incidents, the more desensitised he or she becomes (Anderson, 2007:50-51). Bullying behaviour is also modelled by television programmes or movies, as well as computer games which expose children to heroes, villains, and those-in-between – all of whom use violence to get what they want (Anderson, 2007:51; Bonda and Stoker, 2000:25).

Other contributory factors to bullying are the level of socio-economic stress on families, the amount of violence shown on mass media, high levels of violence in communities, and racial and sexual harassment in society in general (Pillay, 2007:127).

2.7 EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE ON TELEVISION

Some learners become bullies because they watch violence on television. According Seabi (2009:23), research has shown that a constant watching of violence on television (in films) or playing computer games influences a child's tendency to bully other children. This may occur because aggressive behaviour is learnt after observing others behaving in such a way. Children tend to copy what they see their heroes do in movies; hence, they behave the same way when they are in social settings with other children.

2.8 CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Bullying has negative and painful consequences for the bullied. It affects their sense of safety and desire to learn (Sehunoe, 2002:20; Thamm, 1997:54). Indeed, bullying disrupts the teaching and learning process (Batsche and Knoff, 1994:169). According to De Wet (2006:61, as cited by Mollo, 2011: 25), bullying can have a negative impact on the general school climate and the right of learners and educators to learn and instruct, respectively, in a safe environment. Banks (1997:2) emphasises that bullying can result in very serious crimes, when bully-children become adults. This relates to the increased prevalence of depression and severe suicidal ideation among both the bullied and the bullies.

Bullying also impedes the personal development of the bullied learners, because it causes them pain and distress (Train, 1995:26). Bullying has negative, long-lasting consequences for the bullied (Rigby, 1996:187). However, bullying does not affect the bullied alone, it also has an impact on the bullies, the bystanders, the witnesses, as well as the family and friends of the victims (Krige, Pettipher, Squelch and Swart, 2000:11; Pillay, 2007:50).

It becomes important to discuss some of the consequences of bullying for the bullied, the bullies, and the bystanders.

2.8.1 Consequences for the bullied

According to Krige, Pettipher, Squelch and Swart (2000:10, in Nkosi, 2002:28), learners who are bullied experience the painful physical, social, emotional, and educational consequences of bullying.

2.8.2 Physical consequences

Vorster (2002:29-32) indicates that bullying among primary school learners can have such physical implications as loss of appetite, which results in impaired concentration at school. As a result, they perform poorly and are fearful when they must go to school.

Physical bullying often causes the bullied to suffer from the following physical conditions:

- Headaches.
- Loss of appetite.
- Unexpected aches and pains.
- Nail biting.
- Bedwetting (Krige, Pettipher, Squelch and Swart, 2000:10).
- Poor posture.
- Stammering.
- Loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- Stomach ailments (Zeelie, 2004:21).
- Stress, as well as aches and pains in joints.
- Tiredness, exhaustion, and constant fatigue.
- Cuts and bruises and broken limbs (Pillay, 2007:50).
- Increased request for money or stealing money.
- Bursting into tears over trivial matters.
- Unwillingness to go to school.

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school, for example, requesting parents to drive or collect him/her, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school.
- Sleeplessness and nightmares (Anderson, 2007:63-64).

Barone (1997:80) observes that some severe instances of bullying may lead to physical injuries that need hospitalisation, or even the death of the bullied or the bully. Indeed, suicide has been identified as one of the most likely outcomes of excessive bullying. It must be noted that the bullied sometimes go to the extent of killing the bully in the process of defending themselves or retaliating to the bully's attack (Roland and Munthe, 1987:4).

2.8.3 Emotional consequences

The emotional effects of bullying for the bullied may include:

- Depression,
- Anxiety,
- Nightmares,
- Fearfulness,
- Frustration; and
- Hopelessness (Krige, Pettipher, Squelch and Swart, 2000:10)).

The bullied learner may have suicidal thoughts, and their interest in such activities as sports may decline (Byrne, 1994:18). The bullied learner may also develop low self-esteem and poor self-perception (Lidzhegu, 2012:23). Byrne (1994:13) adds that, if a bullied learner becomes constantly angry, resentful and spiteful, he or she may develop an uncontrollable behaviour and become disruptive.

2.8.4 Social consequences

Byrne (1994:18, as cited by Sehunoe, 2002:22) observes that the bullied learner may experience peer-relations negatively and withdraw from group activities and peer company. Clearly, bullying may affect the bullied learner's social interactions. Social withdrawal in a bullied learner manifest through:

- Isolation and loneliness,
- Aversion to friendships,
- Secretive,
- Loss of the desire to mix with others; and
- Shyness (Zeelie, 2004:21).

Bullying can scar the victim's personality for the rest of his or her life (Van Niekerk, 1993:35).

2.8.5 Educational consequences

Bullying has a serious impact on the bullied learner's school performance (Lidzhegu, 2012:24). Bullied learners display the following:

- Withdrawal from school activities,
- Inability to summon the courage to ask questions,
- Underachievement, which makes them appear less clever,
- Tendency to hide their lack of understanding of instructions, for fear of being teased,
- Lack of self-confidence,
- Absenteeism; and
- Inability to concentrate on schoolwork (Zeelie, 2004:21).

The bullied learner, who has a deep sense of failure, absents himself or herself from school in order to distance himself or herself from areas where bullying occurs.

In short, bullied learners often fear school, which they regard as an unsafe environment that causes them unhappiness. Bullied learners view school as a threatening environment; hence, they may experience difficulty to adjust (Bullock, 2002). Bullying leads to bullied learners experiencing depression and low self-esteem (Zeelie, 2004:22). These problems can be carried into adulthood (Nkosi, 2002:30; Rigby, 1996:52).

2.9 CONSEQUENCES FOR THE BULLY

Despite the pain and harassment that the bully causes to his or her victim, bullying also affects the bully negatively (Sehunoe, 2002:23; Krige, Pettipher, Squelch and Swart, 2000:10). Van Niekerk (1993:35, as cited by Lidzhegu 2012:25) remarks that bullied learners usually display ill-discipline and other disruptive behaviours within the school. They often exhibit an anti-social behaviour that affects both their future careers and their adulthood (Zeelie, 2004:22; Krige, Pettipher, Squelch and Swart, 2000:11). Bullies may also experience depression and such mental health disorders as attention deficit, and may have suicidal thoughts (Osman, 2013:13). They may also appear in juvenile courts for committing crimes or may have children who will display the same type of anti-social behaviour (Crothers and Kolbert, 2008:132-142).

Bullying behaviour can be a forerunner of criminal behaviour, as well as that of alcohol and drug abuse (Garrett, 2003:74). Young learners tend to copy bullying behaviour displayed by adults (Brown, 1997:19). Indeed, bully husbands or fathers often abuse and punish their spouses and children through harsh physical discipline (Fried and Fried, 1996:91). Furthermore, bullies may be compelled to

bring weapons to school, to defend themselves against victims who have equipped themselves with weapons, to fight back (Quiroz et al, 2006:1).

Bullies generally produce poor academic results and are more likely to drop out of school (Osman, 2013:14). They are often unable to develop and maintain social relationships with others (Bullock, 2002).

2.10 CONSEQUENCES FOR THE VICTIMS OR BULLIED LEARNERS

According to Chabalala (2011:54), bullying in school can make bullied learners feel unwanted at and rejected by the school. Bullied learners are fearful and spend their energy worrying about when and how they will be bullied again (Quiroz *et al.*, 2006:1). This has a negative impact on their studies: instead of concentrating on their studies, they focus on how the bullying will occur and what they can do to protect themselves against the bullies. In addition, bullied learners may suffer direct pain and discomfort, when the victimisation is physical (Quiroz *et al.*, 2006:1). Furthermore, bullied learners experience confusion, anger, and frustration. The latter is displayed by lashing out at friends, parents, and other family members (De Wet, 2007:192). The victims of bullying may also suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and may feel sad, unhappy or hurt (Osman, 2013:13). These feelings may develop into suicidal thoughts or a desire for revenge (Bauman and Del Rio, 2005:429).

Bullying behaviour among primary school learners increases the future use of psychopharmacological medication. Indeed, bullied learners become weak in terms of academic skills, have mood swings, and low social competencies. Both the bullied and bullies are considered to have behaviours that elude control. The bullied learners experience strains because bullying actions produce such negative emotions as anger, frustration, and depression or anxiety that may lead to self-harm and future wrongdoings. Bullied learners or children have a lower and longer-lasting cortisol response to stress. This is because bullying invokes

biological changes in victims, with potential longer-lasting impacts (Quellet-Morin et al., 2011:70). Conversely, bullying perpetrators may experience unfavourable future outcomes.

2.11 CONSEQUENCES FOR THE BYSTANDERS

Bullying behaviour also affects bystanders or witnesses (Rigby, 1996). While parents feel annoyed and frustrated by their inability to protect their child or children against bullying, bystanders feel ashamed and guilty for failing to intervene (Krige, Pettipher, Squelch and Swart, 2000:11). Rigby (1996:64) underscores that various bystanders are affected differently by their constant witnessing of bullying incidents. Some are amused, or sad, as they imagine that it may be their turn next time, whereas others, are paralysed by fear and fail to intervene, feel angry, ashamed, and guilty (Nkosi, 2002:29). Some learners do not care and choose not to intervene by distancing themselves from what they are witnessing (Lidzhegu, 2012:25; Rigby, 1996:65). In some cases, bystanders, who are afraid of becoming the next victim, deliberately side with the bullies. This manifest through their cheering on of the bullies. Although such bystanders may be safe from bullying, they still experience feelings of shame and guilt afterwards (Coloroso, 2003:70).

As it becomes apparent from the above discussion, a great deal has been written about the nature and extent of bullying as well as its effects on the bullied learners. Thus, it becomes imperative to discuss the strategies that would help in addressing and preventing bullying in primary schools. These strategies would assist learners, parents, educators, support staff, and society in mitigating the effects of bullying (Moll, 2009: 62).

2.12 A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO MANAGING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

The preceding discussion of bullying behaviour among primary school learners indicates that bullying has devastating effects on learners (Sehunoe, 2002:24). Bullying scars the victim psychologically for life and, in extreme cases, contributes to suicidal tendencies (Garrett, 2003:39; Olweus, 1997:495). This is a clear indication that bullying among primary school learners needs to be effectively managed, to prevent its negative effects on learners.

Dowling v Diocesan College and Others (1996:849) is a perfect illustration of the replications of bullying for the school. In this case, a learner experienced severe bullying, and the court held the school liable (Du Plessis, 2011). The school was then ordered to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of learners through effective supervision, as well as the enforcement of discipline and good behaviour amongst learners in the school (Garrett, 2003). This reinforces the imperative for school managers and educators to continuously monitor the performance and behaviour of learners in primary schools.

This helps to ensure that learners are guaranteed such rights as the respect and protection of their dignity (SACE, 1994:2). Clearly, bullying in schools violates learners' right to dignity and leaves them feeling degraded, humiliated, and insulted (Sehunoe, 2002:25). Bullied learners also endure pain, suffering, and discomfort. The court case suggests that school managers, principals, and educators should be held accountable for the damages sustained by learners as a result of being bullied at school. This is because of their failure to provide proper care for the victim by not taking the reasonable steps to prevent bullying at school.

According to SACE (1994:3), learners also have the following fundamental rights:

- Right to privacy: learners' right to privacy implies that they should not be deprived of their possessions. Bullying acts where bullied learners'

belongings are seized by bullies constitute a gross violation of the bullied learners' right to privacy (Krige, Pettipher, Squelch and Swart, 2000:5).

- Freedom of expression: every learner has the right to freedom of expression, be it verbal, physical, or in any other form. Thus, the fact that a learner is bullied through name-calling and taunting is not only cruel and inhumane, but also constitutes a violation of the bullied learner's right to freedom of expression.
- Freedom of association: acts of bullying, such as the isolation and exclusion of a learner from a group, can violate the bullied learner's right to free association (Nkosi, 2002).

Bullying infringes on all the above-mentioned rights of the bullied learners (Sehunoe 2002:26). Therefore, it is the responsibility of school management, educators, school governors, and parents to deal with bullying so that learners' rights are always protected. According to the South African Schools Act of 1996, a learner may be suspended, if he or she victimises, bullies or intimidates other learners. Thus, the failure of school managers, educators, and school governors to intervene timeously to protect learners against abuse and harm represents a violation of the bullied learners' right to a safe and secure learning environment (*Dowling v Diocesan College and Others*, 1999:850). Thamm (1997:55) and Squelch (1998:4) stress that school management should create a haven for learners in schools and should spare them the harassment and repeated humiliation associated with bullying.

Furthermore, Coloroso (2003:17) recommends that school governing bodies adopt a code of conduct for learners. This will foster the creation of a disciplined and purposeful school environment. This can only be effective through a concerted effort by educators, learners, and parents (Tattum, 1993:63). The ideal school environment, characterised above, should be grounded in moral values, norms, and principles that the school should uphold. For an effective prevention of

bullying, schools should elaborate, publicise, and promote their disciplinary procedures (Lidzhegu, 2012:28).

2.12.1 Managing bullying behaviour

School-based bullying is a threat to the safety and wellbeing of learners, as it contributes to an unsafe school environment (Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2008:18). Learners who are subjected to bullying feel angry and miserable; they lose self-confidence and even opt to stay away from school in order to avoid being bullied (Neser *et al.*, 2003:140). Sharp and Smith (1994:7, in Sehunoe, 2002:27) reinforce the above statement by stressing that bullying can contribute to long-term problems, immediate unhappiness, and loss of self-esteem.

Bullying behaviour is best managed by means of a whole-school approach (Du Plessis and Conley, 2007:48). Given bullied learners' tendency to commit suicide or drop out due to stress, educators and school managers need to take bullying seriously (Sullivan, Cleary and Sullivan, 2004:20). In other words, schools should adopt a proactive approach to bullying, to prevent its traumatic consequences (Smith, 2003:27).

School management should launch sensitisation campaigns or programmes aimed at raising awareness about the undesirable consequences of bullying (Lidzhegu, 2012:29). Primary school managers and educators should involve learners and other school community members actively in the endeavour to reduce bullying, so that these stakeholders can identify with the aims of the institution (Olweus, 1997:5).

2.12.2 A whole-school approach to managing bullying

Given that a whole-school approach was emphasised in this study, the ecological theory was used as theoretical framework. This theory emphasises a view of

groups of people as interactive systems: the effective functioning of the whole depends on the synergetic interaction between all parts of the system (Venter, 2013:242). In this regard, the curbing of bullying depends on the interaction between school managers, educators, learners, parents, and the entire community and hence, the adoptions of a whole school approach (Donald et al., 2010).

A whole-school approach to managing bullying rests on a systematic perspective that requires a systematic solution (Richards, 2011:10). Clearly, a school should function as a system in its bid to combat bullying (Garrett, 2003:39). A system is understood as an orderly approach to organisational goals. In this regard, the organisation's procedures, decision processes, functional operations, and information flow should be considered as components of a whole that should work together to achieve a goal (Davis, Alderman and Robinson, 1990:4).

In addition, a whole-school approach to managing bullying implies that all staff members, school management, and the community accept responsibility for the behaviour of learners (Du Plessis and Conley, 2007:51). Educators, learners, parents, and community members should be concerned about learners' behaviour at home, within the community, and at school (Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2008:19). Similarly, Venter (2013:242) emphasises the relationship between parents and the bully or the bullied, between the teacher and the bully or the bullied, as well as between the educational psychologist and the child as client, all in a concerted effort to combat bullying through a whole-school approach.

In other words, all school stakeholders should work together, not only to arrive at a common understanding of bullying, but also to use their shared knowledge to develop strategies to counter this harmful behaviour (Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2008:19; Du Plessis and Conley, 2007:52). All school stakeholders should work together to make the school and its surroundings safe zones for all learners. These zones should be promoted as environments with a zero-tolerance for any kind of bullying (Venter, 2013:242).

Cowie and Jennifer (2007:24) underscore that a whole-school approach to bullying should also facilitate the total involvement of external agencies, through the creation of partnerships aimed at reducing and preventing bullying in schools. In other words, a whole-school approach to managing bullying among primary school learners should encourage the participation of external agencies alongside learners, educators, school governors, support staff, and parents (Bauman et al, 2008:250). Tattum (1993:64, as cited by Seunoe, 2002:28) indicates that a whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour involves the following components:

- A multi-level approach which includes various people,
- A broad debate on bullying to raise issues and solve complex problems,
- An anti-bullying programme that needs to be included in the school curriculum; and
- A well-communicated and understood policy statement that rejects bullying behaviour.

A whole-school approach counters the view that bullying is part of the growth process; it challenges educators and learners' attitudes towards bullying behaviour, and it examines their relationships (Tattum, 1993:63). Olweus (1997:5) notes that a whole-school approach initiates discussion at all levels, that it is collaborative in nature, and that it moves beyond a crisis-management approach that only applies to critical cases. A whole-school approach creates a supportive ethos and ends the culture of secrecy. A whole school approach is based on a systems or ecological view of a school (Richards, 2011:10).

In conclusion, a whole-school approach to bullying implies raising awareness about bullying, increasing knowledge about it, developing methods to reduce it, identifying bullying areas, forming anti-bullying partnerships with parents and other schools, and creating informative contact sessions with support agencies (Lidzhegu, 2012:30; Rendall, 1996:6). It implies bringing everyone together to work

towards creating a safe, inclusive and accepting school where bullying problems are prevented and handled effectively when they arise (Pepler and Craig, 2014:4).

2.13 WHOLE-SCHOOL-APPROACH INTERVENTION STRATEGIES TO PREVENT BULLYING

Countering the severe consequences of bullying requires multifaceted, multidimensional, and interactive system approaches (Richards, 2011:10). According to Tattum (1993:66), various strategies can be elaborated to combat bullying within schools. However, to yield a successful programme, these intervention strategies should be sustained. Batsche and Knoff (1994:170) indicate that for a whole-school approach to bullying to succeed, an on-going, integrated and systematic strategy should be implemented.

2.13.1 Anti-bullying policies

According to Garrett (2003:94), every school needs to have a written anti-bullying policy that is familiar to all members of the school community. This means that the school management has the responsibility to develop an anti-bullying policy in collaboration with learners, staff, parents, members of the governing body, and the school principal. In this regard, Moll (2009:41) states that the wider and more thorough the consultation when devising such a policy, the more likely it is to be successfully implemented. An anti-bullying policy should reflect the culture of the specific school.

It should aim at preventing bullying by creating an awareness of its effects on the victims as well as the implications for the perpetrators. An anti-bullying policy should also strive to improve the self-confidence of everyone in the school in order to make the school a bullying-free place (Glover, Cartwright, Gough and Johnson, 1998:90-9). Smith and Sharp (1994) identify the following as essential elements of a school's anti-bullying policy:

- School policy statement that promotes positive interpersonal relations between members of the school community in order to prevent bullying and harassment at school,
- A description of how the school proposes to deal with the bully and or the bullied,
- A clear definition of bullying, with examples; and
- An encouragement to both learners and parents concerned about bullying to speak to school personnel.

Smith *et al.* (1994:41) add that a bullying policy must be comprehensive and clear to all members of the school community. This policy should define bullying, explain different forms and categories of bullying, provide a list of examples to illustrate each type, classify the different categories of misconduct (from less serious to most serious), and indicate the possible sanctions for each (Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2008:20). It is further argued that, when developing an anti-bullying policy, educators need to assess the situation in order to establish the kind of bullying taking place, as well as its extent and location. More importantly, they need to identify both the perpetrators and victims (Train, 1995:164).

For an anti-bullying policy to be effective, it should consider the culture of the given school. The aims of an anti-bullying policy should be to deter bullying tendencies and to create a sense of trust in the school environment (Parsons, 2005:67). Batsche and Knoff (1994:171) stresses the imperative for school management to ensure that the elaborated anti-bullying policies are implemented, to provide adequate support to victims of bullying and school staff when dealing with bullying incidents. Moreover, parents and the school community at large should assist in enforcing anti-bullying policies in order to reduce the prevalence of bullying incidents amongst school learners (Gibson, 1998). In other words, the stakeholders should help to create a more pro-social climate that promotes a safe and fear-free school environment (Zeelie, 2004:39).

2.13.2 Using the curriculum to tackle bullying

The school curriculum can be used to tackle issues associated with bullying behaviour and to build a supportive, anti-bullying school culture (Katz, 2008:3). In other words, the school curriculum should be a vehicle for developing learners' attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviour (Tattum, 1993:71). Thus, the school curriculum should provide knowledge about and understanding of bullying, as well as the academic skills needed to influence learners' attitudes towards aggressive behaviour positively to reduce it (Barone, 1997:82).

Thus, Katz (2008) underscores that the school curriculum can be instrumental in empowering pupils in terms of acquiring and maintaining the social skills that allow them to manage their relationships with others constructively. This means that the curriculum must equip pupils to respond to bullying in an appropriate way, with assertiveness, if necessary. Another way to help learners to develop the skills that assist them in responding effectively to bullying at school, is through prescribing the reading of appropriate books, having regular class discussions, organising learners-centred debates, promoting learners-led dramas, and hosting other anti-bullying activities (Barone, 1997:82).

What is more, Train (1995:177) emphasises the need for teachers' in-service training to raise awareness of the potential of bullying in their teaching styles. Indeed, to deal with bullying behaviour through the curriculum, teachers can initiate discussions with their learners about the nature and implications of the bullying experienced by some learners within the school (Sehunoe, 2002:31). The school curriculum should not only provide for the teaching of facts, figures, and skills or techniques but also promote an awareness of others' feelings, as well as an appreciation of and a sensitive response to others' viewpoints (Lidzhegu, 2012:34).

Finally, schools should use the curriculum to promote kindness, communication, cooperation, and friendship. In this regard, the curriculum should include lessons

and activities that stress empathy, anger management, and conflict-resolution skills (Katz, 2008:3). Hence, educators should use strategies that are likely to enhance learners' social and emotional competencies as well as cooperative learning (Richards, 2011:4).

2.13.3 Encouraging victims to report bullying

Quiroz *et al.* (2006:1) stresses the need to make bullied learners aware that bullies rarely stop on their own. Hence, it is very important for victims to report bullying incidents to educators and request the latter's assistance (Quiroz *et al.*, 2006:1). Victims can also try to reduce the chances of being harmed by avoiding the times when and places where they are likely to be bullied at school. They should hang out in safe places and stay close to good friends. They should also be encouraged to report any bullying behaviour to educators.

2.13.4 Peer support

Evidence confirms that peer support significantly reduces bullying (Cowie and Wallace, 2000). Peer support groups can be used to promote schools' anti-bullying policies as they enable learners to reject bullying behaviour and take responsibility for themselves and others within the school community. Peer support groups enable learners to develop their capacity to connect with others and contribute to the safety and well-being of peers (Katz, Buchanan and Bream, 2000). A high level of commitment from the school in general and teachers is required to ensure the effectiveness of peer support. However, the latter should not be regarded as a replacement for adult involvement and standard anti-bullying strategies; rather it should be used as one approach among others (Peer Support Forum, 2000).

Katz (2008:4) provides the following different peer support approaches:

- Peer education,
- Peer listening,

- Peer befriending,
- Peer mentoring,
- Peer mediation; and
- Peer advocacy.

2.13.5 Working with bystanders

Learners who stand by during bullying incidences are very important in the fight against this behaviour and as such they should be empowered to confront bullying or report it, where necessary (Katz, 2008:4). They can use their social power and personal actions to promote respect. They can undertake anti-bullying activities and campaigns. Thus, it is very important that they are taught to report bullying when they witness it. Bystanders should be encouraged to alert educators about bullying behaviour and challenge any bully (Katz, 2008:4).

2.13.6 Transition

To curb bullying behaviour in schools, learners who transfer from home or pre-school to school should be assisted with their integration into the busy and active social atmosphere of the new school or classroom (Tattum, 1993:67). According to Train (1995:165, in Lidzhegu, 2012:34), more bullying occurs when children start at a new school. Therefore, learners, educators, principals, and parents should attend induction meetings in which new learners can familiarise themselves with the surroundings of their new school, in addition to becoming aware of school procedures and expectations. The induction programme to be developed by primary schools should counter initiation rituals and prohibit bullying (Tattum, 1993:67). Moreover, pastoral and counselling programmes that encourage learners to report bullying should be elaborated and implemented. Similarly, Besag (1989: 118) stresses the need for schools to run programmes that would help new learners to settle, find their way around the school, and become familiar with staff.

2.13.7 Playground supervision

Primary school playgrounds are one of the areas where significant bullying occurs. Therefore, learners should be monitored and supervised during breaks and playtime (Tattum, 1993:72). Furthermore, play areas should not only be safe, but should also be turned into creative and constructive social and physical environments where learners may be separated into young and old. Games should equally be divided into smooth and rough in order to reduce the bullying of young learners by older ones (Sehunoe, 2002:32).

This separation will help protect young learners' rights, notably the right to be cared for in a nurturing environment (Soul City, SABC Education, 2000:108). The implication of this is that educators can be held responsible if some learners are injured in the school due to a lack of supervision (Michelle, 1991:39). To put in another way, primary school educators should be able to foresee any problems that might arise from an accumulation of learners on the playground, and they should encourage learners to play constructively (Train, 1995:172).

Besag (1989:113) highlights that adequate supervision is one of the most efficient and economical preventative strategies applicable to bullying in primary schools. As a result, school educators should focus their attention not only on the amount of supervision, but also on its quality. Supervision should be firm and yet friendly. It should also reflect the ethos of the school (Sehunoe, 2002:32). Finally, primary school educators should not just be present during playtime but must be able to intervene quickly and decisively in bullying situations (Olweus, 1993:71).

2.13.8 Circle Time

Circle time is a regular activity in which learners and their educators spend between 20 and 30 minutes a week sitting in a circle. During this time, they participate in games and deal with such serious issues as bullying (Katz, 2008:5).

The main purpose of circle time is to encourage the class to work as a team, rather than as cliques (Zeelie, 2004:40). Zeelie (2004:40) further underscores that during circle time, the educator and the learners can get to know individuals that they may not otherwise encounter. Bliss *et al.* (1999, in Zeelie, 2004:40) add that circle time is also a way of having fun together as a group and as such, it increases mutual support, breaks down barriers, and encourages the group to deal with difficult issues.

2.13.9 Role of educators

A school's failure to confront bullying effectively creates a hostile environment that interferes with learning. Conversely, a school's ability to address the bullying improves the school climate, therefore, helping to maximise achievements and to create a happy community (Beaty and Alekseyev, 2008:2). Learners should feel safe at school and in this regard, a culture of respect and recognition of human dignity is important (Venter, 2013:245). Educators should encourage learners to work co-operatively and pupils should learn to trust, help, and share with each other (Sharp and Smith, 1994:24).

Thus, it is important for educators to intervene in bullying situations that occur on the playground and in classrooms, where learners spend most of their school time (Anderson, 2007:72). Educators should become more vigilant within the classroom, when moving around the school, and when supervising learners on playgrounds (Sharp and Smith, 1994:240). As it becomes evident, educators are at the forefront of any effort to manage bullying successfully (Goldstein, Apter and Horootunia, 1984:16). According to Galloway and Ronald (2004:37, in Anderson, 2007:72), bullying behaviour in schools is likely to be influenced by the quality of the social and educational climate in the classroom and the school. Clearly, educators play a key role in the endeavour to manage bullying, not only on the playground but also in classrooms (Cowie and Jennifer, 2008:30). Garrett

(2003:96, in Lidzhegu, 2012:39) recommends that educators implement the following in managing bullying:

- Involve learners when setting anti-bullying rules; this compels each learner to conform to those rules,
- Hold regular classroom meetings which help to develop and clarify anti-bullying rules,
- Schedule meetings with parents, to inform them of the anti-bullying rules made,
- Establishes a collaborative and respectful classroom climate; and
- Have open communication and appropriate responses for learners involved bullying (Pepler and Craig, 2014:2).

Auma-Okumu (2012:29) reinforces that educators need to develop compassion for their learners and should be able to build confidence and a sense of trust in the learners they teach. Compassion should reflect a strong desire to set limits on unacceptable behaviours like bullying and enforcing class rules that would prevent bullying actions or behaviours.

2.13.10 The role of school senior managers

Educators play an important role in curbing bullying at school, specifically, to detect it early enough in the educational process before the problem becomes ingrained. Thus, school management needs to boldly support educators' efforts to curb bullying among primary school learners (Auma-Okumu, 2012:29). Sharp and Smith (1994:24) stresses the imperative for head-teachers, senior managers, and school governors to demonstrate a strong commitment to tackling bullying amongst primary school learners. This can also be done by convening regular meetings on bullying.

School managers should also educate all school staff about bullying behaviour. This could be achieved by inviting speakers who are familiar with bullying

(Lidzhegu, 2012:38). School managers should allocate enough time and resources to the development and implementation of anti-bullying policies (Sharp and Smith, 1994:24). More literature on bullying behaviour should also be made available, and enough adult supervisors should be appointed to monitor learners during breaks (Rigby, 1996:80).

School management should regulate the behaviour of learners by means of relevant school rules and regulations or anti-bullying policies. The latter should not only be formulated in a language that is accessible to learners but must also be applied firmly and consistently (SACE, 1994:3).

2.13.11 The role of parents

Parents are children's first teachers. The words that children use or the actions that they display are often heard or witnessed in other settings (Quiroz *et al.*, 2006:1). Consequently, parents should be encouraged not to display aggressive behaviour in front of their children (Galloway and Roland, 2004:37). Parents can equally be made aware of bullying in school through newsletters and parent-educator meetings (De Wet, 2005:88).

In partnership with parents, educators should elaborate an intervention programme to aid both bullies and bullied, and to curb bullying behaviour in schools (Besag, 1987:70). Parents should share activities with their children and should encourage the latter to interact with others. One way of doing this is by allowing children to invite friends for a meal (Rogers, 2000:181). Parents should avoid being overprotective of their children, but rather support the latter's efforts to be independent. Parents can raise concerns with educators and participate in finding ways to support both the bullies and bullied learners (Pepler and Craig, 2014:3).

Furthermore, parents must monitor the whereabouts of their children closely and should encourage positive social behaviour in their children (Besag, 1989:71). Finally, children should be trained in problem-solving techniques and parents should maintain firm, consistent, and fair discipline and create an atmosphere of warmth and positive involvement (Besag, 1989:154). In cases where bullying is severe and goes beyond parents' control, they may notify the police or seek legal advice.

2.13.12 The role of learners

Lee (2004:84, in Lidzhegu, 2012:37) notes that peer involvement in the prevention and response to bullying is central to schools as learners are given the opportunity to contribute to decision-making at various levels, including teaching and learning issues and policy formulation.

Soul City, SABC Education (2000:106, in Sehunoe, 2002:34) suggests the following ways in which learners can approach bullying peers:

- Walk with a friend,
- Take a deep breath then tell the bully how you feel – stressing that he/she has no right to treat you in that way,
- Walk away and do not fight back,
- Do not handle bullying alone. Tell an adult you trust and keep telling until something is done about it; and
- Stand together with other bullied learners, talk to each other and confront the bully together.

School learners should feel more confident to tell a member of the teaching staff that they are being bullied, or that someone else is being bullied (Sharp and Smith, 1994:24). They should hang out in safe places at school, stay close to good friends, and be encouraged to keep reporting bullying until assistance is provided (Tanzola, 2006:1). Train (1995:175, in Sehunoe, 2002:34) underscores that learners should

be instrumental in the development of anti-bullying policies, because they are the ones who are mostly affected by bullying acts.

Sharp and Smith (1994:26) suggest that learners may also reject bullying behaviour in school in fairly simple ways: excluding peers who behave aggressively, making room in their social group for learners who are being bullied, refusing to join in with bullies, and telling bullies that what they are doing is unfair or asking them to leave the victim alone. Learners can equally reject bullying behaviour by encouraging other peers not to support the bullies, as well as by telling educators about the situation. If this is done, learners who indulge in bullying behaviour may feel uncomfortable, because they are likely to realise that they are infringing group norms.

2.13.13 No-blame approach

A no-blame approach is a perspective on bullying that focuses on addressing the problem, as opposed to apportioning the blame (Maines and Robinson, 1997). It is a non-punitive approach based on counselling and it focuses equally on the bullies and the bullied (Katz, 2008:6). In a no-blame approach, the educator or person doing the intervention, first meet the victim without any accusation and obtains a picture of how the victim was harmed (Zeelie, 2004:40). Another intervention meeting is then held with the bully, the victim, and other learners who can positively influence the outcome of the meeting (Anderson, 2007:71). Subsequently, the intervener explains to the group how the victim has been hurt and seeks proposals on how the problem can be addressed (Rigby *et al.*, 2004:4).

2.13.14 Buddy system

The buddy system is a practice by which two people, the buddies, operate together as a single unit, so that they can monitor and help each other (Adams, 2015:1).

According to Seunoe (2002:33), learners need to belong, be with their peers, and have friends. As such, parents, educators, and other learners need to assist bullying victims to create friendships with buddies who will take care of and defend them. A buddy system can also be created across grades, in such a way that senior learners are assigned to junior learners (Youngerman, 1998:59).

Sharp and Smith (1994:90) note that learners may also be encouraged to form groups of five to six individuals who meet regularly to identify their problems, analyse them, brainstorm, suggest possible solutions, and present these problems and their related solutions to school management or adults in the school community. These partnerships can defuse bullying and improve peer respect (Youngerman, 1998:59).

In schools where buddy systems exist, learners' safety has improved. This is because each learner can prevent another from becoming a casualty, by rescuing him or her from a bullying situation (Adam, 2015:1). Clearly, the buddy system reduces bullying behaviour in school, simply because it creates greater social integration and strong companionship amongst school learners (Adam, 2015:2).

2.13.15 Working with professionals

To curb bullying behaviour among school learners, it is vital for professionals working with children to engage with the families of the latter to ensure that these young children do not become victims of bullying. Such professionals will teach these children how to communicate effectively (Tanzola, 2006:1). If there is early positive social interaction in families, such anti-social behaviours as bullying can be prevented. Indeed, children learn mostly from what they see adults do. Hence, if family members have positive interactions with each other, children from such families would learn to love and appreciate other children (Bandura, 1977:25). What is more, early cognitive stimulation and emotional support that include

reading together and eating meals together can confer resilience against bullying (Chabalala, 2011:61).

2.13.16 Role of educational psychologists

Educational psychologists have both a preventive and a responsive role to play in schools, regarding the reduction of bullying behaviour. In addition, educational psychologists must raise awareness about the seriousness of bullying behaviour on school premises or outside (Venter, 2013:246). A collaborative approach whereby educators and parents are involved in curbing bullying behaviour – with the help of educational psychologists – is essential. Educational psychologists are also in the position to help formulate school policies that adopt a comprehensive, school-wide approach to the prevention of school bullying (Smokowski and Kopasz, 2005:107-108).

2.13.17 The role of the school

Bullying in primary school needs to be effectively managed through strong interventions. This could be done through establishing a bullying prevention committee, organising school conferences on bullying, and through developing a coordinated system to supervise learners during break-time (De Wet, 2007:196). In addition, to reduce bullying behaviour in primary schools, parents and educators should meet regularly to discuss common problems and strategies that could prevent bullying behaviour at school.

2.13.18 Classroom level intervention

Bullying behaviour should be prevented within the classroom context by drawing up and enforcing class rules that would prevent bullying actions. Furthermore, regular discussions should be held between class educators and learners in order to discuss various aspects of bullying and other anti-social behaviours.

Discussions should also be held between class educators and parents (De Wet, 2007:197).

2.14 SUMMARY

This chapter stressed that bullying behaviour is a serious problem that can drastically affect learners' ability to progress academically and develop socially (Du Plessis, 2011:9). Furthermore, the extent of bullying was fully discussed. The definition of bullying was provided and the theoretical framework of my discussion of this problem was outlined. In addition, the effects and consequences of bullying among primary school learners were discussed in relation to the whole school approach to this problem. The most common forms of bullying discussed in this study are verbal, physical, emotional, social, and psychological.

It was emphasised that bullying – like abuse, torture, and harassment – forms part of aggressive behaviour (Smith and Thompson, 1991:1). It was also noted that the bullying learner is generally stronger than the bullied one, hence, the latter cannot resist the former or defend himself/her (Smith and Thompson, 1991:1).

It was indicated that bullying amongst primary school learners is usually influenced by various factors such as the family, the school environment, the social context, culture, and the individual as well as inborn temperament (Fried and Fried, 1996:7). It was also stressed that bullying amongst primary school learners has negative implications for the bully as well as painful and long-lasting effects for the bullied, who may also lose confidence and self-esteem.

Consequently, this chapter stressed the imperative for bullying behaviour to be managed through a whole-school approach, which should be a joint effort, by all members of the school community. This approach should integrate various strategies to manage bullying amongst primary school learners. Such strategies should include the use of the curriculum, management initiatives, playground

supervision, an anti-bullying policy, and an induction programme during a learner's transition period (Bauman et-al, 2008:851).

Finally, the role of parents, principals, learners, and educators in the implementation of strategies aimed at addressing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners was emphasised. Intervention strategies geared towards the creation of a safe, fear-free environment where pupils can learn harmoniously were outlined. Furthermore, parents, educators, and learners should be involved in the establishment and implementation of anti-bullying programmes (De Wet, 2007).

2.15 PROJECTION FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER

The next chapter elaborates on the research design, the instruments used to collect relevant data, and the data analysis method.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the literature review and the theoretical framework of the study. The impact of bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners was emphasised. The chapter fully outlined the forms, causes and consequences of bullying, and discussed the strategies to prevent or reduce it through a whole school approach. The literature review indicated that bullying behaviour among primary school learners was a worldwide phenomenon that required a whole-school approach intervention.

This chapter focuses on the methodology and design of the research. The chapter discusses the qualitative strategies used to collect information from the participants about the whole school approach in managing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. It also elaborates on the data analysis and interpretation.

3.2 PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Qualitative research is based on some form or some underlying assumption and/or assumptions about what constitutes trustworthy research methods and which ones are appropriate (Nyoni, 2012:69). In order to understand qualitative research, it is essential to know and fully conceptualise what these philosophical assumptions are (Nyoni, 2012). Qualitative research can be interpretivist or constructivist (Wagner, Kawulich and Garner, 2012). The following three paragraphs further discuss the various underlying philosophical assumptions namely, ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions.

3.2.1 Ontological assumption

Ontology can be defined as the nature of reality (Kruger, 2011:62). It represents people's views about what constitutes the social world as well as the approach to studying it (Barbour, 2008:295).

Constructivists/interpretivists maintain that there is no single, unitary reality. They believe that reality is socially constructed (Creswell, 2003). They further stress that reality depends on the individual's mind and is, therefore, a personal or social construct (Wagner, Kawulich and Garner, 2012:56). Constructivist/Interpretivist ontological assumptions suggest that there is no objective reality, rather, there are multiple realities constructed by human beings who experience a phenomenon of interest (Taber, 2006:54). On the question of reality, Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012:57) add that interpretivists believe that reality is socially constructed by people. People impose order on the world in order to construct meaning.

From an ontological perspective, there is no objective truth – meaning comes from the participants' engagement with the social world during the process of social exchange. Examples of such engagements are the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions conducted by me in this study (Kruger, 2011:63; Kings and Horrocks, 2010:220). The study investigates bullying phenomena in primary schools in Limpopo.

3.2.2 Epistemological assumption

According to Merriam (2009:9), epistemology is the nature of knowledge. Epistemology relates to theories of knowledge and how humans come to know the world and their ideas about the nature of evidence and knowledge (Kruger, 2011:63). Epistemology pertains to what humans know about reality and how they can know it (Wills, 2007:10). Simply put, epistemology is the theory of knowledge

(Wagner, Kawulich and Garner, 2012:270). It must be reiterated that knowledge is subjective, socially constructed, and mind dependent.

Therefore, the truth lies within the human experience (Wagner, Kawulich and Garner, 2012, 56). In other words, statements on what is true or false are culture-bound and historically- and context-dependent (Claire *et al.*, 2002:57). From an epistemological perspective, I encouraged the participants to talk, and tell their stories, which are then captured in terms of their voices and experiences. In this study, I sought to know and understand the sentiments of educators, learners, principals, SMT members, SGB members, and parents regarding the implementation of a whole school approach in managing bullying behaviour in primary schools (Muvhango, 2016:10).

Based on the underpinnings of the theoretical framework of interpretivism/constructivism, I assumed that social reality is constructed through language, which creates accounts of events (King and Horrocks, 2010:20). Another assumption was that knowledge is generated through a verbal exchange between the participants and me (Kruger, 2011:7). Finally, I held the belief that the world comprises of people with their own assumptions, intentions, attitudes, beliefs and values, and that reality is discovered by exploring the experiences of others regarding a specific phenomenon. It is an attempt to see how others have constructed reality by asking about it (Moll, 2009: 52; Nieuwenhuis, 2007:55).

In this study, an interaction occurred between myself and the participants, whereby I interviewed the participants. The participants responded based on their experiences and knowledge of the use of a whole school approach in managing bullying behaviour.

3.2.3 Axiological assumptions

Axiology refers to values in terms of whether we believe that an inquiry is value-free (objective) or value-bound (subjective) (Du Plooy, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:8). I also referred to the study of values and value judgments in my engagements. According to Ryn and Cooper (2010:293), axiology is the branch of philosophy that focuses on the study of the nature of values and value judgments. Values are important aspects of the research inquiry process. They contribute to decisions regarding the choice of a research problem, the paradigm and theoretical framework on which the research is based, the data generating methods, the context, and the format of the presentation of the findings (Kruger, 2013:58; Guba and Lincoln, 2005:197).

According to Mertens (2009, in Kruger, 2011:58), axiological assumptions ask: 'What is considered ethical or moral behaviour? In other words, how does the study contribute to social justice and how do my morals influence the research study?'

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology, according to Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014:289), refers to the ways in which data are collected and analysed. In other words, it is a set of procedures used to collect and analyse data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:490). In this study, the qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for data collection and analysis. A qualitative inquiry refers to an in-depth study which uses face-to-face or observation techniques to collect data from people in their natural settings (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:489). Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006:563) note that qualitative research seeks to preserve the integrity of narrative data and attempts to use the latter to exemplify unusual or core themes embedded in contexts.

3.3.1 Qualitative approach inquiry

Considering the nature of the research problem, a qualitative data collection method seemed appropriate for this study. My choice of a qualitative method was also motivated by the fact that it enables an in-depth, explorative, descriptive, and contextual engagement with the issue. Clearly, qualitative research necessitates a multi-perspective approach (utilising different qualitative techniques and data collection methods) to social interaction (Merriam, 1998:5).

The general purpose of the qualitative method is to describe, reconstruct, and interpret or make sense of a phenomenon in terms of the meaning that the experiencing subject attaches to it (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport, 2007:268). However, in the case of this research study, the aim of the qualitative approach was to investigate a whole-school strategy to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools.

3.4 THE NATURE OF THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

As observed by Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012:126), qualitative research is concerned with understanding the process as well as the social and cultural context that shape various behaviour patterns. It strives to create a coherent story through the accounts of those who are part of it and to understand and represent their experiences and actions as they encounter, engage with, and live through situations (Wagner, Kawulich and Garner, 2012:126). Qualitative research implies that data can be amassed through verbal interaction between individuals or groups. It deals with the underlying qualities of subjective experiences and the meaning associated with phenomena (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:173). It is interested in understanding subjective experiences that allows the researcher to see things through the participants' eyes (Neuman, 2011:424).

Qualitative research is a multi-perspective approach to social interaction. It is aimed at describing, making sense of, and interpreting or reconstructing this interaction based on the meanings that the subjects attached to it (Zeelie, 2004:44). Gay (1996:13) further asserts that the rationale for qualitative methods is to gain a complete understanding of a situation and the context in which it occurred (Wagner, Kawulich and Garner, 2012:127). In qualitative research, researchers develop concepts, insights, and understanding from data patterns, rather than collecting data to assess pre-conceived models, hypotheses, or theories (Creswell, 1994:145).

A qualitative method is humanistic simply because, in a qualitative approach, researchers study people qualitatively, they get to know them personally, and they experience what the participants experience in their daily struggles in society (Wagner, Kawulich and Garner, 2012:127). In the qualitative approach, I was able to provide a thick description of subjective experiences and meanings based on qualitative data (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:173).

Since a qualitative methodology is concerned with people and how they relate to their environment, this research study strove to obtain relevant information by examining various social settings and the individuals inhabiting them (Punch.1998:148). Finally, through a qualitative inquiry, I intended to explore the experiences, feelings, and opinions of the participants regarding the adoption of a whole school approach in managing bullying behaviour in primary schools.

3.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

According to Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014:173), a qualitative method is the methodology that deals with the underlying qualities of subjective experiences and the meanings associated with phenomena. It is also referred to as a whole-world experience. For Buchaman and Schutt (2014:466), a qualitative method is designed to capture social life as participants experienced it, rather than

organising it in categories that are predetermined by researchers. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:320) summarise the characteristics of the qualitative method as follows:

- It studies the behaviour as it occurs naturally,
- Researchers collect data directly from the source,
- The focus is on the participants' understanding, descriptions, labels, and meanings,
- It foregrounds a complex or multi-perspective view of understanding and explanations,
- It views data as intrinsically meaningful, not as a deficient,
- In a qualitative study, I was the main measurement device,
- Generalisations are induced from synthesising gathered information,
- In a qualitative method, I usually act as an observer in the setting being studied – either as interviewer, observer, or person studying artefacts and documents; and
- In a qualitative method, I approached a situation with the assumption that nothing is trivial or unimportant.

Buchman and Scutt (2014:237) add the following as characteristics of the qualitative method:

- It focuses on human subjectivity, the meaning that participants attach to events and people, as well as the significance that the participants give to their lives through their life stories; and
- Qualitative research emphasises the importance of the social context in understanding the social world.

In the light of the above discussions, I decided to employ qualitative research methods to collect data relating to the whole school approach to managing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners.

For Lidzhegu (2012:43), the purpose of qualitative research is to describe, interpret, and evaluate the collected data. It is essential to explain these three concepts, to show their relevance in this study:

a) Describe

I gather data from the school management, educators, principals, learners, school governing bodies, and parents about a whole school approach in managing bullying behaviour in the primary schools.

b) Interpret

I provide inputs and insights that might prompt primary school learners to change their views and attitudes towards bullying. Interpretation can also assist with the implementation of anti-bullying policies and whole school approach programmes aimed at decreasing the extent of bullying in primary schools.

c) Evaluate

I provide relevant and purposeful judgments about the policies and intervention strategies aimed at decreasing bullying incidences among primary school learners.

3.6 RESEARCH DESIGN (Explorative phenomenological study)

3.6.1 Research design.

A research design is the programme used to guide the researcher in collecting, analysing, and interpreting observed facts (Maphoto, 2016:159). Mouton (1996:107) construes a research design as a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing a research problem. De Vos, Strydom, Delpont and Fouché (2007:132) define the research design as the plan or blueprint for how the research is to be conducted.

In other words, research design refers to a plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures that help to answer the research question (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006:17). Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006:34) further define research design as a strategic framework for action that serves as a link between research questions and the implementation of the research. Considering this, a research design is a procedural plan elaborated by the researcher to answer questions in an economical and accurate manner in order to ensure validity and objectivity (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:93).

The present study was based on a phenomenological, qualitative research design. A phenomenological study describes the meaning of a lived experience (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:24). De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont (2007:270) construe a phenomenological study as one that describes the meaning of various people's experiences of a phenomenon, a topic, or a concept. As such, it is suitable for an investigation of whole-school strategies aimed at managing bullying behaviour in schools (Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter, 2006:562).

In applying a phenomenological approach, I was intimately connected with the phenomenon being studied, namely, bullying in primary schools. In this respect, a whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour was analysed through the detailed descriptions provided by educators, learners, principals, and SMT members.

3.7 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Qualitative research is based on some form of underlying assumptions about what constitutes trustworthy and appropriate research methods (Nyoni, 2012:69). To conduct and evaluate qualitative research, it is important to know and fully conceptualise the relevant philosophical assumptions. According to Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012:54), qualitative paradigms can be positivist,

constructivist/ interpretivist, transformative, or postcolonial. Before discussing the philosophical paradigms underlying this study, it is essential to define the concept 'research paradigm'.

A research paradigm is a shared worldview that represents the beliefs and values of a discipline and guides how research is conducted in order to solve problems (Wagner, Kawulich and Garner, 2012:272). A research paradigm is also conceived of as a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied. As such, it addresses questions related to the nature and sources of knowledge that warrant our attention (Kruger, 2011:53, Denzel and Lincoln, 2005:22).

This study used the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm in order to comprehend how individuals in everyday settings construct meaning and explain the events occurring in their worlds (Muvhango, 2016:9). The interpretivist paradigm allowed me to interact with the participants, to gain insights and form a clear understanding of the nature and extent of the whole school–approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary school. It also enabled me to analyse existing knowledge on the implementation of a whole-school approach to manage bullying behaviour in primary schools.

3.8 POPULATION

A research population is defined as the overall group of people or entities from whom/which information is required (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:132). A population, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:489), is a group of individuals or events from whom/which a sample is drawn to generate results. A population is also the entire set of individuals of interest to me (Gravette and Forzano, 2003:115). The population for this study comprised of principals, management teams, learners, parents, and educators from primary schools.

I selected individuals who are information rich in respect of the aim of this inquiry. Thus, ten learners, ten educators, eight parents, ten SMT (school management team members) and ten school principals were selected. The participants, selected by means of purposive sampling, met certain criteria: they had shared experiences or characteristics in relation to the use of the whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour (De Wet, 2011: 73).

3.9 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS/TECHNIQUES

Data collection instruments refer to the techniques used to gather information that assists the researcher to answer the research question (Wagner, Kawulich and Garner, 2012: 265). The study used four data collection instruments, namely, interviews, semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, and document analysis.

3.9.1 Interviews

According to Stewart and Cash (1985:3, as cited by Mtsweni 2008:11), an interview is a process of dyadic relational communication with a predetermined serious purpose that is designed for the interchanging of views and involves the asking and answering of questions. The word dyadic means that the interview is a person-to-person interaction between the interviewer and interviewees. An interview is a two-way conversation and a purposive interaction in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data about the participants' ideas, expectations, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours. It helps the researcher to see the world through the eyes of the participants (Wagner, Kawulich and Garner, 2012:133).

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2005:287) define an interview as a conversation conducted with the aim of understanding the world from participants'

perspectives, unfolding the meanings of their experiences, and uncovering their lived world prior to scientific explanations.

An interview, therefore, allows me to interpret and understand the meaning of participants' answers to specific questions (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:188). It also allows the interviewer to amend questions and to probe surface issues further (Cumming and Worley, 2001:118). In the present study, semi-structured interviews with open-end questions were used. Parents, learners, SMTs, educators, and principals were interviewed. The interviews were tape-recorded with the participants' permission and then transcribed.

3.9.2 Semi-structured interviews

Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012: 274) define semi-structured interviews as those conducted according to an interview guide containing some key questions for the participants. This allows issues to be explored as they arise. A semi-structured interview is a research method used particularly in the social sciences in order to collect data. It allows the generation of new ideas during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says (Muvhango, 2016:11). The aim of using semi-structured interviews in this study was to understand the participants' experiences and perceptions regarding the implementation of a whole school approach in managing bullying behaviour (Kruger 2011:73). I used semi-structured interviews simply because of the open-end questions, which give the participants greater freedom to discuss issues that are of importance to them, rather than me determining the agenda (Barbour, 2007:33; Kruger, 2011:74).

Semi-structured interviews constitute the greatest opportunity for me to obtain elaborate responses to questions that cannot be answered simply. In this study, I gathered data about the whole school approach in managing bullying behaviour in primary schools (Mollo, 2009: 55).

3.9.3 Document analysis

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:468), documents are records of past events, whether handwritten or printed. Examples of such include theses, dissertations, letters, diaries, newspapers, and regulations. The documents analysed in this study include policy guidelines, inter-office memo books, journals, reports, minutes of meetings, magazines, other physical materials, and researcher-generated documents (Merriam, 1998:112-113). The specific purpose of analysing these documents was to learn more about the situation, person, or event being investigated. Creswell (2002:209) notes that document analysis provides valuable information that helps researchers to answer their research questions.

Documents provide valuable information that helps researchers understand central phenomena in qualitative studies and as such, they represent a good source of text data for a qualitative study (Creswell, 2002:209). For the purpose of this study, all the documents related to the whole school approach in managing bullying behaviour in primary school were studied. Documents analysis provides data that help answer the research questions in a study (Mollo, 2009: 53).

In this study, document analysis considered the documents obtained from the various primary schools selected. Documents such as learners' codes of conduct, records of disciplinary problems and the corresponding disciplinary measures taken by the school, and parental and departmental involvement in addressing some of the most serious bullying behaviour problems were studied (Mestry and Khumalo, 2012:100).

3.9.4 Focus group interviews

Focus group interviews complement semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Kruger (as cited in De Vos, Strydom, Fouche' and Delpont, 2007:300)

defines focus group interviews as carefully planned discussions designed to obtain participants' perceptions on a matter of interest. Morgan (as cited in De Vos, Strydom, Fouche' and Delport 2007:300) further describes focus groups as a research technique that enables the collection of data through group members' interaction on a topic determined by the researcher.

In addition, a focus group interview is a group interview used to determine the attitudes, behaviour, preferences, and dislikes of participants who are interviewed simultaneously by a facilitator (Du Plooy, Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014: 183). Bachman, Russell and Scutt (2014:259) characterise a focus group interview as a group of individuals formed by a researcher who then leads them in a group discussion on a topic of relevance to the study.

A total of three focus-group discussions were conducted with an average of five members per group. Each focus group consisted of a principal or a delegated member, parents, teachers, a Head of Department, and Grade 7 learners. The participants were gathered for the sole purpose of eliciting their views and opinions about the whole school approach to managing bullying behaviour. I identified broad questions and themes, in advance, relating to the adoption of a whole school approach in managing bullying behaviour in schools (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:183).

A focus group interview has more advantages than other data collection methods. Indeed, according to Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014:185), debates generated during focus group discussions can provide the researcher with a deeper understanding of the participants' differing opinions and viewpoints. It also allows, in this study, allows me to collect evidence about the participants' shared experiences, feelings, and opinions about the same situation.

Thus, this study regards focus group interviews as one of the most suitable data collection methods in exploring a whole-school approach to managing bullying

behaviour amongst primary school learners. Data were drawn from the experiences, values, opinions, and feelings of the participating parents, educators, principals, school managers, learners, and support staff.

In this study, participants in the focus group interviews were chosen from SGBs, educators, SMTs, and principals. They provided me with their own understanding and experiences of managing bullying behaviour among primary school learners (Mestry and Khumalo, 2012:100). A total of three group discussions were conducted, with an average of six to eight members per group. In total, 24 members partook in the interviews. Each focus group consisted of a principal or their delegate, parent governors, educators, learners, SMT members, and HODs. Table 1, below, provides a summary of the participants' position, age group, gender, and level of education.

Table 3.1: List of the participants selected for the focus group interviews

Participant	Age Range	Gender	F	M	Level of Education
Principals	39-52		3	5	Teacher Dip; Hons
Gov. Body	40-48		5	2	Gr 7 – Gr 10
Educators	35-50		6	6	Teacher Dip.
Learners	11-13		6	6	Gr 6 – Gr 7
SMT	35-52		6	6	Teacher Dip.; Hons

3.10 SAMPLE

Sampling is the selection of research participants from an entire population. As such, it involves decisions about the people, settings, events, behaviours, and/or social processes to observe (Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter, 2010:49). Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014:135) define a sample as a subset considered to be representative of a research population. In other words, a sample is a subset of elements from the larger population (Bachman and Schutt,

2014:466). To put it another way, sampling is the process of selecting cases to be included in research (Neuman, 1997:201). Purposive sampling was used in the current study.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:489) construe purposeful sampling as consisting of choosing small groups or individuals who are likely to be knowledgeable and, therefore, informative about the phenomenon of interest. Purposive sampling is about selecting cases for a study that does not require generalisation. Purposive sampling, according to De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2007:202), is based entirely on the researcher's judgment and that is, a sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population of interest. For his part, Babbie (2007:184) regards purposive sampling as a type of non-probability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected based on the researcher's judgment about which ones will be the most useful representatives of the population.

In the light of the above, a sample is thus intentionally selected to serve the purpose of the study (Gravette and Forzano, 2003:115). According to Polkinghorne (2005:137), participants in a qualitative study are not selected because they fulfil the representative requirements of statistical inference, but rather because they can provide substantial contributions to establishing the structure and character of the experience under investigation. In this research, the investigated experience was the management of bullying behaviour in primary schools.

As indicated earlier, in the discussion on the unit of analysis, the sample involved educators, school principals, learners, parents, and SMT members. This is because they have enough rich information that can bring refinement and clarity to the understanding of the implementation of a whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour in primary schools.

For the purpose of this research, one SMT member, principals, educators, learners, and SGB members were selected to participate in this inquiry. I hoped that they could share relevant experiences about the use of a whole school approach in management bullying behaviour in primary schools. A maximum of three members per primary school were selected for inclusion in this research (Neuman, 1997:201). Mestry and Khumalo (2012:100) note that purposive sampling allows researchers to select primary schools where participants could provide rich information regarding their experienced successes or challenges in managing bullying behaviour in their respective primary schools.

3.11 UNIT OF ANALYSIS

Mouton (1996), as quoted by De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont, (2007:104), identifies different units of analysis, namely, individuals, institutions, social actions, cultural objects, and events. In the context of this study, individuals constitute the unit of analysis. Thus, the analysis focused on educators, school principals, SMTs, parents/guardians, and learners. Babbie (2007:96) further describes a unit of analysis, in simpler terms, as what or who can be studied. My choice of individuals as the unit of analysis in this study was motivated by the fact that they possessed significant information regarding the implementation of a whole-school approach to managing bullying in primary schools. As such, they are likely to yield the desired information that would enable me to answer the research question.

3.12 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Qualitative data analysis can be defined as working with data, organising it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesising it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learnt, and deciding what one would tell others (Nyoni, 2012:89). According to De Vos Strydom, Fouché and Delpont (2007:333), data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data.

In this study, data were analysed through content or textual analysis. This means that a textual content approach had to be used to transcribe the data from all the raw information sources that included the participants' responses during conversations, interviews, focus group meetings, and all the notes and journals generated during the research (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Textual content analysis involves coding, classifying, categorising, and indexing data. Texts relating to the whole school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools include oral and written or graphic languages, books, and theses (Sonderling, 2001:148).

Thematic data analysis, which was also employed in this study, involved identifying themes or patterns in the data. Data reduction, which also formed part of the data analysis approach, is the process consisting of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming data that appear in transcriptions. It occurs through coding and memoing, whereby data are reduced without significant loss of information, so that a drawn conclusion can be verified.

3.12.1 Data analysis strategy design

My data analysis strategy design followed a narrative analysis approach which involved the reformulation of stories presented by participants considering context of each case and different experiences of each participant. Elaboratively, narrative analysis is the revision of primary qualitative data by me.

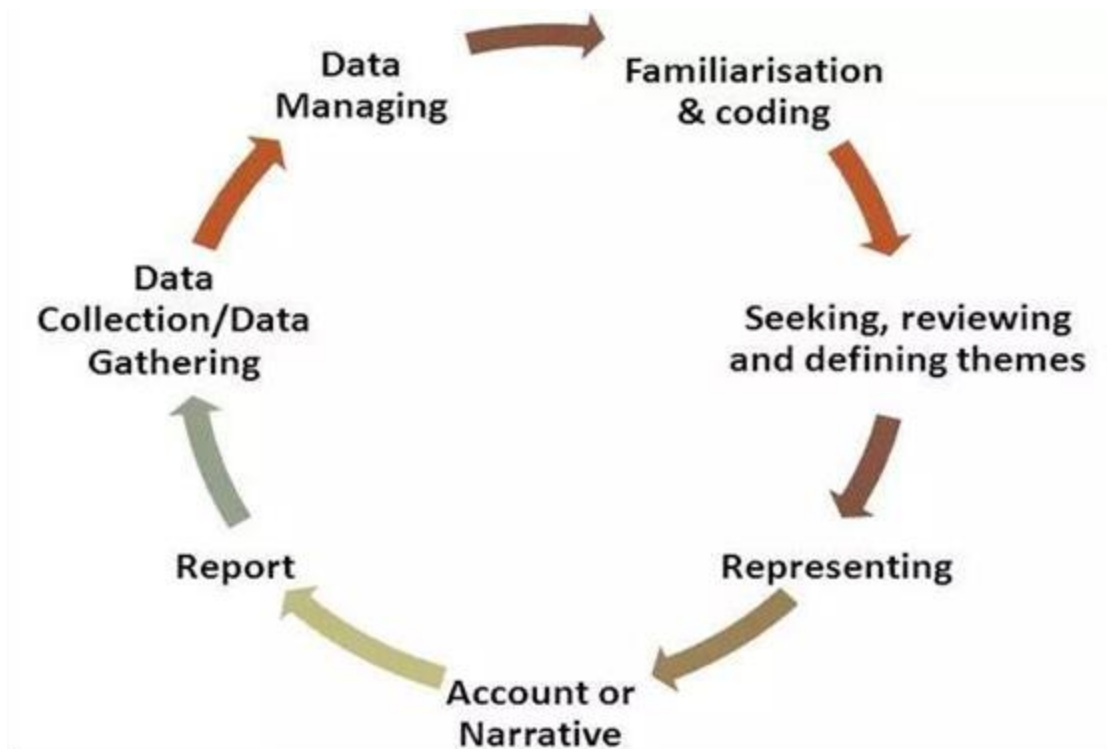


Figure 3.1: Phases of thematic analysis (Adapted from Clark & Braun, 2013)

Table 3.2: Sequential steps followed to analyse data

	Phases	Description of analysis process
1	Familiarising myself with data	a) Narrative preparation, (transcribing data) b) (Re) – Reading data and noting down initial ideas
2	Generating initial Codes	a) Coding interesting features of data in systematic manner across entire data set b) Collating data relevant to each code
3	Searching for Themes	a) Collating codes into potential themes b) Gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4	Reviewing themes	a) Checking if themes work in relation to the coded extracts b) Checking if themes work in relation to the entire data set c) Reviewing data to search for additional themes d) Generating a thematic “map” of the analysis
5	Defining and naming Themes	a) On-going analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells.

		b) Generating clear definitions and names for each theme
6	Producing the report	a) Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples b) Final analysis of selected extracts c). Relating the analysis back to the research question, objectives and previous literature reviewed

Qualitative data analysis was conducted through the following three steps:

Step 1: Developing and applying codes: - Coding was done by categorisation of data. Codes were made of singular words or short phrases that represented a theme or an idea. All codes were assigned meaningful titles. A wide range of non-quantifiable elements such as events, behaviours, meanings etc were code. Three types of coding were used namely:

- 1) Open coding – The initial organisation of raw data to try to make sense of it
- 2) Axial coding – Interconnecting and linking the categories of codes
- 3) Selective coding – Formulating the story through connecting the categories

I manually did the coding to identify emerging themes. I used folders, filing cabinets and wallets to gather materials that were examples of similar themes or analytical ideas.

Research Title	Elements coded	Codes
A Whole school approach to managing bullying behaviour among learners in South African primary schools	All forms of learner bullying in primary schools	Cyber bullying, physical, relational, emotional

Step 2: Identifying themes, patterns and relationships - In qualitative data analysis there are no universally applicable techniques that can be applied to generate findings. I used my analytical and critical thinking skills in analysing data

to identify common themes, patterns and relationships within responses of sample group members in relation to codes that have been specified in the previous stage.

- Word and phrase repetitions – scanning primary data for words and phrases most used by participants as well as words and phrases used with unusual emotions.
- Primary and secondary data comparisons – comparing the findings of interview/focus group (FG) / observation / any other qualitative data collection method with findings of literature review and discussing differences between them.
- Search for missing information – discussions about which aspects of the issue was not mentioned by participants, although I expected them to be mentioned.
- Metaphors and analogies – comparing primary research findings to phenomena from a different area and discussing similarities and differences.

Step 3: Summarising data – I linked my research findings to my research aim and objectives. I had to interweave my findings with noteworthy quotations from the transcript in order to highlight major themes within findings and possible contradictions.

3.13 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Limitations can be construed as the constrains or limits of a research that are out of one's control. Such limitations relate to time, financial resources, access to information, and so on (Du Plooy, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:275). In this study, it was difficult to secure an appointment for the individual and focus group interviews with school principals, educators, and learners of the selected primary schools. This compelled me to re-strategize by using emails to book an appointment with the participants. Furthermore, the study was confined to primary schools' learners.

Other stakeholders, such as circuit managers, district senior managers, and school administrative staffs were excluded from the research study, due to time constraints. Some of the school principals and heads of the department preferred email-based interviews to individual face-to-face interviews.

These email-based interviews limited further probing, even though they provided as much information as possible, due to the degree of flexibility given by the semi-structured interviews. They tried to respond to a few questions and gave detailed information. However, it felt that the information gathered would have been deeper and richer if there had been time to probe through face-to-face interviews. Moreover, the timing of the data gathering was not favourable, because it was just before the 2017-mid-year examinations period in primary schools. Educators and learners were very busy writing or marking examinations.

As for the delimitations, they are parameters or borders of one's research (Du Plooy, Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:276). This study was limited to the whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour in primary schools. The research did not include secondary schools. Essentially, primary schools were ideal for this study, because most of them share the same culture of bullying.

3.14 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Erlandson *et al.* (1993: 29) describe trustworthiness as the combined qualities that the study should possess by:

- Demonstrating its truth value
- Providing the basis for applying it; and allowing external judgment to be made about the consistency of its procedures and the neutrality of its findings.

Trustworthiness refers to the extent to which the data and data analysis are believable and trustworthy (Mafenya, 2016:127). Trustworthiness comprises of

credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. The purpose of trustworthiness in a qualitative study is to promote the understanding of a phenomenon, within a specific context, and not to generalise the results to a broader population (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:258).

3.14.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the accuracy with which I interpreted the data provided by the participants (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:258). Credibility, as described by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:486), is the extent to which the results of a study approximate reality and are thus judged to be trustworthy and reasonable. Credibility, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:391), addresses the following questions:

- Do researchers observe what they think they observe?
- Do researchers really hear what they think they hear?

A study is deemed credible when it presents faithful descriptions, and when readers or other researchers confronted with the same experience can recognise it (Mafenya, 2016:128).

In this study, the inclusion of the participants in the checking of the findings provided the much-needed feedback on the data, interpretation, and conclusions. This is one of the methods used to increase credibility in this study (Mafenya, 2016:128). Lincoln and Guba (1985:314) consider member-checking of the findings as the most critical technique for establishing credibility in a research study.

3.14.2 Transferability

According to Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012:275), transferability refers to the extent to which the methods and results of a qualitative study can be understood

within the context of the reader of the study. It is concerned with the exchange of information and engagement with the individual reader, rather than with generalisable rules. Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014:259) further characterise transferability as the degree to which the results and analysis techniques can be applied beyond a specific research project.

Transferability, in the qualitative study, could be increased by means of thick descriptions in which I provide the reader with a full and purposeful account of the context. Transferability could also be increased through purposeful sampling (Collaize, 1987). To achieve a high degree of transferability in this research study, I provided a detailed description of the context of the study. This was to provide the reader with enough information so that he/she could make informed decisions about the applicability of the findings to other settings (Mafenya, 2016:130; Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

3.14.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the degree to which the reader can be convinced that the findings are, indeed, what I say they are. Dependability is achieved through rich and detailed descriptions that show how certain actions and opinions are rooted in and develop from contextual interaction (Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter, 2006:93-94). It also refers to the quality of the integration process between the data collection method, the data analysis, and the theory generated from the data (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014:259).

For Lincoln and Guba (1985), the notion of dependability parallels the idea of reliability in qualitative research. Reliability relates to validity, just as dependability relates to credibility. A research study could be regarded as dependable or reliable, in quantitative terms, but produce no credible or valid results. If the research does produce credible or valid results, then it is more likely that it is dependable or reliable (Mafenya, 2016:129).

3.14.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to how well the data collected support the researcher's findings and interpretation, as well as how these findings flow from the data (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014:259). Confirmability requires the researcher to have described the research process fully in order to assist others in scrutinising the research design (Collins and Hussey, 2003:278-279). In other words, others who analyse the data must come to conclusions like those of mine. One way in which the soundness of a research can be demonstrated is for the research process to be clear, that is, another researcher should be able to understand the methods used and the process followed (Mafenya, 2016:128). Both the dependability and confirmability of a research project are established through auditing the research process.

To enable the auditing by other researchers, it is advisable to archive all collected data in a well-organised and retrievable form, so that it can be made available to whoever challenges the findings (Mafenya, 2016:128). In addition, a researcher can increase the reliability of his/her data by having intensive engagement with the material and by ensuring the iteration of the data interpretation. Furthermore, all research notes taken during the focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews, which are explanatory in nature, ensure the authenticity of the findings and a high level of validity.

3.14.5 Member-checking

Lincoln and Guba (1985:236) describe member-checking as a research phase during which the provisional report is taken back to the site and subjected to the scrutiny of the persons who provided the information. This enables the participants to comment on what I had found. Lincoln and Guba (1985) further describe member-checking as an optimal means of assessing the validity of a qualitative study, because the first step of many qualitative projects is to accurately

understand the participants' worldview. In this process of member validation or checking, the participants are provided with relevant sections of a research report and are invited to comment on the accuracy of the report (Koelsch, 2013).

Prior to the member-check interviews, all the participants in the present research were requested to read the transcription to check if I had vividly and accurately portrayed their experiences and perceptions (Mafenya, 2013:131). I asked if they felt that the transcription treated them fairly and respectfully, and if it portrayed their stories fully and accurately. In addition, I asked if the participants had anything else to add that they were unable to say during the first interview (Mafenya, 2016). Finally, the participants agreed that all presentations and interview transcripts were a true reflection of what they had said.

3.14.6 Field research

All the interviews were done at the selected schools, which were the natural settings of the participants in order to reflect their lived experiences (MacMillan and Schumacher, 2010:331).

3.14.7 Verbatim accounts

Verbatim accounts in which the participants' exact words were retained – in direct quotations – were used (Johnson and Christensen, 2012:267). In this research, verbatim accounts from the interview transcripts were extracted in order to illustrate the tone, sense, intentions and emotions of the participants (Pazvakavambwa 2016:140; Morrow, 2005:253).

3.14.8 Mechanically recorded data

For the purpose of this research study, a voice recorder was used to document the interview proceedings. This was advantageous since accurate and relatively

complete records of the conversations between me and the participants were available (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:331).

3.15 EMERGING DATA TREATMENT

It is essential to note that, as a researcher, I spent 13 months engaging with the data. Furthermore, I allowed time, in my design, for the process of locating and evaluating the ways I could sample the studied area. This exercise was very much demanding, as no preselected sample was waiting for me. As a result, I treated theoretical sampling, for example the selection of participants, according to the needs of my analysis and built time and budget for it into my design. As a researcher, I was able to state the areas where further sampling was likely, and I budgeted time and other resources accordingly.

3.16 RIGOUR

Rigour, in qualitative data analysis, is a necessary element for the maximisation of the potential for generating meaning (Nyoni, 2007:92). It accounts for the trust in one's research by peers and readership (Gumbo, 2016:36). It also means precision, accuracy, exactness, scientific approaches, and unerring (Melrose, 2001:164). In this research study, rigour was ensured by minimising subjectivity. For instance, I endeavoured not to impose my views and preconceptions on the data (Gumbo, 2016:36). Furthermore, I strived to faithfully record and interpret the data in this research study.

Moreover, the data provided by the participants were not judged against my values or existing knowledge. Nevertheless, they were compared with the data from the other participants in the study. Codes were developed from the transcripts, using the words of the participants. After several readings of each transcript, words and phrases were marked as issues and facts of interest to the study. An indicator,

such as the frequency of the phrases, issues, words, or the position of a statement guided me.

3.17 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research ethics is generally concerned with beliefs about what is right or wrong from a moral perspective. It also focuses on what is morally proper or improper, when engaging the participants, or when accessing archival data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:117). Likewise, Babbie (2007:62) notes that in most dictionaries as well as in common usage, ethics is typically associated with morality, that is, it deals with matters of right and wrong. According to Neuman (1997:445), ethical research requires the balancing of the value of advancing knowledge and that of non-interference in the lives of others. Research ethics can specifically be defined as the responsibility of researchers to be honest with and respectful towards all individuals participating in a study (Gravetter and Forzano, 2003:59).

From the statements above, it becomes clear that no sensitive, intimate, and innermost information that may humiliate or harm the participants should be released. The most common aspects of relevance to ethical issues are informed consent, prevention of harm to the participants, anonymity, confidentiality and privacy, and avoidance of deception (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:264).

3.17.1 Approval for conducting the research

Permission to conduct the research study was obtained from the Limpopo Education District Senior Manager, the circuit offices, and the relevant primary school principals. To ensure that the research study complied with ethical principles, I, as a student of the University of South Africa, applied for ethical clearance from the latter.

3.17.2 Informed consent

Informed consent, as described by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:487), consists in obtaining permission from individuals who are willing to participate in research, before the research begins. Informed consent, according to Babbie (2007:64), means that subjects participate voluntarily in research projects with a full understanding of the possible risks involved.

In this study, the potential subjects were not coerced into participating in the interviews, they did so voluntarily. Indeed, the participants were formally informed of the purpose of the study and the expectation of their consent (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:264). This is consistent with the requirement that participants be briefed about the purpose of a study as well as the time length needed (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:119).

Written permissions to conduct the study, obtained from the district office, school principals, and the circuit office, were also presented to the participants. Finally, I informed the participants about the purpose and significance of using such devices as audiotape-recorders in the interviews.

3.17.3 Preventing harm

In the context of social science, harm may include things that are impossible or more difficult to eliminate. Examples of the latter include causing participants to recall emotionally painful memories or creating situations where a participant's prospects may be harmed (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:266). Babbie (2007:63) emphasises that social research should never injure the people being studied, even if they volunteered to participate in the study. Harm, according to De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont (2007:58), is usually of an emotional nature, although one cannot completely rule out physical harm.

To ensure that the participants in this study were unharmed, they were informed beforehand about the potentially harmful impact of the investigation. Subsequently, they were provided the opportunity to withdraw from the investigation, if they so wished (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont, 2007:58). Clearly, I undertook steps to ensure that this study never resulted in physical or mental discomfort, harm, or injury to the participants. This included not revealing information that might cause embarrassment or danger to home life, school performance, friendships, as well as direct negative consequences (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:119). In brief, I followed all ethical principles (Anderson, 2007:28).

3.17.4 Anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy

Anonymity means that a researcher protects the identities of the participants (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:121). For Babbie (2007: 64), anonymity is guaranteed in a research project when neither the researcher nor the readers can link a specific response to a respondent. For De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont (2007:62), anonymity means that no one, including the researcher, can identify any subject afterwards.

To guarantee the participants' anonymity in the present study, I did not record their names at any stage of the research process. Thus, it would be impossible to match their identities to their responses in any way (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:267). To further ensure anonymity, the participants were not required to write their names on the questionnaire. Similarly, schools where the research was conducted were referred to as School A/B/C and so forth, to protect their identities (Anderson, 2007:29). For Babbie (2007:65), anonymity is linked to a researcher's pledge to not publicly identify participants' responses.

According to Neuman (1997:453), the term confidentiality means that information may have names attached to it, but the researcher must hold it in confidence or

keep it in secret from the public. In the context this study, information was not released in a manner that linked it to specific respondents. The collected information was only handled by me, and the identities of the participants remained a secret to the public (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:268).

As for privacy, it means that access to participants' characteristics, responses, and behaviours is restricted to me. The latter guarantees privacy by ensuring the anonymity of the participants, the confidentiality of the information that they provide, and the appropriate storing of the collected data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:121). Throughout this study, all collected information and the subsequent findings were subject to privacy, until the report was published.

To ensure privacy and anonymity, letters and numbers were assigned to each individual participant to protect their names, identities and settings (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:121, Pazvakavambwa, 2015:136). The use of code names for people and places ensured participant's anonymity. Educator participants were identified as PSE 1, PSE 2, PSE 3, PSE4, for example, while primary schools were identified as PA, PB, PC, PD, PE, for example. Principal participants were identified as PSH 1, PSH 2, and PSH 3 for example. Learners' participants were identified as PSL 1, PSL 2, PSL4, for example. School management team participant were identified as PST 1, PST 2 for example.

These codes were used to break discernible connections between the data and individuals or schools, and this ensured anonymity in this study (Johnson and Christensen, 2012:104, Creswell, 2012:232, Pazvakavambwa, 2015:137). Thus, research participants' privacy, anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the important stages that included data collection, analysis and storage (Mouton, 2006:244).

3.17.5 Permission to tape-record interviews

As indicated earlier, this research study used the qualitative interview approach to gather information rich data about the participants' thoughts, knowledge, beliefs, perceptions and understanding about the whole school approach in managing bullying behaviour in the primary schools, a process that allowed me to enter into the inner world of another person to gain an understanding of that person's perspectives (Johnson and Christensen, 2011:202, Pazvakavambwa, 2015:137).

To capture all the important information, all the interviews were audio recorded (Pazvakavambwa, 2015:137). Participants were informed at the onset that all interviews would be recorded by means of an electronic recording device and that they had the right to withdraw from the study if they felt uncomfortable (Strydom, 2007:61). This was included in the consent form, hence, the voice recorder of the interviews never proceeded without the consent of the participants to avoid deception (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:119, Pazvakavambwa, 2015).

3.18 DATA MANAGEMENT AND SAFE STORAGE

Data management and safe storage are fundamental in research. I employed semi-structured and focus group interviews as data collection instruments. I used a voice recorder to collect verbal information from individual and focus group interviews. The respondents' words, tone, pauses, and phrases were recorded in a permanent form and could be listened to repeatedly. All this electronic information was stored on a password-protected computer. In addition to storing all the responses from the interviews electronically, I opened a ring-binder file that was kept under lock in a safe cabinet wherein the voice recorder was also placed (Nyoni, 2007:93).

3.19 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the research design, research paradigm and methodology were explained. Semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and document analysis were identified as the main data collection instruments in this study. Furthermore, the research methodology was explained in order to provide an understanding of the procedures followed in the data collection. The relevant ethical considerations were also discussed. Finally, the data analysis steps were indicated. In nutshell, Chapter Three provided a step-by-step account of the procedures followed in conducting this research study. In the next chapter, the collected data are analysed and interpreted.

3.20 PROJECTION FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER

Chapter Four elucidates the research findings in the form of themes and categories that emerged during the qualitative data analysis obtained from the document analysis, focus group and the semi-structured interviews with school learners, educators, principals, heads of department (HODs) and school governing bodies.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 described the methodology and design of the study. This fourth chapter focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data obtained through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The analysis explored how the whole-school approach to management of bullying behaviour in primary schools was managed. Data analysis and interpretation of results covers the preparation of data for analysis, the recording of interviews, the transcribing of interview data, the tools to qualitative data analysis, data coding, and the discussions of themes and categories.

4.2 PREPARING DATA FOR ANALYSIS

It was very important that I follow the necessary procedures in preparing qualitative data for analysis in order to accomplish a systematic and scientific interpretation. Therefore, this chapter reports on the results of the data-gathering tools used to collect data. This foregrounded the provision of a more comprehensive picture of learners', school principals' and educators' understanding, experiences and attitudes regarding the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools.

As outlined in the previous chapter, I locate the findings of this study within an interpretive constructivist paradigm. In particular, I utilise Heidegger's (1982) and Husserl's (1981) descriptive--interpretive approach, because it has the potential to enable me to identify the essence of humans' experiences of a phenomenon on the understanding that meanings are not directly available to us but are the product of interpretation (Mafenya, 2016:15). Furthermore, Heidegger's (1982:119) view of basic qualitative inquiry is that it starts with how things are experienced, how we relate to other people, and the way people live.

The research population in this study comprises of primary school learners, educators, principals, school management teams, and school governing bodies. All the participants were selected through a purposive sampling procedure (Denzel and Lincoln, 2000). I applied for the permission to conduct interviews with the members of primary school communities. Furthermore, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of South Africa's Ethical Clearance Committee. After obtaining the ethical clearance certificate from the Research Ethics Committee, I requested all the participants to sign a consent form in which they declared that their participation in the study was voluntarily and that they understood the purpose and objectives of the study (see Annexure 2). Participants signed a binding privacy form that stipulated that all the information provided by the respondents would be confidential and used solely for research purposes. Finally, I designed an interview guide (see Annexure 3). The next section presents the findings that emerged from the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

4.3 PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS FROM SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

This section focuses on the discussion of the findings from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions conducted with select members of the primary school community. These semi-structured interviews and focus groups discussions were aimed at understanding the participants' experiences, perceptions and beliefs regarding the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools.

This study used Collaizi's (1978) thematic data analysis framework with the aim of providing a series of steps that would guide me in managing the complexity and amount of the gathered qualitative data. Moreover, the participants in the study were divided into groups that were allocated identifying numbers. The participants were identified as PSP for parents, PSE for educators, PSH for principals, PSL for

learners, PSMT for school management teams, whereas the schools were identified as school PA, PB, PC, and so forth. Finally, the following important themes and categories were identified.

4.4 PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

At the selected primary schools, the semi-structured individual interviews and focus group discussions were held with the following stakeholders:

- Primary school principals
- Learners and educators as members of the focus group
- Grade 6-7
- Learners' parents and legal guardians (as individuals).

For the purpose of maintaining the principle of confidentiality in this research study, the selected primary schools were coded in the following way: school PA, school PB, school PC, school PD, school PD, school PF, school PG, school PH, school PI, school PJ, and so forth. The participating primary school principals were coded in the following way: PSH-1 and so on, while the Senior Management Teams were labelled as PSMT-2. The participating learners were coded as PSL-4 and the educators were coded PSE 7. The participating parents were coded as PSP-5 and so forth.

Educators and learners who partook in the individual interviews were drawn from the focus group discussions, hence, they continued to use the codes assigned to them during the focus group discussions. The aim of coding the participants was to ensure that the data obtained could not be linked to any person or setting. In other words, this was to ensure the anonymity of the participants and the privacy and confidentiality of the data provided (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:121).

4.5 RECORDING THE INTERVIEWS

I employed semi-structured, individual interviews and focus group discussions as data collection instruments. I used a voice recorder to capture the information provided by the participants during the interviews and focus group discussions.

As reflected in Table 4.2, the transcripts of the semi-structured individual interviews and focus group discussions were subjected to a rigorous analysis. The presentation of the data in themes and categories enabled me to scrutinise the interviewees' responses, to elicit their opinions, feelings, attitudes and experiences about the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour among primary school learners and to interpret the results. Some of the phrases and sentences from the interviews were quoted verbatim to retain the actual words articulated by the participants. The quotations from the verbatim transcripts will be utilised to support the findings (Johnson and Christensen, 2012:267). The table below outlines the identified themes and categories.

Table 4.1: Summary of the themes and categories

Themes			Categories	
1.	Primary school bullying behaviour		•	Definition of school bullying in primary schools
2.	Strategies to deal effectively with bullying behaviour in primary schools		•	Whole-school approach
			•	Anti-bullying policies
			•	Using curriculum to tackle bullying
			•	Role of educators
			•	Role of school managers

3.	Areas where	school	bullying	•	School playground
	behaviour mostly occurs			•	School toilets
				•	Classrooms
4.	Consequences	of	bullying	•	Educational consequences
	behaviour or its effects on learners			•	Social consequences
				•	Physical consequences
				•	Emotional consequences
				•	Academic performance
				•	Consequences for the bystanders
5.	Whole-school approach to			•	Managing schools using whole
	managing bullying behaviour				school
					approach
6.	Factors influencing		bullying	•	Family factor
	behaviour amongst	primary	school	•	Community factor
	Learners			•	Poor academic achievements
				•	School factor
				•	Peer pressure
7.	Forms of bullying behaviour in			•	Cyberbullying
	primary schools			•	Physical bullying
				•	Psychological bullying
				•	Social bullying
				•	Relational bullying

4.6 THEME ONE: PRIMARY SCHOOL BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Bullying behaviour in primary schools is one of the most common forms of school violence. It involves multiple incidents targeted at one person, over time, rather than a single incident.

4.6.1 Definition of bullying behaviour in primary schools

Bullying behaviour can be defined as the repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful individual or group of people (Rigby, 1993). Bullying is an intentional, repeated hurtful act, or an utterance of word, or a display of such behaviours as name-calling, or threatening by a child or children against another child or other children (O'Moore and Minton, 2004:72).

Bullying includes the threat of bodily harm, the possession of weapons, assault and battery, gang activity, attempted murder, and murder (Lidzhegu, 2012:54). In this regard, a principal from school PA has this to say, "I think bullying behaviour is hurtful, intentional repeated behaviour on a weaker person by one who is stronger" (PSH- 1). Similarly, an educator from school PA described bullying behaviour in primary school as "[...] when a stronger child hurts or frighten a smaller or weaker child on purpose again and again" (PSE-4). A learner from school PA conceived bullying as "[...] a boy hurting your body and leaving marks" (PSL-5). An educator from school PB indicated that "In my opinion, bullying behaviour is when a stronger child hurts or frightens a smaller or weaker child on purpose again and again" (PSE-2).

The principal from school PD stated, "I think I can say that bullying behaviour in our primary school is an aggressive behaviour which is very hurtful and deliberate and it can usually last for months and weeks, it is anti-social actions which took place in our respective primary schools" (PSH-6). A school management team from school PC observes, "I think, bullying behaviour is nothing else but an act of

physical, psychological and verbal behaviour by bigger, stronger and superior children that intentionally hurts and negatively affects the smaller, weaker and inferior child” (PSMT- 3). This understanding is in line with Pillay’s (2007:127) view that bullying is a painful and humiliating act or barbaric behaviour by stronger or superior children who bully the weak ones who feel embarrassed and battered.

The parent representative from school PE indicated: “My understanding of school bullying behaviour is a cruel, repeated and unacceptable behaviour within the school, which is intentional and deliberate. Its purpose is to hurt or distress the other person and is often an abuse of power” (PSP- 4). Similarly, a learner representative from school PD indicates that “Bullying behaviour in school can be defined as repeated unprovoked, hurtful actions by one child or children against another” (PSL-5). This view is supported by Olweus’ (2010, in Kruger, 2013:19) notion that bullying behaviour is the collective aggressiveness towards an individual or group of a person who does/do not provoke or attract this aggressiveness, as well as the intention to cause harm. For the PSL-11 of school PH: “Bullying behaviour is when a stronger learner hurts or frightens a smaller weaker learner on purpose again and again” (PSL-11). The principal of school PG further defined bullying behaviour in primary schools thus: “I think bullying is cruel, abusive behaviour which persistent and pervasive and causes suffering to individuals, which is severe and sustained” (PSH-6). For a learner representative from school PE: “Bullying to me is an aggressive behaviour in which one learner harass another learner repeatedly over a period of time” (PSL-7). This conception agrees with Du Plessis’ (2011:1) view that bullying is aggressive behaviour that implies the forceful attacking of people over a period.

According to Mink (2014:48), bullying behaviour among school learners is the most common form of school violence that can have devastating effects on children who bully and those who are bullied (Langdon and Preble, 2008). From the afore-quoted statements, all the interviewed participants from the various primary schools expressed their views that bullying behaviour is a major problem and a

common feature of everyday life in primary schools today. Harm done to an individual indicates the existence of a power imbalance between the individuals. Primary school educators, principals, and school management teams agreed that bullying in school is the repeated actions by one learner against another or other learners. It hurts and negatively affects all concerned parties. It also emerged from the interviews that different bullying behaviours transpire variously in schools (Fried and Fried, 1996:91).

4.7 THEME TWO: STRATEGIES TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH BULLYING BEHAVIOUR IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

During the interviews with the school community, various strategies that could help in dealing with bullying behaviour in their respective primary schools were identified by the participants. The latter suggested a whole-school approach, procedure policies, raising the awareness of bullying, and using the curriculum to tackle bullying in the primary schools.

4.7.1 Whole-school approach

As noted by Pepler and Craig (2014:5), a whole-school approach brings everyone together to work towards creating a safe, inclusive, and accepting school environment where any bullying behaviours are prevented and/or handled effectively when they arise. A whole-school approach involves the administration, teaching and non-teaching school staff, learners, parents/guardians, and the broader community. In addition, the various primary school educators interviewed stated that a whole-school approach was needed to address bullying behaviour in primary schools. Several school principals reinforced this view by suggesting that the schoolwork as a united force against school bullying. In other words, the participants believe that for such an approach to succeed, the whole school community needs to be involved in school decision-making processes and

subscribe fully to the whole-school approach. Within this context, an educator from school PL emphasises that:

“It will be necessary for us to stop bullying, to change the culture in the school. And that will not just come from a group of educators, but rather we should workshop the entire school staff and then incorporate this whole school process in the way we teach, see how we can fit it into our lesson. It should be a collective action in order to change the learners’ behaviour in our school” (PSE -5).

Similarly, the principal of school PA states that: “In my view I just think bullying in the primary school could be curbed if all schools can apply a whole school approach system because it is an integrated system as well as proactive and preventive approach” (PSP-7). Krige *et al* (2000:18) agree with this respondent that a whole-school approach is systematic and allows all stakeholders to deal with bullying behaviour.

The above participants’ views are in line with the point made by Michele (1991:17) as well as Pepler and Craig (2014:4) who believe that the whole school community should unite and accept responsibility for the behaviour of all learners, to fight bullying behaviour successfully. In this regard, the principal of school PJ notes that “To manage bullying from a whole school approach, the entire school community needs to accept responsibility for the behaviour of learners; this will help to reduce bullying actions” (PH-4). Michele (in Lidzhegu, 2012:56) supports this view when he states that the entire school community should unite and be accountable for the behaviour of all learners, to be able to fight bullying behaviour or actions effectively. On the same note, a learner representative from school PD indicates:

“I think for the school to reduce bullying in our school, the entire school community should apply the whole school approach which involves all the school community including the non-teaching staff and our parents. If the school can do that bullying behaviour can be totally eradicated in our school environment” (PSI-5).

The participants' responses are congruent with Du Plessis and Conley's (2007:51-52) conviction that bullying can be reduced by applying a whole school approach that involves all school staff members, school management, the community, parents, and learners in dealing with bullying behaviour in schools.

Emphasising the suitability of a whole-school approach in managing bullying in primary schools, a member of school PF's management team remarks:

"My dear sir, bullying actions in our school occurs much more frequently in senior phase grades and if as school we follow the whole school approach methods wherein all main stake holders take an effective responsibility towards eradicating the bullying behaviour in our primary school" (PSE-8).

The above responses confirm Pepler and Craig's (2014:2) view that a whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour should involve activities and initiatives that involve all members of the school community, namely, learners (individuals and classes), parents/guardians, school staff, and community partners. The school community should provide valuable information and form parents support groups aimed at eradicating bullying behaviour in primary schools (Pillay, 2011:6).

An educator from school PC outlines the following pre-requisites for the success of a whole-school approach:

"For a whole school approach to be effective and more successful in schools a joint discussion within the school about the policies and procedures that need to be followed is necessary. Support structures for both learners and educators must be made available and safe school environment needs to be created where every school member and learners knows their rights and responsibilities" (PSE-7).

This response is supported by Mink (2014:48) who stresses that bullying behaviour is a systemic issue requiring a whole-school approach and a strong intervention

by all members of the school who must work together to prevent or reduce bullying behaviour or actions on school premises, so as to create a safer school environment.

A whole-school approach is a comprehensive anti-bullying programme whose success is based on the establishment of a trust relationship among educators, learners, school principals, and the larger school community. These stakeholders should collaborate in tackling bullying actions and developing a respectful school climate (Whitted and Dupper, 2005).

The participants emphasise that a whole-school approach is one of the strategies that could be used to effectively to reduce bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners (Du Plessis and Conley, 2007:51, Dowling v Diocesan College and Others, 1999:85). The interviewees further revealed that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners is a problem that needs to be addressed using a whole-school approach.

The whole-school approach, according to the participants, tackles bullying behaviour from as many angles and across a broad spectrum of the school community. The school should establish a bullying support team including educators, learners' legal guardians, parents, and guidance counsellors whose role would be to aid in dealing with bullying behaviour among primary school learners (Olweus and Limber, 2010). For the whole-school approach to manage bullying behaviour to be effective, a bullying prevention programme needs to be established at school level. The established programme needs to include learners, educators, and all the other school community members (Mink, 2014:11).

Successful bullying prevention programmes such as the whole-school approach depend on the ability of teachers, principals, and other school staff to create a climate that encourages positive peer processes that promote a positive, safe, inclusive and accepting environment and discourages bullying. Through the whole-school approach, educators should establish a collaborative and respectful

classroom climate, create open communication, and formulate appropriate responses to children and youth involved in bullying (Pepler and Craig, 2014:2). Educators, parents, learners, and the school community at large should be concerned about learners' behaviour at home, within the community, and at school (Du Plessis, 2011:6).

4.7.2 Anti-bullying policies

The participants' perception is that to control and curb bullying behaviour in primary schools, the latter need to have a written anti-bullying policy well known to all members of the school community. This anti-bullying policy should clearly show and define bullying behaviour, outline procedures for reporting and responding to bullying, and indicate ways of recording bullying behaviour at school (Moll, 2009:65).

An educator from school PI concurs with the above view regarding the imperative for schools to have written anti-bullying policies. This is evident when she says, "I think for the school to run properly it should have the anti-bullying policies that can simply guide learner, educators, parents on how to respond to bullying incidents in and around the school" (PSE 6).

Similarly, the principal of school PI indicates:

"I think that an anti-bullying policy that aim to clamp down on bullying behaviour and serve as guidelines on how to deal with bullying incidents should be developed. Such anti-bullying policies should be made available to everyone in the school community "

The anti-bullying policy should not only focus on mechanisms for preventing bullying but should also guide learners and educators on how to report or respond to bullying incidents (PSD- 5). In the same vein, Tattum (1993:66, in Sehunoe,

2009:29) states that to manage bullying behaviour through a whole-school approach, an anti-bullying policy should be formulated and clearly communicated to all school stakeholders, to maximise the ability to reduce bullying actions.

Regarding the procedure for reporting bullying, the participants noted that clear reporting methods for documenting bullying incidents, the delineation of the intervention process, and the establishment of support structures in primary schools were essential. The educators further perceived commitment and dedication from all school staff, learners and parents as central to developing and implementing anti-bullying policies in schools.

This view was best expressed by an educator from school PJ who notes:

“I think we really need to put structure in place whereby learners know who they can go to. So, may be there must be some process that they can follow. It must be very clear terms as to this are the process, this is the first person to whom I speak, and this is the chain of command. And we ourselves in fact should know how to deal with the bullying in school” (PSE- 1).

According to the interviews, an anti-bullying policy should contain the following elements:

- A description of how the school proposes to deal with the bully and or the victim,
- A clear definition of bullying – with example; and
- An encouragement to both learners and parents with concerns about bullying to speak to the schools.

In this regard, an educator from school PJ indicates: “According to my understanding bullying policy must be comprehensive and clear to all members of the school community” (PSE- 5). Furthermore, the principal of school PSH stresses that: “The anti-bullying policy should define bullying behaviour and explain different forms and categories of bullying in schools” (PSH-19). Similarly, a head of

department underscores that: “For an anti-bullying policy to be effective, it should it should take into account the culture of the given primary school and such policy should deter bullying behaviour tendencies and create a sense of trust in the school environment “(PSE- 7). Another participant from school PE insists that: “Anti-bullying programmes should be established to empower educators to deal with bullying effectively. All educators need training in the areas of identifying and dealing with bullying that can take place in any class” (PSE 4).

Based on PSE-4’s above statement, it becomes evident that anti-bullying policies or programmes are not effectively applied. This is because some educators do not know the procedure regarding the handling of bullying, since no proper training pertaining to the application and management of anti-bullying policies is provided (Mabatha, Magano and Sedibe, 2014:234).

Most of the school community members regard anti-bullying policies as one of the best strategies to reduce the prevalence of bullying in primary schools. The participants added that clear methods for reporting bullying behaviour were key to the alleviation of bullying and the enhancement of the school environment (Lidzhegu, 2012:57).

Furthermore, the formulated anti-bullying policies for primary schools need to include the following:

- The aim of the policy.
- Procedure for reporting bullying.
- Roles and responsibilities of educators, non-teaching staff, learners, and parents.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the policy (Moll, 2009: 65).

4.7.3 Raising awareness

The data obtained through the individual interviews and focus group discussions reflected that bullying behaviour in primary schools should be exposed through anti-bullying awareness campaigns. The latter should be aimed at creating awareness in the context of the whole school approach. In that regard, a school governing body representative from school P12 confides that:

“As a parent I think there is a need to create awareness campaign amongst the teenagers, because there are some teenagers that are not aware about the school bullying policy. Learners need to be made aware that there are consequences for certain behaviour. All schools’ awareness campaign should focus on school bullying. The campaign should be spearheaded by school principal and the school management team” (PSP-8).

To this, the principal of school PD observes that:

“For ant-bullying awareness be effective all organised workshops and talks about the whole school approach and anti-bullying behaviour should be conducted by knowledgeable professionals, and the awareness should not be conducted for the learners only but for the entire school staff” (PSH-6).

An educator from school PF cautions that:

“For campaign about the whole school approach to be effective slogans, poster essays, debates and poetry about the anti-bullying and whole school approach can be useful in raising ant-bullying awareness and creating a conducive learning environment” (PSE-8).

From the above quotations, it transpires that both educators and parents should be involved in campaigns aimed at raising awareness about school bullying. These campaigns are expected to increase the entire school community’s knowledge

about bullying. This is regarded as another way of creating contact sessions between parents, learners, and educators.

4.7.4 Using the curriculum

The interviews suggested that the school curriculum could be used to curb school bullying behaviours. The school curriculum could provide knowledge and understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour as well as the strategies to reduce its occurrence amongst primary school learners. To this effect, an educator from school PS indicates:

“I simply think that school curriculum can play an important role in empowering learners to acquire the social skills that will allow them to positively manage their relationship with others in and outside the school premises” (PSE- 9).

Furthermore, the principal of primary school PK remarks that:

“To deal with bullying behaviour through curriculum, educators can open up discussions with learners about the implications of the bullying experiences by some learners within the school premises” (PSH-10).

The same principal adds:

“I think I can add that; the school curriculum should not only provide for the teaching of facts and figures but should also promote an awareness of other’s feeling and appreciation of and a sensitive response to the viewpoints of other learner.” (PSH-10).

In addition, another participant articulated that through the curriculum, bullying behaviour could be dealt with more effectively in schools. This educator from school PL suggests:

“I guess that to deal with bullying behaviour through curriculum the school should prescribe the appropriate reading literature or books, have regular class discussions, organised learner-centred debates, school dramas and anti-bullying school activities. All these should aim towards addressing bullying behaviour by school” (PSE- 5).

The above suggestions are in line with Sharp’s (1994:84) view that the school curriculum should enable educators to initiate discussions with their learners on the nature of bullying. Such discussions would also allow them to gain insight into the various types of bullying behaviour displayed (Krige, Pettipher, Squelch and Swart, 2000:90).

Still on the strategies to reduce bullying, an educator from school PG says, “In my view the school, especially the educators, should use various activities that raise awareness and stimulate ideas that are related to the reduction of bullying action in our primary schools” (PSE-2). This response is congruent with Smith *et al.*’s (2003:296) view that to curb bullying in schools, educators should use films and videos that condemn bullying actions in the school.

In view of the above perspectives of the participants, the school curriculum could be used as an effective strategy to address school bullying behaviour. The school curriculum could enhance learners’ social and emotional competencies as well as their cooperative learning.

4.7.5 Role of educators

Data collected through semi-structure individual interviews and focus group discussions reflected that educators’ involvement in dealing with bullying behaviour or actions in primary schools is one of the most effective strategies to counter school bullying. Furthermore, educators’ role in addressing school bullying could improve teaching and learning in schools. Within this context, an educator

from school PJ notes that “Educators should encourage learners to work co-operatively; culture of respect and recognition of humanity should be stressed for the sole purpose of creating a bullying free school” (PSE-10). This is congruent with Pepler and Craig’s (2014:2) conclusion that educators should be responsible for establishing a collaborative and respectful classroom climate as well as ensuring that school learners get consistent messages about the danger of bullying everywhere, they live, learn, and play.

An educator from school PM underscores that “Educators should talk and discuss about bullying behaviour with learners at school or in class, so that they know when they are bullied” (PSE -10). Smokowski and Kopasz (2005:108, in Venter, 2013:246) agree that classes should be engaged in discussions and activities related to bullying actions, so that learners may know what is bullying and how to intervene when it occurs. Encouraging collective responsibility, the principal of school PN proposes: “I think as educators we need to let learners to debate and talk about bullying during the teaching and learning session” (PSP-5). This idea joins Crothers and Kolbert’s (2008: 133-137) as well as Venter’s (2013:246) view that educators are the main role players in curbing bullying actions. They can do this by affording learners the opportunity to hold debates and write essays about bullying behaviour.

Reflecting on the role of educators, a governing body member from school PA suggests that, “Educators should become more vigilant within the classrooms, when moving around the school premises because educators are the one who are on the forefront of any efforts to manage bullying behaviour effectively” (PSE-1). This response confirms Du Plessis’ (2011:5) view that within school premises, educators and school management need to take bullying among learners seriously and should elaborate bullying awareness programmes and deal directly with bullying incidents. Furthermore, a school management team member from school PN observes that:

“Educators can play an important role in the endeavour to manage school bullying through involving learners when setting anti-bullying rules. Educators need to hold classroom regular meetings which help to develop and clarify anti-bullying rules” (PSE- 10).

The above response of the school management team member agrees with Garrett’s (2003:96) assertion that the effective management of bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners requires that educators involve learners when setting rules about bullying and that they make learners aware of the negative and positive consequences of their behaviour inside and outside the classroom settings.

It becomes evident that primary school educators have a crucial role to play in rooting out bullying behaviour tendencies, developing compassion amongst learners, and setting limits on all behaviours that are unacceptable at school.

4.7.6 Role of school senior managers

The semi-structured individual interviews and focus group discussions emphasised that school senior managers have the power to curb the bullying behaviour displayed at primary schools, before the problem becomes ingrained. In this regard, the principal of school PO urges: “but it is imperative for head educator, the senior manager, school principals, and the school governors to demonstrate a strong commitment to tackling bullying behaviour among the primary school learners” (PSH- 9). This participant also stressed that the school management team should boldly support educators’ efforts to curb bullying amongst learners. To this end, a parent representative from primary school PD agrees: “Yes, the school manager should educate all school staff about bullying behaviour in school and support educators by allocating enough resources for the development and implementation of anti-bullying policies in school” (PSP-8).

These responses resonate with Oosthuizen *et al.* (2008:21) who suggest that the school manager should convene school meetings and discussions about bullying on school premises. Such school meetings should recommend generous praise for pro-social and helpful behaviours by learners and encourage co-operative learning activities in the school. Furthermore, an educator from primary school PD advises that:

“The school managers should ensure that each classroom has anti-bullying rules that regulate the behaviour of learners. In addition, I think, the school managers should also appoint an adult supervisor to monitor the behaviour of learners during breaks” (PSE- 4).

The above comments and suggestions by participants demonstrate that school managers can and should play an important role in curbing bullying actions within primary schools.

4.8 THEME THREE: AREAS WHERE SCHOOL BULLYING BEHAVIOUR OCCURS

The interviews indicated that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners did not occur just anywhere, it mainly occurred secretly – out of educators or adults’ sight.

4.8.1 The school playground

The interviewees identified the school playground as the most common setting where bullying behaviour is displayed. In this regard, an educator from school PC confesses:

“You know, our school playground is the fertile place where most learners feel unsafe. Most bullying acts do occur in the school football ground especially during

break time. Besides sports field bullying also occurs in the classroom where educators are perceived by learners to be less effective in classroom management” (PSE- 6).

Confirming the above, a learner from school PC confides: “The school playground is where the bullies bully us because during break time our educators just sit in the staffroom” (PSL-7). Similarly, an educator from school PL comments: “I think the school sports ground is where bullying activities took place because normally the school playground is not supervised and as result bullies uses this opportunity to victimise other learners by any means” (PSE- 5). Yet another educator from school PM extends the territory of bullying behaviour:

“I think it just occurs basically anywhere, I usually see it while walking to the staff room or when you are doing playground duty. So, I think basically that wherever there is an opportunity for somebody to bully, I think that is where it is going to happen” (PSP -10).

A learner from primary school PO adds weight to the view of the playground and the sports ground as the epicentres of bullying:

“Vicious bullying does occur in the school playground or the sports field. The school playground or sports field is the where most learners are being bullied and the principal as well as the educator do not check us when we are playing. If the educators and the school management can improve supervision bullying threats and harassment can be eliminated” (PSL -12).

The above learners’ views are reinforced by Smith *et al.* (2003:296) who stress that a great deal of bullying occur in playgrounds and school yards and add that it is the duty of school management to improve the supervision of the school playground, especially during break time. The lack of school ground supervision is reiterated by a head of department at primary school PG who divulges that:

“Our playground is the most common place where learner bullying does occur, and most learners feel very much uncomfortable because the bullies use this time to victimise other defenceless learners. Bullies do this because in most cases our learners’ playgrounds are not supervised by educators” (PSMT-6).

More emphasis on the school playground is placed by the principal of primary school PS who ponders the following: “I think the school playground or sports field becomes the ideal location to excising the bullying behaviour. On our school playground, the bully learners harass and intimidate other children and there is lack of supervision by educators” (PSH-5).

In view of the foregoing, the school playground or sports ground becomes the ideal location where most bullying happens, because it is unsupervised. The school playground or the sports ground promotes bullying actions in primary schools. This is simply because during break time, the educators are sitting in the staffroom chatting about weekend news or drinking tea. Thus, they distance themselves from supervising learners during playtime. Therefore, the school management and educators need to improve the supervision of the playground during break time in order to reduce the occurrence of bullying.

4.8.2 The toilets

During the semi-structured individual interviews and the focus group discussions, school toilets were identified as the most dangerous places where severe bullying behaviours are displayed. In most instances, boys and girls gather in toilets where they threaten and intimidate other children. The senior head of primary school PJ confides: “What I can say the school restrooms are the places where severe bullying behaviour occurred. In the toilets they bully learners victimise other learners or intimidate others in the toilets and get away with it” (PSMT- 8). This is corroborated by an educator from school PF who notes: “To my understanding the school toilets are the most dangerous places at school where learners are being

bullied and educators could not able to see it when it occurs” (PSE-11). Chuenyane (2008:5) agrees with these participants that learners’ toilets are where bullies harass other learners through intimidation and other cruel actions, without the educators’ knowledge.

Clearly, the bullies terrorise other learners in the restrooms, without any fear of being questioned by an adult. Learners’ toilets become unsafe places, as there is no supervision by educators or other school workers.

4.8.3 Classroom

Several participants observed that although bullying mainly occurred in the toilets, on the playground and in the school corridors, it also took place in the classroom and, at times, in the educator’s presence. The general perception is that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners is more prevalent in classrooms and halls, where learners perceive educators to be less effective in terms of management and discipline. The principal of school PH states:

“What I can simply say is that bullying among the primary school learners just occurs anywhere. I truly tell you that it mostly occurs in the classroom in the presence or the absence of the educator. I used to see it happening in the learners’ classrooms and in the morning assembly hall” (PSE- 9).

Greef (2004:16) concurs that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners also occurred in classrooms in the presence of the educator. The prevalence of bullying in classrooms is emphasised by the principal of school PG who reflects:

“I think classrooms are predominantly areas where bullying actions occurs between the learners especially to the learners who are young and new at school at that particular classroom. It sometimes occurs between individuals or between the groups” (PSH -10).

From the above quotation, it become evident that classrooms are fertile bullying grounds, especially when educators are out; consequently, there is no one to intervene in the bullying situation.

4.9 THEME FOUR: CONSEQUENCES OR EFFECTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR ON LEARNERS

Bullied learners endure a great deal of misery, which increases the prevalence of depression and other long-lasting consequences that also affect the bystanders or witnesses (Zeelie, 2004:21).

In this research study, interviewees' responses revealed that bullying behaviour in school causes much pain and has serious effects on learners' adulthood and future careers (Horton, 2011:237). Bullied learners experience depression and mental health disorders, develop suicidal thoughts, and become fearful (Kruger, 2011:4; Thornberg, 2010:311). The following categories were deemed relevant to this theme: educational, physical and emotional consequences for the bullied, as well as consequences for bystanders (Zeelie, 2004:21).

Bullied learners generally tend to stay away from school, to avoid harassment and humiliation. As one participant from school PF puts it, "bullying behaviour itself damages self-esteem; it makes them to be scared to come to school. It makes them feel powerless" (PSE-1).

4.9.1 Educational consequences

Bullying, according to the participants, has serious educational consequences for the bullied learners. The principal of school PG testifies that: "I have noticed that bullied learners in many instances withdrew from school activities, absent themselves from school, inability to concentrate on the daily schoolwork as well as inability to participate in class" (PSH-2). Moreover, an educator from school PSI

indicates: “According to my understanding, the bullied learner attempt to distance him/herself from the school because they feel as being unsafe or unhappiness and the find themselves difficult to adjust themselves” (PSE-3). Magano and Sedibe (2014:236) support this view when they note that bullied learners play truant or stay away from school to avoid harassment and humiliation.

The link between bullying and absenteeism is reinforced by the principal of school PS who warns that, “Bullying, if not managed and curbed, can lead to absenteeism from the school. It can also lead to truancy among learners who fear being bullied by other school learners” (PSP-10). Field (1999) agrees with the above idea when he states that bullying results in absenteeism on the part of many bullied learners who miss school due to the fear of being attacked or intimidated by bullies.

The connections among bullying, absenteeism and low self-esteem is highlighted by an educator from primary school PG who notes that “Bullying itself damages self-esteem, it makes them to be scared to come to school, it makes them feel powerless” (PSE 5). This is in line with Mabatha, Magano and Sedibe’s (2014:236) view that bullying behaviour leads to bullied learners playing truant and dropping out of school, or their school performance dropping automatically as they lose focus on their studies.

The individual interviews and focus group discussions revealed that the bullied primary school learners developed a deep sense of failure, absented from school, and endeavoured to distance themselves from the vicinity where the bullying behaviour occurred. Furthermore, this study found that learners who experienced bullying developed fear and tended to regard the school as an unsafe environment that inflict pain and causes unhappiness.

4.9.2 Physical consequences

It emerged, during the interviews, that primary school bullying could have physical consequences or implications for the bullied learners. In this regard, an educator from school PI notes:

“I believe that bullied learners encounter physical consequences such as severe headache, loss of appetite, bedwetting during the night or while they are sleeping, continuous aches and pains in their body as well as nail biting” (PSE-11).

Hinduja and Patchin (2010:206) as well as Koh and Boyce (2009:15) confirm the above physical effects of bullying when they note that the bullied learners experience physical effects such as dizziness, bodily pain, insomnia, and tiredness. A member of school PT’s management team shares that:

“What I have observed that bullied learners usually complained to educators by many things such as stomach ailment, severe headaches, migraines and back pains. In some instances, these learners burst into tears over trivial matters as well as sleeping disorder by having nightmares, walking up early and more tired. Some of the learners in our school experienced the problem of digestive systems by having irritable bowel syndrome and stomach aches” (PSMT-9).

It becomes clear that bullying causes physical harm to the bullied learners. It suffices to note that frequent physical malaises may cause the deterioration of bullied learners’ general physical health.

4.9.3 Emotional consequences

The interviews revealed that bullied primary school learners experienced emotional consequences of bullying. In this regard, the school principal of school PJ confides that: “in our school learners who are being emotionally bullied

experiences many emotional problems such as depression, anxiety, fearfulness and frustrations in their daily life. Such children always display the poor character of being hopeless and weak” (PSH-8). Moreover, the principal of school PD observes that: “The bullied learners in many instances develop terrible thoughts which are the suicidal thoughts. Such learners develop low self-esteem and poor perceptions” (PSH-11). Koh and Boyce (2009:15) confirm that bullied primary school learners experience feelings of worthlessness, helplessness, and loneliness.

On the devastating effects of bullying, an educator from school PF concedes:

“I guess emotional bullying behaviour has negative consequences to the learners simply because bullied learners may simply develop suicidal thoughts, and their interest in sports activities started to decline. They do further develop low self-esteem and a poor self-perception” (PSE -8).

The deputy principal of primary school PA stresses that:

“Bullying behaviour has severe consequences because it damages self-esteem and that can take a long time to heal. In addition, self-esteem also influences self-confidence to an extent that even specialisation areas of a learner are being affected” (PSH-10).

Mabatha, Magano and Sedibe (2014) confirm that bullied learners experience damaged self-esteem and the fear of the unknown, as they are constantly wondering what will happen next. Bullying breaks the victim’s self-esteem to the extent that this learner has no confidence in their ability to cope with everyday pressures. Piotrowski and Hoot (2008) emphasise that emotional bullying behaviour among primary school learners cause the victims to develop an uncontrollable behaviour and become disruptive.

4.9.4 Consequences for the bystanders

Data collected during the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions reflected that bullying actions in school negatively affect bystanders or witnesses. Educators emphasised this. In this regard, an educator from primary school PJ elaborates:

“Bullying actions in schools affects the witnesses because when someone is being bullied, they feel annoyed and frustrated by their inability to protect their friends. Sometimes they do feel ashamed and guilty for failing to intervene or they do feel sad as they imagine that it may be their turn next time” (PSE-12).

Furthermore, a member of the school management team of school PF explains that: “During the bullying action, the bystander usually paralysed by fear, feel angry, ashamed, and guilty for not intervening when bullying actions took place. Through fear they distanced themselves from the scene they are witnessing” (PSMT-13).

The above quotations indicate that bystanders feel ashamed and, in some instances, afraid of becoming the next victims of bullying actions, hence, they deliberately side with the bullies.

4.10 THEME FIVE: A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO MANAGING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Data collected through face-to-face focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews reinforces that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners needs to be effectively managed in order to prevent its negative effects on school learners. A whole-school approach was suggested as one of the strategies that would help in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour in primary schools. This strategy will assist learners, parents, educators, support staff, and society in controlling bullying behaviour or actions.

4.10.1 Managing bullying behaviour using whole school approach

School bullying is perceived as a threat to the safety and wellbeing of learners. Managing bullying actions is the responsibility of school managers, educators, school governors, and learners. This is best done by means of a whole-school approach. In this regard, the principal of primary school PF shares:

“I think schools should eradicate this problem of bullying behaviour in all grades by adopting a proactive approach to bullying. School managers and educators should involve learners and other school community members in managing bullying actions. Collective efforts by all stakeholders could be a good endeavour in reducing bullying behaviour in schools” (PSE-13).

A school governor at primary school PD unpacks the meaning of the whole-school approach to managing bullying by stating that:

“According to my understanding, a whole school approach to managing bullying implies that all the members of school including educators, management team, non-teaching staff, and the school community accept responsibility for the misbehaviour of the learners. The school should adopt the systematic approach on bullying actions and this systematic approach requires a systematic solution. I think through this endeavour bullying could be eradicated from our primary schools” (PSP-14).

In the same vein, the principal of school PN indicates:

“In regard to my knowledge, a whole school approach to managing bullying behaviour in schools requires a good relationship between learner’s parents and the bully or the victim, between the educator and the bully or the victim in concerted efforts to combat bullying actions. In other words, I intend to say, all the school

stakeholders should work together to counter this harmful behaviour within the school” (PSH-3).

Similarly, the parent of a learner from school PD notes that:

“To manage bullying behaviour through whole school approach strategy, all the primary school stakeholders should work together to make the school and its surroundings a safe zone for all learners. The school management should encourage the participation of external agencies alongside learners, educators, school governing body and learners’ parents in eradicating bullying actions” (PSP-2).

Kruger (2011:118), who posits that all the stakeholders, namely, school managers, educators, learners, and parents need to take bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners seriously and adopt a policy aimed at countering it, corroborates the above quotation. Everybody should be involved in the effort to reduce or stop bullying actions in primary schools.

Concerning the effect of a whole-school approach, a school manager and principal of primary school PA comments: “A whole school approach in managing bullying behaviour in the primary school is that good learners’ discipline helps to reduce bullying in school” (PSH-2). Furthermore, the principal of school PB indicates that, “the school management team take learners bullying seriously and all learners are encouraged to report bullying incidents to the respective educators for the purpose of reducing bullying actions in the primary school” (PSH-3).

As reflected above, the whole-school approach is a multi-level approach that includes a range of people. It opens up discussions at all levels; it is collaborative in identifying and condemning bullying behaviour; it moves beyond a crisis-management approaches that only reacts to critical cases; and it creates a supportive ethos and breaks down the culture of secrecy (Zeelie, 2004:58).

4.11 THEME SIX: FACTORS INFLUENCING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

Bullying in primary schools occurs for different reasons, and any child can become its target (Cowie and Jennifer, 2007:22). In schools, some learners bully to hide their sense of inadequacy, others do so to feel powerful and draw attention, and others bully because of jealousy (Nkosi, 2002:61).

The investigation revealed that the bullies' aggressive behaviour towards other learners is usually influenced by various factors, namely, family or home factor, school factor, social factor, and community factor (Fried and Fried, 1996:6-7).

4.11.1 Family or home factor

The interviews revealed that children who are rejected at home are more likely to display unacceptable behaviour than those who receive care, warmth, attention, acceptance, and love. The lack of these expressions of humanity within the family places children at a greater risk of engagement in bullying actions. As a parent of a learner from school PC puts it, "Poor supervision and continuous conflict within the family contribute towards the children to develop aggressive bullying behaviour. Children whose parents are more violent and abusive are likely to become bullies at school" (PSP-17). This is corroborated by Mestry and Khumalo (2012:107) who state that learners from homes characterised by poor parental supervision, where parents always fight, or are already divorced cannot concentrate on their schoolwork and end up bullying other learners.

The influence of the family or home factor is further reinforced by the principal of school PK who indicates: "I think children who had been raised in loveless, unsupportive, and disrespectful families grow into intolerant individuals who are unable to show empathy, respect, and positive attitudes towards other children" (PSH-18). This attribution is shared by a learner from school PE who exclaims "Oh

I think some learners bully because of the problem at home, like a father is beating up a mother” (PSL-10). In this regard, Elliot and Ageton (1998, in Mabatha, Magano and Sedibe, 2014:239) emphasise that learner bullying is aggravated by poor parental involvement and dysfunctional family units. Another learner from PF also views the home as contributing to bullying behaviour: “[...] learners who do not get much attention at home and then they seek attention in violent way” (PSL-4). This is confirmed by Georgiou (2008:109) who indicates that uninvolved parents who are sometimes absent from home indirectly prompt their children to play the role of mother and father which, in some cases, contributes to bullying behaviour or actions. An educator from school PD stresses this: “well, it comes from home, number one, the parents do not recognise the child, meaning the child is not receiving enough attention” (PSE-2). This is in line with Nkosi’s (2002:62) claim that some learners perpetrate bullying because of many reasons like parents being divorced, or learners being affected by other home situations or conditions. An educator from school PG exemplifies some of these situations by stating that: “actually the problems like if the child is under a lot of stress at home, like the middle child, parents tend to prefer the last and the first born, then the middle child gets frustrated and start to take out his or her stress by bullying the younger ones” (PSE-7).

During the interviews, it was evident that families differ in their parenting styles. For instance, some have poor parenting styles, while others have a high incidence of violence that contributes to bullying behaviour in schools. This view was supported by an educator from school PC who notes: “I think the child who bullied other learners are in many instances the children who might have been reared differently. Those learners who had been reared differently by their parents usually misbehave in the classroom, and one can pick up those learners” (PSE-10). Similarly, the parent of a learner from school PJ adds that “Children who experienced harsh inconsistent disciplinary methods, unsupervised, and lack of involvement in children’s life influences the children to bullying behaviour tendencies” (PSP-8). In the same regard, a learner from school PA confesses: “To

tell the truth, some learners bullying because they do experience the problem at home, like a father beating up a mother every time” (PSL-6). An SMT member from school PD adds weight to this view:

“For your information, children who bully are usually the children who are under a lot of stress at home, like the middle child, parents tends to prefer the last and the first born, then the middle child gets frustrated and start to take out his or her stress by bullying the younger children” (PSMT-5).

Furthermore, the principal of school PM identifies divorce as one of the major sources of bullying: “I think parents’ divorce is one of the main reasons why some primary school learners bully others” (PSP-3). An educator from school PF blames bullying at schools on upbringing by grandparents:

“We as the educators have observed that most of our learners do not stay with real parents, they stay with grandmothers and then that is where lawlessness and bullying crops in. Most of the grandparents are unable to discipline them and to make sure they do their work. So, they come to school with the bad behaviour of bullying (PSE-5).

In view of the foregoing, difficult home circumstances impel children to engage in bullying behaviour towards other learners. Lack of warmth in the family structure, the use of physical violence in the family, and the absence of clear guidelines and monitoring contribute to the bullying behaviour enacted by certain children/learners. Learners who grew up in violent circumstances learn to settle their differences by means of violence (Krige et al., 2000:6). In addition, the lack of parental support, as well as family backgrounds characterised by physical abuse, conflict and domestic violence are perceived as the main causes of bullying behaviour at schools (Mestry and Khumalo, 2012:106).

4.11.2 Community factor

The social context prompts some learners to engage in bullying actions at school. In many instances, learners bring the violent acts perpetrated in their communities to school. One educator suggests, "I think the community conditions and attitudes can contribute to the promotion or discouragement of bullying behaviour. The amount of violence that occurs in the social community is the fundamental factor that causes learners bullying in schools" (PSE-18). Moreover, a school management team member from school PE remarks that:

"Children who grew up in a community where conflicts and violence are common tend to become bullies either in the surrounding community or at school. These children who are from the violent and conflict community usually learn to settle differences and misunderstanding using violent and aggressive means" (PSMT-18).

The parent of a learner from school PS reiterates the influence of the community thus: "My dear sir, some children engaged in the bullying behaviour because of the area where they do live, and the area which they do come from or live have social problems like alcohol and drug abuse, crime and a high unemployment rate" (PSP-6). This point is reinforced by Mestry and Khumalo (2012:107) who state that social ills influence children to become bullies at school and promotes behavioural disorder.

4.11.3 School factor

It was noted, during the focus group discussions, that the lack of supervision and poor discipline within the school environment play a major part in promoting bullying behaviour. In this regard, the principal of school PD stresses that:

“The school educators who do not exercise strong supervision at school usually contribute to the prevalence of bullying behaviour among the learners. I can add that the educators who are unwilling to solve learners’ conflicts help to promote bullying behaviour at school” (PSE-19).

Furthermore, the principal of school PF observes that “The schools which do not have anti-bullying policies or strategies cannot able to educate and empower their

staffs on how to detect and deal with bullying behaviour at school” (PSH-10). Educators’ lack of bullying management training is reinforced by one educator from school PE who confesses: “I think in our school bullying behaviour do take place because educators are not trained or workshopped on how to deal with bullying incidents or actions at school” (PSE -2). This view is supported by Mabatha, Magano and Sedibe (2014:238) who contend that the unavailability of intensive workshops and training create numerous problems for educators who ultimately must carry the burden of addressing the issues associated with bullying in primary schools. Educators lack insight regarding the procedures pertaining to the handling of bullying behaviour and actions at school.

The above quotations demonstrate that the school environment influence learners’ bullying behaviour, due to educators and school management’s inability to maintain discipline at school.

4.11.4 Poor academic achievement

The focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews suggested that academic performance played a role in bullying behaviour. A well-performing learner usually becomes a victim of bullying on the part of those performing badly. As the principal of school PG puts it: “A lack of school achievement makes someone to be a bully learner. A learner who experiences poor performance in class is likely to be either a victim or a bully” (PSP-2). The view that academic

performance may be a source of bullying behaviour is corroborated by an educator from school F who affirms that “Children bully because they do not have good academic result” (PSE-5). The principal of school PE attributes bullying to circumstances that influence learners and their academic performance negatively: “Primary school learners become bullies and victims because of some situations, and those situations might eventually affect them, especially their performance at school” (PSP-5). The partial location of the source of bullying in academic performance is reinforced by a member of the school management team who confides that “In our school what I have noticed is that some learners bully because they do not have good academic results, they always repeat the grades” (PSS-6).

From the above quotes, some learners bully for recognition, while others do so because of their sense of insecurity. Yet other learners bully because they cannot excel in class; hence, they look for something that will make them popular or known at school (Nkosi, 2002:64). The learner from primary school PC confirms that “Some learners sometimes bully because they want to take out insecurity or to prove themselves by inflicting pain to others and to be admired by others” (PSL-5). Clearly, some learners perpetrate bullying to gain control over others. The control-related view is shared by the principal of school PH who believes that “The bully learners bully because they usually want to be in control, they want to show everyone that they are the big bosses in the school classroom (PSP-12).

The interviews underscore that learners who experience challenges with their studies do sometimes resort to bullying as a means of shielding their poor academic performance. Furthermore, the findings suggest that situations within the family contribute to the bullying behaviour displayed by learners. For instance, some learners who grew up in violent circumstances learnt to settle their differences by means of violence. In addition, learners who perform poorly in their studies do sometimes resort to bullying, so that they could feel good about themselves (Nkosi, 2002:65).

4.11.5 Peer pressure

In primary schools, peer pressure contributes significantly to bullying behaviour amongst learners. Concerning this, one of the learners from primary school PD suggests that “The person is trying to please others around them, maybe they want to gain popularity from his or her friends” (PSL-10). This view is confirmed by a learner from primary school PB who states that “Some learners bully for the purpose of being in the group, everybody is doing it, why can’t I do it” (PSL-4). Similarly, another learner from primary school PF concurs that “Some bully to fit in with the friends, because their friends also bully them, they think they must also pick on somebody (PSL-3). This learner has also introduced a vengeance aspect to peer-pressured-induced bullying.

It is evident that some bullies practise bullying to relieve the pressure or stress that might originate from their friends and peers. Young people usually think that for one to fit in or belong to a group, one needs to do what the members of the group are doing. Thus, peer pressure plays a significant role in making certain learners do things that they really do not want to do, only to please or impress their peers (Lidzhegu, 2012:65). This view is confirmed by Pettipher, Squelch and Swart (2002:12) who articulate that one of the greatest psychological needs a child has is to belong to and to be part of a group. However, belonging to and being part of a group requires commitment. This means that one should do what is required by the friends or the group.

4.12 THEME SEVEN: FORMS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Bullying behaviour in the primary schools takes various forms that include direct or indirect bullying actions (Auma-Okumu, 2012:22). Direct bullying behaviour involves physical attack and offensive words, while indirect bullying includes spreading rumours about someone and isolation (De Wet, 2005: 80).

In the context of this research study, the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions highlighted the existence of different forms of bullying behaviour in primary schools. The following categories were identified as relevant to theme seven: cyberbullying, physical bullying, social bullying, verbal bullying, emotional bullying, and relational bullying.

4.12.1 Cyberbullying

The participants linked cyberbullying in primary schools to such technological devices as mobile phones and the Internet that are used to send text messages. Most primary school learners use these modern technological devices to hurt other learners daily. In connection with this, an educator notes that “I actually think that in our primary school learners used various technologies such as cell phones, Facebook and the internet in general to insult or to intentionally hurt other individual learners” (PSE-8). Another educator from primary school PH expands:

“Sir let me tell you that cyberbullying in our primary school is widespread and it usually done by the learners through text messages, photographs or through the video-clip. These messages are done repeatedly, and it usually includes harassment, taunt, ridicule serious threats, victimisations, intimidations and harm” (PSE-9).

Commenting on the implications of this form of harassment, the principal of school

PK shares that:

“Cyberbullying in our primary school is very serious simply because it occurs in school or out of school and it is very difficult to observe it. It usually resulted in the tense conflict between the learners in the school and this conflict normally disturbs teaching and learning in the school environment” (PSH-10).

Elaborating on the forms and media of cyberbullying, an educator from school PE notes:

“To my view cyberbullying does occur in our school premises and it occurs in many forms and these include slanderous comments, harassment or denigration using SMSs or MXTIT, Facebook and chat-rooms. In many instances, learners post the ugliest messages on Facebook.” (PSE-10).

The parent of a learner from primary school PG indicates that, “Cyberbullying according to my knowledge is cyber violence, or the internet harassment, or the online harassment” (PSP-15). This conception is supported by Popovac and Leoschut (2012:12) who regard cyberbullying as the harassment or aggressions perpetrated through ICTs and includes sending harassing emails or instant messages; posting obscene, insulting and slanderous messages; as well as online bulletin boards or social networking sites. Similarly, an educator from school PA notes: “I would understand cyberbullying as the form of bullying that occurs using computers, the internet and social media for the purpose of hurting another learner (PSE-17). Fretwell (2015:104) shares the view of cyberbullying as a learners’ conflict occurring through social media applications.

Clearly, cyberbullying is fostered by the advancement of technology. It occurs using modern technological devices, means or platforms such as cell phones, SMS, Facebook, and the Internet. The perpetrators’ aim is to ridicule, threaten, harass, and intimidate other learners. Through modern technology, some learners post terrible things about other learners on their web pages in orders to promote and disseminate defamatory content.

As indicated by many participants, cyberbullying has become prominent in recent years and it is more prevalent amongst female learners. It is one of the most damaging forms of bullying, although it does not leave any physical evidence. It usually takes the form of malicious text messages or text messages of a sexual

nature – known as sexting – or taking pictures and videos of someone with the intention of distributing them to other people via mobile phones or online (Popovac and Leoschut, 2012:12).

4.12.2 Physical bullying behaviour

The interviews revealed that physical bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners was the most visible and therefore the most readily identifiable form of bullying. In this regard, a school principal from school PN indicates: “I think what I can say is that physical bullying among the learners involves kicking, punching, beating, smacking and assaulting. Because of this ruthless attack, I think physical bullying resulted to the severe injury or death of the victims” (PSH-1). This view is supported by Kruger (2011:33) who indicates that physical bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners involves hitting, tripping, punching, kicking and physical assault. An educator from school PM shares: “I guess that physical bullying among the primary school kids involves poking, stabbing, physically threatened, being shoved against desks and the classroom walls and being tackled to the ground” (PSE-4).

Harris and Hathorn (2006:51) agree with the respondent that physical bullying in primary schools in many instances involves the physically injury of another learner as well as the blackmailing of other learners. A learner from primary school PK took an original approach conveyed in the statement: “I think physical bullying involves taking someone’s money, taking others learner’s lunch boxes, locked in the dark room, and taking other learners’ classwork and homework” (PSL-12). Returning to the common views, the principal of school PL indicates that: “To my understanding I think in the physical bullying the bully uses various weapons such as sharpened pens, pair of scissors, knives and razor blades as well as stones and sticks in beating the victims during or after school” (PSH-11).

In view of the above information, physical bullying – in most instances – involves physical contact.

4.12.3 Relational bullying

The research participants characterised relational bullying behaviour in primary schools as surreptitious and therefore difficult for educators to detect. In this regard, an educator notes that, “Relational bullying behaviours in primary schools is not easy to detect it by school educators or management. As a result, it is very difficult for the educators to respond to it” (PSE-7). Commenting on the effects of relational bullying, a school principal from primary school PO indicates:

“I think relational bullying makes the victim feel alienated and lonely to such an extent that his or her relationship with other learners is totally destroyed. The bully usually influences other learners to exclude him or her maybe through spreading nasty news or rumours about the person” (PSH-6).

An educator from school PH expressed similar sentiments: “Relational bullying in our school does occur in various forms such as through social isolation or social exclusion from a peer group”. To this, PSE-10 from school PD added that, “Relational bullying among the primary school learners is malevolent and can be more damaging to a person’s psyche than physical bullying. It usually applies more to females, but the boys do it as well” (PSH-10). Furthermore, Kruger (2013: 90) indicates that relational bullying among primary school learners takes the form of sniggering, giggling, and the exchange of looks.

From the above interview excerpts, it transpires that relational bullying is subtle and underhanded and makes peers feel that they do not belong.

4.12.4 Emotional bullying

The investigation revealed that emotional bullying is an indirect form of school bullying that emotionally hurts the victim. In this regard, an educator from school PI notes: “I think that this type of behaviour in many schools took place in the form of humiliations, insulting, nasty name calling and constant threatening. These types of bullying like I said is very hard to detect it because even the victim always live in the state of fear for the bully boss” (PSE-9). Within the same context, another educator from primary school PM remarks that “Emotional bullying behaviour is not physically visible from the school educators and making it difficult to deal with even when reported. It sometimes occurs through gossiping and uttering defaming statements and rumours about someone” (PSE-11). The above views are supported by an educator from primary school PF who shares that: “In our school emotional bullying behaviour among the learners is through humiliations and name calling such as fatty boom-boom. It is very hard to detect or to can see this type of behaviour” (PSE-8). It becomes evident that emotional bullying amongst primary school learners is very common although very difficult to detect.

Theme eight related to the areas where school bullying occurs. The enquiry revealed that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners occurs at various sites within the school community. An educator from school PD summarised this thus: “I think it just occurs basically anywhere. I usually see it in the classroom. I can see it while walking through the school corridors or the stairwells” (PSE -10).

4.13 SUMMARY

The individual semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions is evidence of the fact that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners is a matter of increasing concern. It poses a major challenge to school authorities, as it interferes with the school code of conduct or guidelines on discipline. Therefore, it is essential

that schools adopt a policy aimed at countering bullying among primary school learners. School heads and educators from the surveyed primary schools believe that everybody should be involved in the effort to reduce or eradicate bullying on school premises. In other words, all education stakeholders should work together to draft and implement an anti-bullying policy.

School management teams and principals should try to mobilise their efforts to prevent and stop bullying actions by availing themselves to learners, encouraging learners to report any bullying actions, talking about bullying in the classrooms, using Life Orientation periods effectively and, being punctual. The elaboration of support strategies should be the joint responsibility of school heads, school managing bodies, educators, learners, and parents.

Bullied learners need to be more proactive and tell bullies to stop their unacceptable behaviours.

4.14 PROJECTION FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER

The next chapter will discuss the research findings from the literature reviews and from empirical interviews.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This research study aims at investigating whole-school approach strategies for reducing bullying behaviour among primary school learners. The main objective is to analyse and understand the nature and extent of bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. In chapter four of this research study, the researcher undertook an analysis and interpretation of data in terms of the essential components of a whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools. These components include actual whole-school strategies to counter bullying behaviour in primary schools and its concrete indicators.

5.2 FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH

The literature study, which includes information from different sources on a whole school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools, as well as empirical data obtained through focus group discussions and individual, semi-structured interviews with primary school principals, educators, learners, and learner parents from selected primary schools revealed various aspects that will be detailed below.

5.2.1 Findings from the Literature Review

Several findings pertaining to bullying amongst primary school learners emerged from the literature review, as unpacked in the following sub-sub-sections.

5.2.1.1 Definition of bullying behaviour among learners

According to the literature review, bullying behaviour is defined as the repeated oppression – psychological or physical – of a less powerful person by a more

powerful one or group of people (Rigby, 2001:60). Pillay (2007:9) defines bullying behaviour as an act whereby one or more individuals inflict physical, verbal, or emotional abuse on another. This includes the threat of bodily harm, intimidation by means of weapons, and assault (Naser, et al., 2003:129). From the literature review, it is quite clear that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners involves recurring aggressive and disruptive behaviour, as well as power abuse and dominance over a defenceless person/s.

5.2.1.2 School bullying

The literature study conducted for this research revealed that school bullying is a serious, growing problem amongst primary school learners. It is often perceived as the pro-active aggression intended to cause harm (Rigby, 2010:14). School bullying is a grouping of aggressive behaviours repeatedly directed towards individuals who are incapable of defending themselves efficiently (Myburgh and Poggenoeel, 2009:449). Primary school bullying, based on the literature, negatively affects the victims and the perpetrators as well as the ethos of the school. For example, bullying hinders learners' ability to perform to the best of their ability, and to function in a safe and secure environment (Pillay, 2007:129). Bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners is further viewed as the mistreatment of a person. This may range from social isolation, exclusion, teasing, slapping, and articulation of hurtful names, hitting, punching, damaging property, and teasing to physical violence (Levinson, 2002:135). It was evident from the literature study that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners consists of intentional, repeated, hurtful acts, words or other behaviours, such as name-calling, threatening, or shunning committed by a child or children against another child or other children (Zeelie, 2004:12).

Bullying behaviour is further characterised by Conoley and Goldstein (2004, in Nkosi, 2012:13) as a form of lower aggressive behaviour that is either overt or

covert. It occurs when one child or group of children repeatedly hurts another child through actions or words.

In the literature, bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners is construed as a repeated or persistent hurtful or violent act. It takes many forms such as physical, verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse.

Bullying behaviour in school has become a common feature that constitutes a major concern in schools in South Africa and worldwide. Internationally, bullying in schools is a worrisome practice that infringes on the bullied learner/child's right to human dignity, privacy, freedom, and security (Allanson, Lester and Notar, 2015:35).

The literature study revealed that while there is a lack of research data on the managing of bullying in primary schools across South Africa, various studies and reports indicate widespread incidences of bullying in the form of hitting, fist fights, intimidation, verbal and emotional abuse, and sexual harassment.

5.2.1.3 A whole-school approach

The literature review revealed the whole-school approach as one of the best or most effective strategies that could help to eradicate bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. For this strategy to be more effective and efficient, all members of the school community should unite and take responsibility for the behaviour of all primary school learners. The literature also suggested that combatting bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners requires an all-inclusive, holistic approach. Thus, all members of the school community should monitor learners' behaviour at home, at school, and within the community.

Considering the above, a whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour amongst primary schools is a combined effort, which mobilises both the school and

the community, to fight all forms of bullying behaviour. A whole-school approach to bullying behaviour involves raising awareness about bullying, being knowledgeable about bullying actions, developing strategies to combat bullying, and creating anti-bullying partnerships amongst parents, school principals, learners, educators, support agencies, and other schools (Tattum, 199:6).

Furthermore, a whole-school approach is an anti-bullying strategy whose effectiveness solely depends on the concerted efforts of the entire primary schools' community. This approach includes anti-bullying policies and organised programmes to assist all stakeholders. The literature review presented the whole-school approach as the most effective way to prevent bullying behaviour among primary school learners and promote a positive learning environment; one that promotes positive relationships at school level (Kowalski, 2000:231). The whole-school approach emphasises the spirit of working together for a safe, inclusive and accepting school.

A whole-school approach is an integrated, systematic, proactive and preventive tactic consisting in confronting bullying on an on-going basis (Krige et al., 2000:18). The whole school approach implies that bullying behaviour amongst primary school is dealt with by all stakeholders. Therefore, meetings should be organised with all parties involved, to discuss ways of tackling bullying behaviour in primary schools.

5.2.1.4 Whole-school approach strategies

The literature review underscored that countering or preventing bullying behaviour amongst primary schools required various strategies or programmes aimed at preventing bullying actions. Such strategies or programmes should involve the entire school community, among others, parents, learners, educators, and the school principals. The strategies or programmes designed to prevent bullying

behaviour amongst primary school learners should be multidimensional and interactive systems.

5.2.1.5 Anti-bullying policies and programmes

The literature review indicated that an anti-bullying policy could play a vital role in the elimination of bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. The anti-bullying policy should include the definition of bullying actions and the forms that bullying takes. The anti-bullying policy should stress that bullying is an unacceptable behaviour that will not be tolerated. Furthermore, the anti-bullying policy should be developed and fully communicated to all primary school stakeholders. It means that bullying amongst primary school learners can be stopped, if all people involved in schoolwork together to provide systematic, comprehensive and sustainable anti-bullying programmes (Lidzhegu, 2012:69).

The development of anti-bullying policies and programmes entails consultations, gathering information, raising bullying behaviour awareness, and providing feedback. In addition, primary schools need to develop a curriculum that promotes friendship, assertive skills, and communication amongst primary school administrators, educators, parents, and learners.

5.2.1.6 Involvement of all stakeholders

To curb bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners, the school should involve all stakeholders in the drafting of the anti-bullying policy, policy formulation, policy implementation, monitoring of policy implementation, and policy evaluation. Furthermore, communication with all primary school stakeholders needs to be improved and strengthened. The school should facilitate meetings in which issues concerning bullying behaviour amongst learners are discussed.

5.2.1.7 School wide intervention

Any intervention at school level needs to be intensified and be based on the nature and constitution of the school. A Bullying Prevention Committee must be established – with the responsibility to supervise learners during breaks or lunchtime. Moreover, parents and educators must meet regularly to discuss common problems and strategies to curb bullying behaviour among learners.

5.2.1.8 Classroom level intervention

Intervention within the classroom involves the elaboration and enforcement of class rules aimed at preventing bullying behaviour. Regular discussions should be held between class educators and learners, on various aspects of bullying and other anti-social behaviours. Discussions should also be held between class educators and parents.

5.2.1.9 Supervision

Primary schools where bullying behaviour occurs frequently in such places as the school playground, corridors, toilets, hallways, passages, and lockers need to be supervised and closely monitored by the Bully Prevention Committee in order to reduce bullying actions amongst pupils.

5.2.1.10 Role of parents

It emerged from the interviews that parents are often too uninvolved and therefore unable to help their children. The interviews established that parents are, at times, uninvolved and sometimes absent from home, forcing children to play the role of mothers and fathers, in some cases. Parents are often stressed because of financial, work, marital, or personal problems that lead to poor communication with their children. What is more, communication amongst the family members of

bullies or victims is very poor /ineffective. Family problems within the household generally result in ineffective communication and a poor relationship between parents and their children.

5.2.2 Areas where bullying occurs

The literature review indicated that bullying behaviour among primary school learners occurred almost anywhere, particularly where there is inadequate or no adult supervision. As educator from primary school PF states: “[...] bullying behaviour among the children occurs on the playground, locker rooms, cafeteria, and hallways” (PSE-18). This view is congruent with Garbarino and de Lara’s (2002) observation that harmful behaviour among children occurs on the school playground, to and from school bus stops, and in school hallways, toilets, corridors and classrooms, especially in the absence of the educator. The principal of primary school PJ indicated that bullying occurred in school lockers and areas with no adult supervision. This is in line with Espelage and Swearer’s (2004) identification of the following as other areas within the school where pupils reported bullying behaviour: changing rooms, locker areas, and dormitories in the case of boarding schools. A learner from primary school PE indicated that “[...] many learners experience bullying at bus stops and on the school transport” (PSL-2).

The focus group discussions revealed that bullying behaviour among primary school learners occurs almost anywhere, particularly where there is inadequate or no adult supervision. Some of the specifically identified hot spots include the playground, the way to and from school, school hallways, toilets, corridors, and classrooms, especially in the educator’s absence.

5.2.3 Consequences of bullying on learners

The undertaken literature study revealed that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners has negative and painful consequences for the bully and the bullied. It seriously harms both the victims and the perpetrators.

- **Physical consequences**

The literature study indicated that bullied learners often suffer from unexplained aches (headaches) and serious pain, loss of appetite, poor posture, stomach ailments, and physical injuries that require hospitalisation. Bullying can result in the death of the bullied or the bullying learner (Krige et al., 2000:10). Being a victim of bullying in primary school increases the chance of the future use of psychopharmacological medication, increased body weight (boys), and the probability of teenage pregnancy (girls), whilst being a perpetrator augments the probability of future criminal convictions (Ericksen *et al.*, 2012:38).

- **Emotional consequences**

Bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners has devastating results. The bullied learners may be affected emotionally and experience feelings of:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- fearfulness; and
- frustrations (Krige et al., 2000:10)

Furthermore, bullying behaviour among primary school learners is painful and humiliating. In other words, bullied learners feel embarrassed and battered (Olweus, 1993:11).

- **Academic performance**

Research shows that victims of bullying turn into very unhappy learners and suffer from anxiety. Consequently, they try to avoid school and social interaction, to escape the bullying (Pillay, 2007:51). Bullied learners are likely to reflect more absenteeism from school than other learners. Ericksen (2012:29) reinforces this view when he states that bullied learners' performance drops to such an extent that they become unable to do school homework, most notably simple mathematical calculations. Rigby (1993:59) stresses that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners creates a hostile environment that is un conducive to learning and extremely harmful to the health, well-being, and the academic progress of the bullied learners.

- **Social consequences**

Bullying amongst primary school learners has social consequences. It results in the bullied child developing anti-social behaviours and having trouble forming relationships (Friend and Friend, 1996:127). The school environment, poisoned by bullying, contributes to learners being unable to establish normal social relationships with their peers. In addition, bullied learners become too scared to socialise with their peers.

5.2.4 strategies to reduce bullying behaviour amongst learners

It emerged from the interviews that educators' knowledge of their learners can assist in reducing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. Knowing learners implies having an insight into their backgrounds and understanding them. This is achievable by talking to them about their challenges and problems and offering them the necessary support.

5.2.4.1 Whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour

The interviews with the participants stressed, as specifically indicated by a parent of a learner from primary school PK that “[...] all stakeholders of the primary school community should be involved in monitoring learners’ behaviour in order to reduce the bullying behaviour among the learners” (PSP-4). This was echoed by an educator from primary school PF who stated that, “[...] bullying behaviour in primary schools needs to be managed from a whole–school approach” (PSE-11). The shared view of the educator and the school principal is reinforced by Du Plessis and Conley (2007:51-52) who indicate that a whole-school approach involves working directly with the entire school community, including children and youth, classroom groups, governors, school nurses, external organisations, school staff, and parents/legal guardians. The interviews with educators and principals revealed that the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour is the most common design for schools’ anti-bullying activities/campaigns. Indeed, it has proven more successful in reducing bullying behaviours than other approaches.

5.2.4.2 Intervention strategy

In the previous chapters, this study established that the non-implementation of anti-bullying policies in primary schools has a direct bearing on learners’ unawareness of the available resources when they are bullied or witness bullying. The study also revealed that the response to bullying in primary schools is characterised by both a lack of a sense of urgency and a casual approach. However, one SMT from school PA contended that educators are adequately equipped to deal with bullying incidents. In other words, they do not need another policy to direct them on how to manage bullying actions amongst learners. It suffices to emphasise that the management of bullying behaviour in primary schools is important and should not be ignored or let down by stakeholders, as it has the potential to change the lives of learners profoundly.

5.2.4.3 Role of educators

During the interviews, it was emphasised that educators needed to intervene in managing bullying behaviour within schools or classrooms. Such interventions should consist in elaborating and enforcing classroom rules that condemn bullying actions. The principal of primary school PB added that, “[...] regular discussions should be held between class educators and learners to discuss various aspects of bullying behaviour amongst the school learners and other anti-social behaviour. Discussions should also be held between class educators and the learners’ parents” (PSH-12).

5.2.5 Factors influencing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners

Bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners is a purposive occurrence influenced by many factors. Examples include the school factor, the community factor, the family factor and poor academic performance, as well as peer pressure (Lidzhegu, 2012:18).

5.2.5.1 School factor

Literature indicates that the poor supervision of learners at school plays an important role in their engagement in bullying. If educators and the school principal lack control over individual learners, these learners can become bullies (Zeelie, 2004:21). Squelch (1998:30) argues that primary schools that ignore bullying (and even condone it in any form) contribute to its prevalence amongst learners. Conversely, primary schools that adopt an anti-bullying strategy and empower educators to be able to recognise and deal with bullying are more likely to reduce the incidence of bullying and create a safe environment for teaching and learning (Olweus, 1993).

5.2.5.2 Family factor

Literature suggests that learners who become bullies are generally children from families with a high level of violence, a lack of clear rules, poor discipline, poor supervision, and limited parental interest in what is going on in children's lives. Moreover, a lack of attention and warmth towards a child and the modelling of aggressive behaviour at home create the perfect conditions for the child to develop aggressive behaviour and engage in bullying actions (SAHRC, 2007:6; Lidzhegu, 2012:19).

Children whose parents display poor role-modelling in terms of getting along with others are likely to become bullies at school. Parents' failure to curb their children's aggressive behaviour at home – towards their siblings – leads to increased aggression at school and at home (Moll (2009:24). In addition, the literature notes that the parents' use of power-assertive child rearing methods such as physical punishment and the likes can increase their children's level of aggression. When children are exposed to parental violence and aggression, they may internalise this as the only way to respond to conflicts or means to solve relationship problems (Morretti and Stewart, 2006:1). Consequently, at school, they display the very negative behaviour to which they were exposed. Generally, these children also lack respect, tolerance and empathy for others as a result of their upbringing (Krige et al., 2000:124; Pillay, 2007:38). In conclusion, children copy and display the attitudes and behaviours of their parents.

5.2.5.3 Poor academic performance

Literature maintains that learners who become bullies often have a record of poor school attainment and limited concentration. Some learners become bullies because of poor performance, boredom, jealousy towards other learners who are passing their tests and examinations, and frustration (Nkosi, 2002:19-20). Indeed, when some learners are bored or have failed academically and do not know what

to do, they may engage in tormenting other learners to disturb them, or simply bully them. Furthermore, some learners resort to bullying when they are subjected to enormous pressure to succeed academically, when they feel different from their peers, and when they feel no sense of accomplishment.

5.2.5.4 Community factor

The level of crime within a society where there is a lack of respect, humanity, tolerance, and empathy for others can influence children to display aggressive behaviour. Socio-economic stress on families, the amount of violence shown on television, racial tensions, and sexual harassment in a community can cause children to become violent and aggressive. A society characterised by violence, abuse, disrespect, inhumanity, and unacceptable behaviour often produces children who tend to abuse power and solve any differences through violence and aggression (Nkosi, 2002:19).

5.2.5.5 Media

During the interviews, the participants identified media messages as the main cause of harmful behaviour amongst school learners. In this regard, an educator from primary school PL indicates that “[...] the video games which children watch in their respective homes influences the children to bully other children” (PSE). The principal of primary school PC adds that “films and television programs contribute to the learners to engage themselves in harmful behaviour” (PSH). These ideas are aligned with Espelage and Swearer’s (2004) view that media messages and television programmes portray bullying as acceptable, which encourages some children to become bullies.

5.2.6 Forms of bullying behaviour among the learners

The literature review indicated that bullying amongst primary school learners occurred in different forms, namely, physical, verbal, emotional, social, psychological, and cyber (Krige et al., 2000:24; Swart, 2000:24).

5.2.6.1 Cyberbullying behaviour among primary school learners

According to the literature, cyberbullying is one of the latest types of bullying prevalent in primary schools. It can take various forms, including harassment through SMS, instant messages, video calls, emails, altered photos, demeaning websites about others, the spreading of false rumours, and the circulation of private information (about a child) (Pillay, 2007:30).

As it becomes evident, cyberbullying consists of bully learners using technology to send insults and/or threatening words to other learners. Electronic text messages are sent with the aim of hurting another child's feelings (Seabi, 2009:23). The bully can send a short text message with the goal of hurting the victim's feeling. This can take the form of saying something on an online chat room such as MXit, social network sites, IM, and apps in order to embarrass the victim (Swart, 2000:25). Quiroz *et al.* (2006:1) indicate that cyber bullying includes writing threatening emails and postings on websites. These postings are generally targeted at a certain learner – taken by another learner at school – using a cell phone camera. Text messaging, pictures, video clips, and instant messaging are prevalent facets of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying occurs at any time of the day or night. For instance, the target may be sent homophobic text messages, or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality or appearance.

5.2.6.2 Physical bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners

The literature review indicates that physical bullying among primary school learners include such behaviours as kicking, hitting, punching, hair pulling, and threats of physical violence, taking others' possessions or money, and damaging others' belongings. Physical bullying, according to literature, includes shoving, fighting, and extortion. It also comprises poking, teasing, burning, stabbing, and taking other learners' lunch boxes or homework, and vandalism (Smit, 2003:27-33).

Some examples of physical bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners, as per Chabalala's study, include shoving other learners against desks and classroom walls, tackling others to the dusty ground, or locking other learners in a dark room (Seabi, 2009: 23). Physical bullying is prevalent on the playground during lunch time or before, and outside school premises (Kruger, 2011:90). Physical bullying amongst primary school learners is also the most common form and the easiest to observe.

5.2.6.3 Verbal bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners

According to literature, verbal bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners takes two forms, namely, direct and indirect verbal bullying. Direct verbal bullying includes humiliating, threatening, incessant mocking, name-calling, and insults (Smith and Sharp, 1993:6). Indirect verbal bullying includes making cruel comments behind the victim's back, nasty notes or letters, and the spreading of rumours (Pillay, 2007:31).

De Wet (2000:19-22) adds that verbal bullying is the most experienced by girls and boys in the form of taunting, teasing, and name-calling. A victim can be bullied verbally through writing graffiti with the names of other learners on bathroom walls and calling other learners nasty names (Greef, 2004:27). Verbal bullying based on

the literature is not as tangible as physical bullying. Therefore, many adults underestimate its prevalence and impact, which aggravates the victims' feeling of hopelessness. (Pillay, 2007:31).

If verbal bullying behaviour increases in intensity, it can escalate to physical bullying. Verbal bullying usually targets another person's self-esteem in the presence of others. However, verbal bullying amongst primary school learners is difficult to deal with, even when reported to educators. This is because of the absence of tangible evidence, apart from testimonies from witnesses or bystanders (Van Niekerk, 1993:35).

5.2.6.4 Social bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners

Social bullying behaviour among primary school learners consists in the social exclusion of the bullied from group activities. It is also one of the most prevalent forms of bullying amongst learners (Greef, 2004:13). It is also regarded as relational bullying. Social bullying is malevolent and can be more damaging to a person's psyche than physical bullying (Kruger, 2011:91).

Social bullying amongst learners can involve saying things that would make other learners dislike a learner and manipulating friendship to ensure that a learner is deprived of his or her best friend (Chabalal:26). Social bullying amongst the learners, for Coloroso (2003:17) and O'Moore and Minton (2004:72), often involves subtle forms such as aggressive stares, rolling of eyes, frowns, sighs, sneers, and snickers.

5.2.6.5 Emotional bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners

Literature conceives of emotional bullying amongst primary school learners as non-physical and causes psychological distress to the victim. This form of bullying includes threatening or obscene gestures, exclusion from a group, friendship

manipulation, and threatening cell phone calls (Naser et al., 2003:128). An example of emotional bullying is a learner being called such names as ‘fatty boom-boom’. This is to hurt the victim emotionally. This type of bullying is considered the most painful, one with long-term psychological effects and marked short-term behavioural effects (Pillay 2007:33).

5.3 FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

The following subsections discuss the major findings from the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

5.3.1 Bullying behaviour in primary schools

Bullying behaviour can be described as an incident where one or more individual(s) inflict(s) physical, verbal or emotional abuse to another/others. It includes the threat of bodily harm, the possession of weapons, various violations, assault, and battery (Friend and Friend, 1996:5).

Bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners is a repeated, psychological, emotional or physical oppression of a less powerful learner by a more powerful one or a group of learners (Rigby, 1993:4). Based on the interviews, the primary school principals, educators, and learners expressed similar views that confirmed the understanding of bullying amongst primary school learners as hurtful actions targeted at a weaker person by a stronger individual or a group. In fact, the educator from primary school PF described bullying as “when a stronger child physically hurts or threaten a younger or weaker learner on purpose several times” (PSE-8). In addition, the principal of primary school PD explained bullying as “[...] a young schoolboy hurting your body and leaving serious marks” (PSH-14). Similarly, a learner from primary school PJ viewed bullying as “[...] the bigger and strong children throwing their weight around by teasing and making life unpleasant for the school learner” (PSL-1). Furthermore, the principal of primary school PE

conceived bullying amongst learners as “[...] acts of physical, psychological, emotional, and verbal behaviour by stronger and superior children who, intentionally, hurt and negatively affect the smaller inferior children” (PSE-12). Mabatha, Magano and Sedibe (2014:238) support the above views that bullying is a specific behaviour that causes harm, demonstrates an imbalance of power, and is repeated over time. During the interviews, an SMT educator from primary school PB stated that “[...] bullying behaviour among the primary school learners is an accumulation of negative reactions occurring repeatedly and over a period directed towards one learner by another learner or learners” (PSH-15).

In the same vein, an educator from primary school PA characterised bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners as “[...] the repeated physical attacks, use of vulgar words, gestures, or social exclusion” (PSE-16). This view is congruent with Rigby’s (1996:3) explanation of bullying behaviour as “[...] verbal threats, insults, name calling, spreading rumours, writing hurtful graffiti or encouraging others not to play with a particular child”.

Bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners, according to the participants, is a common occurrence: it happens every time on or outside the school premises. The participants further stressed that bullying among primary school learners negatively affected both the bullies and the bullied learners.

5.4 STRATEGIES TO REDUCE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

The interviewees identified educators’ knowledge of their learners as one of the tools that can assist in reducing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. Educators’ knowledge of their learners implies understanding their backgrounds. These are achievable by talking to them about their challenges and problems and by offering them the necessary support.

5.4.1 Whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour

To manage bullying behaviour through a whole-school approach, the school must be able to raise awareness about the dangers of bullying behaviour. The school management needs to involve all school stakeholders and must develop methods to reduce bullying. All school stakeholders need to identify bullying areas, and form anti-bullying partnerships (Tattum, 1993:64). Schools should adopt a whole-school approach that requires educators, parents, and learners to work together in dealing with bullying behaviour.

The educator from primary school PB indicates that “[...] the importance of a whole school approach in managing bullying behaviour among the primary school learners is that good learner discipline helps to curb bullying behaviour in all primary schools” (PSE-4). This is in line with Besag’s (19989:113) view that good and adequate discipline can help to reduce bullying behaviour in primary schools. Furthermore, the principal of primary school PK stated that “[...] managing bullying behaviour in primary schools, we the school management encourages learners to create friendships with one another in school and outside school as a strategy to curtail bullying acts within the school” (PSH-7). Krige, Pettipher, Squelch and Swart (2002:20) buttress this suggestion when they note that learners’ parents or legal guardians, educators, school governing bodies, and learners could strongly assist the victims of bullying in schools.

On his part, an educator from primary school PJ recommends that “[...] the primary school management team take bullying behaviour seriously” (PSE-16). Moll (2009:73) supports this educator’s view by stressing the need for bullying behaviour in primary schools to be taken seriously by all educators, non-educators, and school management teams in order to prevent learners from being absent from the school due to the hurts and threats resulting from bullying. Consequently, the principal of primary school PM notes that “[...] primary school learners are encouraged to report any bullying behaviour incidents to their classroom educators

or the SMT members for the sole purpose of reducing bullying actions in school” (PSH). This response confirms Besag’s (1989:144, in Lidzhegu, 2012:61) view that reporting bullying behaviour to school educators can reduce its occurrence among learners.

The impetus to address primary school bullying behaviour should come from high levels. This is supported by the SMT member/educator from primary school PL that “[...] the primary school governing body should recommend possible disciplinary measures on how to deal with bullying behaviour among the primary school learners” (PSMT-12). The parent of a learner from primary school PC reinforces the view that “[...] bullying behaviour amongst the primary school learners is a serious problem and it should be managed from a whole school approach strategy” (PSP-9). This parent’s statement is in line with Mollo’s (2009:73) view that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners is a serious issue that is best dealt with in a holistic manner, through a whole-school approach.

It is evident that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners is a sensitive and painful occurrence that needs to be addressed using a whole-school approach. The principal of primary school PJ elaborates that “[...] for effective eradication of learners bullying behaviour, the schools should establish a bullying support team including learners, educators, parents, and caregiver to provide assistance in dealing with bullying behaviour” (PSH-17). This statement is reinforced by Ericksen *et al.* (2012:38) who suggest that in dealing with bullying behaviour, schools should involve learners’ parents, caregivers, and communities in order to address related safety issues. Furthermore, schools need to establish linkages with relevant community stakeholders for an effective eradication of bullying behaviour amongst learners.

5.4.2 Anti-bullying policies

It emerged from the interviews that in order to prevent bullying among learners, every school must have an anti-bullying policy. In this regard, the principal of school PF stresses that “[...] for the purpose of managing bullying behaviour, every primary school need to have a written ant-bullying policy well known to all stakeholders” (PSH-13). This response is congruent with Garrett’s (2003:94) view that primary school management has the responsibility to develop an anti-bullying policy, in collaboration with learners’ parents and all the other school stakeholders. The SMT member/educator from primary school PK stresses that “[...] in the process of drafting the anti-bullying policy for the school, it is essential that all members of the school community should work together and provide a comprehensive and sustainable anti-bullying policy” (PSMT-5). An educator from primary school PG adds that “[...] a drafted anti-bullying policy should take into consideration the type of bullying behaviour that takes place, its extent, and its location” (PSE-19). As Darmawan (2010) notes, an anti-bullying policy should be aimed at establishing a secure and safe environment through the provision of rules and procedures that enable the effective management of bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. Moreover, the principal of primary school PF underscores that “[...] an anti-bullying policy for the management of bullying behaviour in primary schools is very important and should not be ignored or let it down by all stakeholders, as it has the potential to change the lives of learners profoundly” (PSH-15). An anti-bullying policy ensures that bullying behaviour amongst learners is effectively managed; as such, it should be based on the principle that bullying behaviour is intolerable (Garrett, 2003:98).

5.4.3 Role of primary school educators

It emerged, during the interviews, that educators’ role is very important in managing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. The principal of primary school PF notes that “Primary school educators should intervene in

bullying behaviour that takes place around the school premises and even in the hot spot like school playground, restrooms, corridors and classrooms” (PSH-2). This view is in line with Galloway and Ronald’s (2004:37) argument that primary school educators should be at the forefront of any effort to manage bullying behaviour amongst learners. Similarly, the SMT member/educator from primary school PD stresses that “Educators need to intervene in managing bullying behaviour within the school classroom and in all places which they think it might promote bullying actions” (PSH-3). Such interventions imply drafting rules that condemn bullying actions, conducting regular discussions and meetings with learners, and discouraging anti-social behaviours (Mollo, 2009:73). Finally, it becomes imperative that primary school educators work with learners’ parents to eliminate bullying. Open and frank discussions between parents and educators will help to eliminate bullying in primary schools (Olweus, 1993). Educators’ discussions and meeting with learners about bullying could enable educators, school administrations, and parents to develop more consistent disciplinary measures that could make primary school safe environments (Auma-Okumu, 2012:29-30).

5.4.4 Using the curriculum to manage bullying behaviour among primary school learners

The participants observed that the school curriculum could be used to curb bullying behaviour in primary schools. In the words of an educator from primary school A, “The school curriculum should provide social skills, good values, beliefs that would assist in reducing bullying behaviour among the primary learners” (PSE-21). This sentiment was confirmed by Krige, Pettipher, Squelch and Swart (2000:19, in Lidzhegu, 2012:34) who emphasise that “The school curriculum needs to be based on co-operative values and beliefs that can create a context where bullying behaviour is unlikely to flourish” (PSE-22). Clearly, a well-designed school curriculum can help educators to raise awareness of bullying and facilitate the understanding of shared social procedures. In this regard, the principal of primary

school PB suggests that “To control bullying behaviour in our schools, the school curriculum should enable educators to initiate discussions with their learners on the nature of the bullying behaviour” (PSH-11).

Such an integration of anti-bullying education in the curriculum provides insight into the types of bullying behaviour portrayed/experienced by primary school learners. Train (1995:173) supports this view when he argues that primary schools need to integrate bullying behaviour awareness within the school syllabus. He further remarks that the school curriculum should not solely provide for facts teaching, it should also promote an awareness of anti-social behaviours such as bullying.

5.4.5 Role of primary school managers

To control bullying behaviour among primary school learners, school managers should adopt a whole-school approach. According to the principal of primary school PH, “A whole school approach provides a prepared supportive foundation that could reduce bullying behaviour. Through the whole school approach system school managers can be able to involve the entire school stakeholders such as educators, learners and parents in tackling the bullying behaviour among the learners” (PSH-7). Mollo (2009:74) supports this idea when he recommends that primary school managers should appoint educators, learners, and school management team members to supervise learners at lunchtime and convene regular meetings on bullying behaviour-related issues. Additionally, an educator from primary school PJ notes that “For effective control of bullying behaviour, primary school principals should regulate the behaviour of learners by means of rules and regulations” (PSMT-2). Such formulated rules are to be respected by all school stakeholders. For this reason, these rules and regulations should be in a language that is understandable to all the people involved.

5.5 AREAS WHERE SCHOOL BULLYING MOSTLY OCCURS

During the individual interviews and focus group discussions, it transpired that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners occurs inside and outside school premises. An educator from primary school PJ observes that “Primary school playground is the most common place where learners are being bullied and physically harassed” (PSE-9). This view is confirmed by Seal and Young (2003:735) who state that a primary school playground is the places where most learners do not feel safe. This is simply because it affords bullies the opportunity to victimise other learners. The principal of primary school PE concurred that “Bullying in primary schools occurred mostly on the playground, especially during break time. The lack of supervision in this place makes it easy for the bully to intimidate other learners. An educator from primary school PG states that “in many instances bullying behaviour does occur to and from the school and even when the children are in the school tuck-shop while buying food” (PSE-10). Nevertheless, several news stories have ranked the school sports ground as the number one place where learners are bullied. Chabalala (2011:45) concurs that the school playground is the place where most learners are bullied because it is generally unsupervised.

5.5.1 The restroom

The learner from primary school PC affirms that, “The school toilets is one of the most dangerous and unsafe places. Groups of boys or girls gather in restroom where they do threaten and intimidate other learners” (PSL-15). In this regard, Chuenyane (2008:5) underscores that the restroom is the place where most bullying occurs. As such, boys and girls who fall victim to this form of oppression typically find that trips to the school’s restrooms are very stressful. This is because of the possibility that an entire group of bullies could be waiting for preys, confident that they will not be questioned by an educator.

Furthermore, an educator from primary school PF further highlights that “Boys prefer to use the restroom as a place where they victimise other learners because educators and learners at school do not use the same restroom. They also use water taps places to hurt defenceless learners” (PSE-23). Clearly, primary school restrooms foster the occurrence of bullying amongst learners, as they make it easy for the bullies to intimidate other learners and get away with it.

5.5.2 The classroom

The classroom is another common place where bullying usually unfolds. A learner from primary school PC states that “When educators are in meetings some boys especially the big one bullies other learners by taking their pens, money, and lunch boxes. Greef (2004:16) corroborates that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners happens frequently in the classrooms, especially in the absence of the educator. This is reinforced by the educator from primary school PF who postulates that, “Some bullies bullied other learners during the transitions periods when educators are being rotated to the respective classrooms” (PSE-1). During that time, bullies are aware of and take advantage of educators’ absence (Chabalala, 2011:47).

5.6 CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

Bullying actions amongst primary school learners have serious consequences. In this regard, the educator from primary school PD emphasises that “Bullying behaviour among the primary school learners is very painful and humiliating and it simply affects both the child being bullied and the bully” (PSE-9). Pillay (2007:51) notes that bullying behaviour has psychological, social, and educational effects.

5.6.1 Educational consequences

Bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners has severe educational implications, according to the principal of school PG. The latter further stated that bullied learners tended to withdraw from school day activities and develop poor concentration. This view is endorsed by Chabalala (2011:51) who states that bullying behaviour among learners can lead to absenteeism caused by the fear of being physically attacked or intimidated by other learners. As an educator from primary school PK indicates, “bullied learners cannot do their schoolwork properly and they do stay away from school due to the terrible fear of harassment” (PSE-24). This sentiment is echoed by Dake *et al.* (2003:173) who indicate that bullying behaviour leads to truancy and poor performance by learners. In the same vein, the principal of primary school PA observes that, “Bullied learners always try to avoid school and to avoid social interaction and they tend to worry, dislike themselves and desire to stay home from school” (PSH-20). In short, bullied learners develop fear and hatred towards the school, which they usually regard as a threatening place that causes them pain. They even develop depression and mental distress. They suffer from fear, anxiety, and low self-esteem because of being bullied (Olweus, 1993:11).

5.6.2 Social consequences

Bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners can cause the victims to feel unwanted and rejected by everyone. The principal of primary school PF stated that bullied learners were very fearful and avoided social interaction. Consequently, they spend most of their energy worrying about when and how they will be bullied again. They concentrate on what they can do to protect themselves against the bullies. The SMT member/educator from primary school PG stated that bullied learners chose loneliness and isolation in order to avoid humiliation and attacks. Thamm (1997:54) supports this view that bullied learners develop shyness, lose the desire to mix with others, and have poor peer relationships.

5.6.3 Physical consequences

Bullying behaviour, according to the participants' responses, has serious physical consequences. A parent of a learner from primary school PA indicates that "Bullied learners can suffer physical effects such as bedwetting and loss of appetite" (PSP-10). Commenting on another characteristic of a bullying victim, the parent of a learner from primary school PF shares that, "What I have noticed is that with bullied learners is the increased request for money or stealing money and he/she have spontaneous out of character comments about either pupils or educators" (PSE-4). This is reinforced by Voster (2002:32) who states that victims of bullying develop stomach-aches, headaches, and other kinds aches. As an educator from primary school PF indicates that, "a bullied learner can have physical injuries that requires treatment and they even think about death as the solution of the problem they are experiencing". (PSP-8).

5.6.4 Emotional consequences

The interviews revealed that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners has emotional consequences. The principal of primary school PB states that, "The bullied learners may have serious depressions, frustrations and anxiety" (PSH). Similarly, the parent of a learner from primary school PA added that, "Bullied children started to have anxiety about travelling to and from school and sometimes they do request parents to drive or collect him/her and changing travel routes" (PSP-9). This sentiment is shared by Pillay (2007:51) who emphasises that learners bullied at school develop emotional issues including low self-confidence and feelings of worthlessness, fear, and hopelessness. These problems can be carried into adulthood. Vorster (2007:3, in Chabalala 2011:52) adds that bullied learners experience such emotional effects as anger, stammering, crying, vomiting, loss of appetite, tensions, schizophrenia, and suicide ideation. All these result in bullied learners having poor concentration at school.

5.6.5 Academic performance

Bullied learners tend to dislike schooling or prefer to sit alone during break time for fear of being bullied (Whitney, 2008:1). The SMT member/educator from primary school PJ underscores that, "Bullying impacts negatively on child's academic work" (PSMT). To this, the principal of primary school PD added the fact that bullied learners "[...] started to lose concentration and lose enthusiasm and interest in school" (PSH-17). Farrington and Ttofi (2009:6) confirm that bullied learners' school performance start to deteriorate and unexplained changes in their mood or behaviour become particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or long school holidays. This is congruent with Rasool's (2002:3) assertion that bullied learners dislike themselves and have difficulty concentrating on their schoolwork. It transpires that bullying amongst primary school learners engenders serious multidimensional issues that require a strong intervention by all stakeholders.

5.7 MANAGING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

Bullying amongst primary school learners is best dealt with through a holistic approach known as a whole-school approach (Tattum, 1993:63; Lidzhegu 2012:28). The principal of primary school PA highlights that, "Bullying behaviour among the learners is a serious problem and it is the sole responsibility of the management and educators to manage it to avoid its immediate unhappiness and loss of self-esteem by the learners" (PSH-19). Mollo (2009:27) concurs that managing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners is the responsibility of the entire school community and that it is best done through a whole-school approach. Furthermore, an educator from primary school PF shares that, "I think to manage bullying behaviour effectively; the school should function as the system to eradicate bullying behaviour among the learners. The school should adopt the whole school approach" (PSE-10). The whole-school approach to managing

bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners implies that educators, learners, school governing body members, learners' parents, and other school community members have a role to play (Krige, Pettipher, Squelch and Swart, 2000:12).

In addition, an educator from primary school PJ states that “[...] to manage bullying behaviour properly the school need to raise bullying awareness programmes and respond proactively to bullying behaviour, to prevent its unhappiness consequences to both the bully and the bullied” (PSH-1). Olweus (1997:505) supports this view when he recommends that school managers should involve all stakeholders in the effort to reduce or totally eradicate bullying. An ethos of wellbeing, content, and process should be created and supported by the school management system in order to control learners' behaviour. Content refers to policy, structure and curriculum, while process relates to the school culture, the quality of social relationships, and the channels of communication (Mollo, 2009:28). In conclusion, managing bullying behaviour implies the establishment of positive relationships with the entire school community, involving caregivers and the larger school community when addressing bullying in schools, and the development of a curriculum that talks about respect and humanity.

5.8 FACTORS INFLUENCING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

Many interviewed participants stressed that bullying amongst primary school learners does not occur in isolation. It is a complex exchange among individuals and involves their broader social environment. The principal of primary school PD indicates that, “Bullying behaviour among the learners is mostly influenced by various reasons and those reasons are very much complex” (PSH-3). Kruger (2011:99) specifies some of these factors when he states that school bullies are influenced by the family factor, the school factor, the social factor, and the

academic factor. For the purpose of this research, the data have been grouped accordingly.

5.8.1 School factor

The SMT member/educator from primary school PA indicates that “As one of the management team in this school I think learners become bullies because the educators cannot able to manage his/her classroom or is through the poor management of the learners’ classroom” (PSMT-10). Zeelie (2004:18) agrees with this view when he identifies the social context and poor supervision at school as playing a major part in the frequency and severity of bullying incidences. Furthermore, the principal of primary school PK adds that “The failure by educators to stop bullies and control them at school influences the learners to fully engage themselves in bullying behaviour” (PSH-11). This is confirmed by the educator from primary school PG who states: “We as educators are very reluctant to intervene and see bullying as way of children growing up and do not see any problem in that regard” (PSE13). In the same vein, Olweus (1993) underscores that inappropriate supervision, ignorance, and inadequate intervention by educators as well as the school climate may influence some learners to become bullies. Similarly, Pillay (2007:40) argues that bullying behaviour is encouraged by the school environment, especially when bullying incidents are ignored (Squelch et al, 2000). These scholars stress that the primary schools that ignore or condone bullying in any form contribute to its prevalence. Sharp and Smith (1994:106, in Pillay 2007:40) conclude that appropriate supervision and intervention at school can enable all learners to have a normal school experience, free of aggressive behaviour.

5.8.2 Family factor

Children’s home or family is one of the factors causing bullying amongst primary school learners. In this regard, the educator from primary school PG stresses, “My

dear sir I just think that family background and the style of parenting can influence the children to become bullies” (PSE-14). This is reinforced by Mollo (2009:18) who posits that the family or home, especially the parenting styles and practices contribute to the bullying behaviour displayed by some children. As the principal of primary school PF puts it “Poor family background where children cannot get the required basic needs influences the children to engage themselves in bullying behaviour” (PSH-24). Besag (1989:68) and Mollo (2009:18) support the view that parenting styles like authoritarianism and rigidity, as well as negligent parents compel some learners to become aggressive and spoilt.

The negative influence of the home environment is illustrated by the principal of primary school PJ who contends that, “I think that constant fighting and the use of the abusive language lead the learners to copy and start to abuse other learners” (PSH-6). Similarly, Pillay (2007:39) emphasises that poor control in the family, aggressive behaviour and violence within the family produce children who are inclined to bullying. Furthermore, parents’ separation may lead to some learners being doubtful about their future, they become stubborn, and they resort to bullying (Mollo, 2009:18).

5.8.3 Community factors

During the interviews, the participants identified rife violence and crime in some learners’ communities as contributors to bullying behaviour. Indeed, the principal of primary school PK stated that, “In my understanding learners become violent and aggressive simply because of their community which is very much violent and aggressive” (PSH-1). This view is corroborated by Pillay who observes that the social context, the level of the socio-economic stress on families, the amount of violence shown on mass media, as well as the level of violence and racial or sexual harassment in society influence children to be very aggressive and violent. Thus, the educator from primary school PG affirms that, “Learners who witness violence and the abuse of power by the adult people in many instances become bullies”

(PSE-15). Krige *et al.* (2000:7) confirm this idea when they note that communities where violence and aggressive behaviour are common often produce learners who tend to abuse power and solve their differences violently and aggressively.

5.8.4 Poor academic achievement

Bullying behaviour is a contributory factor to primary school learners' poor academic achievement. An educator from primary school PA shares that, "In my view the learners who are being bullied failed to their school homework and classwork properly because they usually find themselves under stress" (PSE-7). Thus, the principal of primary school PF explains that, "Bullied learners sometimes cannot concentrate during teaching and learning because they always in constant fear of being bullied" (PSH-23). In this regard, Pillay (2007:52) stresses that bullying behaviour creates an environment that is hostile to learning and is harmful to learners' health, wellbeing, and academic progress. Furthermore, an educator from primary school PG underscores that, "Bullying behaviour in our primary school encourages the bullied learners to have learning difficulties and to dislike schooling in fear of being bullied during break time or after school" (PSE-1). Chabalala (2011:57) confirms that in many instances, bullies become jealous when someone progresses in class and, as a result, they may start bullying them with the intention of pulling them down.

5.9 FORMS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

The interviews revealed that bullying amongst primary school learners occurred in different forms: physical, verbal, emotional, social, and cyberbullying (Krige *et al.*, 2000:24).

5.9.1 Physical bullying in primary schools

During the interviews, the participants indicated that physical bullying among primary school learners mainly took a direct form. As the principal of primary school PD put it, “most of our learners engaged in physical attack such as hitting, kicking and punching each other, especially after school or during break time” (PSH-10). Similarly, the SMT member/educator from primary school PF clarifies: “What I say sir is that physical bullying especially in our school is more visible and is done by all learners both boys and girls” (PSE-2). Venter (2013:242) elaborates that physical or direct bullying range from slight punches, pushing, shoving to physical attack.

Likewise, an educator from primary school PJ emphasises that, “Physical bullying in our school is very serious and it usually occurs during break time where weak learners encounter hair pulling, pushing, scratching, pitching and damage to property” (PSL-18). Pillay (2007:31) notes that physical bullying includes threats of violence, money stealing, and damaging of belongings.

An educator from primary school PK contends that physical bullying among primary school learners is “[...] actually experienced by the first-year learners who are being physical attacked by old learners, take their lunch boxes, and viciously took their pocket money” (PSE-4). This educator adds that, “They also forced these new learners to lie on the ground, hide their school bags, damage someone school uniform, and put sand in their shoes” (PSE-25).

5.9.2 Verbal bullying behaviour among primary school learners

The participants identified verbal bullying as one of the worst forms that occur in many primary schools. The principal of primary school PF confides that, “Verbal bullying in our primary schools, especially in the senior phase, involves mocking, taunting, verbal threats and name calling” (PSH-4). Mollo (2009:14) confirms that

verbal bullying involves teasing, swearing, abusive comments, insulting words, and insulting another learner's family members. The SMT member/educator from primary school PB indicates that, "In most cases, verbal bullying in our school happen when someone especially in higher grades calls another learner by the nasty names or tease them or crack jokes about them in a cruel way" (PSMT-2). Pillay (2007:31) indicates that verbal bullying amongst primary school learners includes cruel comments intended for the victim to overhear, the writing of nasty notes or letters, and the spreading of rumours, anonymous abusive phone calls.

5.9.3 Emotional bullying behaviour among primary school learners

The interviewed participants indicated that emotional bullying amongst primary school learners was nonphysical but could cause severe distress for the bullied learners. An educator from primary school PI attests that, "What I have seen in our school is that learners especially the girls spread rumours, humiliate their classmate in front of everybody and making a fool of someone" (PSE-9). Naser *et al.* (2003:128) support this when they characterise emotional bullying as including extortion, humiliation, and blackmailing, defaming, and manipulating friendships. Furthermore, the principal of primary school PA states that "Emotional bullying behaviour especially in our lower primary school includes rating of personal characteristics such as disability, mocking, stalking dirty looks and intimidating someone." (PSE-16). Similarly, Chabalala (2011:26) notes that emotional bullying amongst primary school learners involves terrorising and excluding another learner from the group, peers or friends or isolating one during playtime and learning activities. Mollo (2009:15) endorses this point when he states that emotional bullying amongst primary school learners includes the spreading of rumours, gossiping about a learner, scaring a learner by staring at them, and hiding someone's belongings.

5.9.4 Cyberbullying

The interviews revealed that cyberbullying was prevalent amongst primary school learners. In this regard, the principal of primary school PK characterises, “My dear sir I just think that cyberbullying among the primary school learners involves the use of communication technologies such as the internet, social networking sites, websites, text messaging and instant messaging to repeatedly harass other learners” (PSH-9). Seabi (2009:23) confirms that cyberbullying amongst primary school learners occurs when technology is used to send insulting or threatening words to other learners. The educator from primary school PE concurs that “Cyberbullying among primary school learners includes horrible messages such as threatening emails or text messages, posting embarrassing photos of someone online, creating a website to make fun of others, as well as pretending to be someone by using their name.

Pillay (2007:94) confirms that cyberbullying involves email, instant messaging, and text messages intended to harass, intimidate and threaten other learners. The principal of primary school PG observes that, “Learners use technology for tricking someone into revealing personal or embarrassing information and sending it to others” (PSH). In this regard, Seabi (2009, in Chabalala, 2011:29) stresses that children are now bullied using insulting text messages and even phone calls.

5.9.5 Social bullying

The participant construed social bullying as the deliberate exclusion of a learner from a group at school. The educator from primary school PD shares that, “What I have seen in our school is the exclusion of learners by other learners and is usually done by girls” (PSE-15). This view is reinforced by Greef (2004:13) who states that social bullying amongst learners includes being ignored, isolated, and shunned. The parent of primary school PH indicates that “I think social bullying behaviour among the primary school learners include ignoring and exclusion from other

learners” (PSP-14). Coloroso (2003:17) confirms that social bullying among primary school learners manifests itself through the exclusion from the group, tripping, intimidation, demanding money, and the theft of valuable.

The interviews revealed that cyberbullying was prevalent amongst primary school learners. The participants stressed that cyberbullying amongst primary school learners involved the use of communication technologies such as the Internet, social networking sites, websites, text messaging, and instant messaging to repeatedly harass other learners. According to the participants, cyberbullying among learners includes the sending of horrible messages, threatening emails or text messages, the online posting of embarrassing photos of someone, creating a website to ridicule others, and using someone’s name. It emerged that some learners used technology to trick others into revealing personal or embarrassing information that is then circulated.

5.10 SUMMARY

In conclusion, the researcher has used both the literature review and interviews to generate findings on the understanding of the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. It emerged that for primary schools to establish strategies to counter bullying, it is imperative to approach it from a holistic perspective, through a whole-school approach. To put it another way, to address bullying amongst primary school learners, the adoption of a whole-school approach becomes necessary as it fosters good behaviour amongst primary school learners. This could possibly assist in the total eradication of bullying amongst primary school learners.

A whole-school approach covers all aspects of the school experience, including policies, culture, and classroom practice. It further emerged that bullying prevention strategies are most effective when integrated into a broad range of activities that promote the creation of a positive and inclusive learning

environment. In a whole-school approach, bullying prevention is everyone's business: staff, learners, governing bodies, parents, and the wider community must ensure that everyone knows and supports their school's strategies and approach to bullying (Boyd, 2018).

As indicated in the previous chapters, a whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners requires that all stakeholders take full responsibility for the behaviour of all learners (Tattum, 1993:63).

Both the literature review and the interviews-based data related to the main themes that emerged during the analysis. These themes include bullying behaviour in primary schools, strategies to deal with bullying behaviour in primary schools, the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour, the factors influencing bullying, the consequences of bullying, the areas where bullying mostly occurs, and the forms of bullying behaviour in schools.

5.11 PROJECTION FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER

The next chapter will focus on research summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 6: OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The research study investigated bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. I analysed with the intent to understand the nature and extent of bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. In Chapter Four, an analysis and interpretation of data was made in terms of the essential components of a whole-school approach to dealing with bullying behaviour in primary schools. These essential components included theoretical whole-school strategies to counter bullying behaviour in primary schools, conjectural indicators of bullying, actual whole-school strategies to counter bullying, and concrete indicators of bullying in primary schools.

This chapter firstly provides an overview of the research study. Secondly, it briefly summarises all the preceding chapters. Thirdly, it makes recommendations that will assist in reducing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners in connection with the implementation of a whole-school approach. Fourthly and lastly, this chapter makes suggestions for future research.

6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEACH

Chapter One stated the general aim of the research, the problem, and the purpose of the study. The chapter also provided the background of the study and outlined the data collection methods and the research methodology and explained the key concepts of the study.

Chapter Two discussed the relevant literature on the adoption of a whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour in primary school. The discussion focused on various theoretical aspects. The first is the four theoretical frameworks

used as the lens of the study. The second is the nature and extent of bullying behaviour in primary schools. The third is the factors causing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. The fourth is the consequences of bullying actions amongst primary school learners. The fifth is the types of bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. The sixth is the areas where bullying usually occurs. The seventh is the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour. The eighth and last is the intervention strategies to prevent bullying using a whole-school approach. The relevant literature review comprised of the knowledge base that familiarised the researcher with the work already done on the research topic. This was to help the researcher to understand the nature and extent of the research phenomenon better.

Chapter Three described and explained the research design and the methodology used and discussed the applicable ethical considerations.

Chapter Four focused on the qualitative data analysis and the research findings that were presented in the form of themes emerging from the interviews conducted with the school learners, educators, principals, SMT members, parents, and school governing body members.

Chapter Five presented the data collected through interviews and subsequently transcribed into verbatim. The findings of the empirical study were related to those from the literature.

The present chapter, Chapter Six, provides a brief summary of the research study, makes recommendations concerning the use of a whole-school approach to decrease incidences of school bullying and to manage bullying amongst primary school learners. The recommendations can be used by primary schools. Most of these recommendations were based on an integration of suggestions made by primary school educators, learners, parents, principals, and SMTs. Some of the

recommendations were from the existing literature. Furthermore, the study will make suggestions for further research on other aspects of this topic.

6.3 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The literature study revealed that bullying behaviour in the primary schools was a major problem in many countries worldwide. Various sources on a whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools, and the interviews conducted with primary school principals, educators, governors, parents, and learner indicated that bullying behaviour was caused by various factors and that it had a negative effect on primary school learners. As such, attempts to address bullying behaviour in primary schools need to adopt a holistic approach.

Data collected in this research study showed that although bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners was a problem even in other countries, it was growing significantly in many South African primary schools. The collected data further revealed that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners was part of their everyday life and that it happened in all schools (Pillay: 2007:55). Similarly, Behr (2000:47) noted that a high percentage of children in South African schools were bullied and that bullying occurred at all schools, be they rich or poor, state or independent.

The research findings were divided into two categories, namely, findings based on the existing literature and those emerging from the semi-structured individual interviews and focus group discussions.

6.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The theoretical framework that informed this research study was the social context perspective that drew on views from the social learning theory, Olweus' prevention theory, and the bio-ecological theory. The social context perspective emphasises

the interactions between individuals and social systems (Kruger, 2011:121). From the literature review and the interviews, it was evident those primary school learners experienced bullying and that it occurred at various sites, both within and outside the school grounds, and that it involved a diverse range of individuals from the school community.

The study further revealed that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners was a growing problem and a daily reality. Hence, all relevant stakeholders, namely, primary school principals, governing bodies, educators, learners' parents, and learners need to take bullying seriously. In addition, the study revealed that individual approaches, whereby educators or principals act in isolation to tackle bullying behaviour are often short-sighted and ineffectual (Krige, et al., 2000:139).

Preventing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners requires a whole-school approach. According to the literature and the interviews, a whole-school approach addresses bullying from as many angles and across a broad spectrum of the primary school community as possible. The whole-school approach is based on the shared values, beliefs and attitudes of all school stakeholders. Kruger (2011:138) explains that bullying behaviour among primary school learners is best-addressed by means of a whole-school approach, as it cannot be dealt with on an ad hoc basis only when bullying incidents occur.

Furthermore, the interviews and the literature review revealed the existence of different types of bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. An example is physical bullying which involves physical attacks such hitting, kicking, and pushing. Verbal bullying was also found to be prevalent in primary schools and occurring through name calling and insulting.

As for emotional bullying amongst primary school learners, it was described as non-physical and causing the victim psychological distress. Indeed, emotional bullying involves serious humiliation, threatening, and manipulation of friendships. Cyberbullying was also mentioned as one of the most common forms in primary schools, occurring through the channels created by technological advances. The bully learner can use the Internet, emails, camera phones, and instant messaging to threaten the victim

The study also discussed the factors influencing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. The literature revealed that bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners did not occur by chance, it was purposive and influenced by various factors. For Nkosi (2002:16), bullying actions in primary schools are influenced by individuals' family background, school environment, poor academic performance, community, and culture.

The study also discussed the consequences of bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. It was evident that bullying behaviour had negative consequences for bullied learners. It prevents the latter to feel safe and learn in a free environment. Bullying behaviour results in pain and distress for bullied learners. It may equally cause these learners to experience low self-esteem, loneliness, anxiety, poor academic performance, school avoidance, and limited friendships.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section makes multi-dimensional recommendations concerning the effective implementation of the whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour in primary schools.

6.5.1 Whole-School Approach to Managing Bullying Behaviour among Primary School Learners

Although much research has been conducted on the issue of managing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners in various countries, little has been done in this regard in South Africa. Given the high levels of bullying incidents among primary school learners in South Africa, a whole-school approach should be used as a strategy to counter bullying behaviour. If bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners is ignored, it can cause life-or-death situations within primary schools. A whole-school approach is necessary for the provision of a safe and secure school environment as well as the protection of learners from deviant behaviour that affects their wellbeing and infringes on their basic right to security.

A whole-school approach, which involves all primary school community members and uses various strategies, should be used in primary schools to deal with bullying among the learners. This approach is further recommended because it also involves raising strong awareness about bullying behaviour amongst learners, increasing knowledge about bullying, and forming a strong anti-bullying partnership with parents, learners, educators, and non-teaching staff. Based on the literature review and the findings of the present study, it is quite essential to make the following recommendations.

6.5.1.1 Collaborative and Collective efforts for Combating Bullying

Educators, parents, and educational psychologists need to work together to make the school a better and safer place for all learners. A whole-school approach, which involves all school community members, should use various anti-bullying strategies for the effective eradication of bullying actions. A whole-school approach strategy is further recommended because it also involves raising awareness about bullying actions in schools, increasing knowledge about bullying, and forming anti-

bullying partnership with parents, learners, educators, non-educators, and support agencies.

6.5.1.2 Deployment of Educators to Combat Bullying

Primary schools should appoint enough educators to supervise and monitor bullying behaviour at hot spots, during learners' break time. In other words, regular and effective supervision is recommended as one of the whole-school strategies to deal with bullying incidences. Once school educators take this duty seriously, bully learners will not have a chance to bully others. A school climate of respect for all should be part of all educators' classroom management strategies. Educators should establish a positive, friendly, and trusting relationship with the class and each individual learner. The school should improve supervision and the outdoor environment and provide an adequate number of educators during breaks and playtime to intervene quickly in student conflicts.

6.5.1.3 Bullying awareness campaigns

Awareness-raising campaigns about bullying and its consequences should be part of the school and classroom teaching and learning. Primary school learners should produce an anti-bullying poster and display it in the school. A bullying box should be created, and educators and school managers should encourage learners to report bullying by writing anonymously. Educators need to be encouraged and empowered by equipping them with more knowledge on the nature of bullying. Indeed, primary school educators' active participation in the resolution of issues related to bullying behaviour will help reduce bullying actions in primary schools. It is essential that educators act on cases of bullying behaviour reported to them by pupils. They should be actively involved in solving the problem, instead of simply reporting it to the SMT. The entire primary school should have a detailed anti-bullying policy, to help all school stakeholders to gain a proper understanding of bullying behaviour as well as the strategies for its prevention and management.

6.5.2 Recommendations for the Primary Educators

For the total eradication of bullying behaviour in primary schools, educators need to be empowered in terms of the practical aspects of whole-school approach strategies to manage bullying actions. Educators need to improve the supervision of the outdoor environment by providing an adequate number of educators during lunchtime and playtime in order to enable a swift response when bullying occurs. In addition, educators need to motivate and encourage learners to report bullying to their respective classroom teachers who must be able to respond adequately. Primary school educators should be empowered in terms of the identification of the indicators of bullying behaviour and the implementation of whole-school approach strategies to manage bullying.

Within the school premises, educators should act on cases of bullying reported to them by learners. In addition, they should participate actively in resolving bullying issues, instead of merely reporting them to the school principal. Primary school educators should actively engage in the reduction of bullying behaviour through the promotion of positive relationships within the entire school, to enhance the school climate and create a supportive learning environment.

Moreover, educators need to work hard to instil a sense of self-discipline in learners and devote time to teaching learners self-monitoring skills. Educators should understand what constitutes bullying and know the different forms of bullying, its causes, and its consequences for the bully, the bullied, and the bystander. In solving the bullying-related problems, educators should involve learners' parents and, sometimes, schools need to call the parents of the bullies or victims, so that they may help to address the situation.

Finally, educators need to make the consequences of misbehaviour clear to learners. They should enforce classroom rules promptly, consistently and equitably – from the very first day of the school. They should monitor classroom

activities and give learners feedback regarding their behaviour. Educators must play an important role in supporting the social and emotional wellbeing of children in their care. In other words, they should promote social and emotional wellbeing from a very early age and foster positive behaviour.

6.5.3 Recommendations for Positive Learning Environment

Primary school educators can support learners' wellbeing by creating a safe and supportive learning environment. The creation of a positive relationship within school premises should be based on respect and a sense of belonging. Educators should ensure that the school environment is free from bullying actions, that it is physically, socially and emotionally safe. This ensures that learners feel free to participate in and contribute to building a bullying-free school.

6.5.4 Strategies to Assist Victims of Bullying in Primary Schools

To avoid being bullied, learners are advised to do the following:

- Stay in a group, avoid going to places where bullying happens.
- If being bullied through name-calling, ignore it.
- Do not try to fight back, if you know that the bully will hurt you.
- Remove yourself from bullying situations.
- Leave valuable items at home.
- Remain calm in bullying situations.
- Develop your self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Improve your friendship and social skills.
- Always tell an adult or educator you trust if you are bullied (Pillay, 2007:135).

6.5.5 Suggestions to Help the Bully

According to Douglas (2002:3-4, in Pillay, 2007:136), primary school bullies should be identified and spoken to coercively, without threat, blame or censure. Some of the strategies in coaching the bully learners in order to foster change include:

- Raising consciousness of the harm caused to victims, because, sometimes, bullies do not realise the extent of the harm that they are causing.
- Encouraging the bully learners to respond in a responsible and constructive way.
- Using peer pressure to encourage bullies to stop. This can take the form of bully courts, which are mock courts run by learners under the supervision of an educator.
- Praising bullies when they are pleasant.

6.5.6 Recommendations for the Department of Education

The Department of Basic Education (DBE), in collaboration with school principals, educators' unions, learners' parents, SMTs, governing bodies, and other stakeholders must promote an anti-bullying model targeting both bullies and the bullied. In addition, the DBE and the national government have a moral obligation to elaborate school policies aimed at the effective implementation of the whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners, with the goal of eradicating bullying in all schools.

Primary school principals, educators, learners, learners' parents, non-teaching staff, and the extended school community must work as a team in preventing bullying behaviour amongst learners. All should support the programmes aimed at managing bullying behaviour through a whole-school approach. This is because, if well supported, the whole-school approach can be very effective in reducing bullying behaviour amongst learners. The DBE should fund and hold seminars on

bullying amongst learners in school clusters in order to bring awareness to all school stakeholders.

6.5.7 Recommendations for the Primary School Community

Since the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools involves the entire school community, the latter should participate actively in developing a vision of a supportive learning environment and creating a positive school climate. The school community should create partnerships with the police to ensure a positive school-police/youth-police relationship. The community should collaborate with learners and youth-serving organisations to offer extra-curricular activities. Finally, the primary school community should, at all costs, support the establishment of a positive school climate that would curb bullying amongst the learners.

6.5.8 Role of the Parents

Learners' parents should be prepared to handle bullying incidents, because their input insofar as helping their children is very important. Effective communication between the school and learners' parents should be encouraged. Guidelines on how to deal with bullying behaviour should be provided, and the educational psychologist should be involved in providing guidance and advice on the management of bullying actions. Learners' parents need to ensure that their children receive consistent messages and support regarding bullying, both at school and at home.

Furthermore, the school needs to formulate an effective anti-bullying policy. Learners' parents should be involved in the drafting of this anti-bullying policy. The latter should stipulate the school's principles, its expectations in terms of learners' discipline, and the consequences for anyone who breaches the terms and conditions of this school policy. Primary schools need to embrace parents' active

involvement in the school life and encourage them to provide support and participate in various school activities (Cortis et al., 2014:7).

6.5.9 Recommendations for the Primary School Management Team

To prevent bullying behaviour in primary schools, the SMT members need to create a comprehensive plan for developing and implementing bullying prevention initiatives. The SMT needs to help the school implement these initiatives effectively. It should meet regularly to advance the school plan and address barriers. The SMT needs to organise workshops and seminars open to all stakeholders to raise awareness and foster a general revulsion to bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners.

Primary school management should consider a well-coordinated approach to developing strong home-school partnerships coupled with wider community-level efforts to teach young people appropriate socio-emotional skills, care for others, and an appreciation for civility, which are essential to the well-being of society. Primary school management should develop anti-bullying policies in order to deal with bullying behaviour. To ensure its effectiveness, the formulated policy should be fully communicated to all school stakeholders. Primary school principals or managers need to appoint enough educators to supervise and monitor bullying hot spots, during learners' lunch or break time.

Regular and adequate supervision is strongly recommended as one of the whole-school approach strategies to deal with bullying incidences. The SMT, including principals, should increase their visibility and informal involvement in the everyday life of the school, and increase their personal interaction with learners.

Principals should encourage educators to handle all classroom discipline problems that they reasonably can and support their decisions. They also need to develop, with input from learners, clear behavioural rules and procedures that should be disseminated to all school stakeholders, including parents and the community.

Moreover, they should support every child's rights and support all the other stakeholders. Principals need to help create a safe and secure learning environment.

School principals, educators, school governing bodies, learners, non-teaching staff, learners' parents, and school administrators need to work as a team to act against bullying. Bullying prevention and intervention must become pervasive in the school. School principals should also establish a hotline system to enable learners to report anonymously when they are being threatened or victimised, without fear.

All parents or all adults, in their respective communities, should refrain from considering bullying as part of children's growing up, and rather regard it as a social problem that must be addressed. Primary schools and communities should consider a well-co-ordinated approach in order to develop strong home school partnerships. This should be supplementary to wider community-level efforts to teach young people appropriate socio-emotional skills, empathy for others, and gratefulness the respect, which are central to the wellbeing of society.

Finally, effective bullying awareness campaigns should be intensified and conferences and workshops to which all school stakeholders are invited should be organised to discuss how to handle bullying behaviour. Anti-bullying classroom rules should be drawn in collaboration with all learners. Educators, principals, learners, parents, and other school community members should be involved in the elaboration of strategies aimed at tackling bullying behaviour from a whole-school approach. In addition, the school should develop a curriculum that promotes communication, friendship, and assertiveness.

6.5.10 A very Clear and Well-publicised Anti-bullying Policy

Educators, principals, governors, parents, and educational psychologists should work as a team to make primary schools better and safer places for all registered learners. A positive school climate of respect for all learners should be part of the classroom management strategies of all primary school educators. It should be an integrated aspect of instruction and curriculum, without focussing on authoritarian discipline. Primary school learners should be actively engaged in democratic classroom processes (Crothers and Kolbert, 2008:134). In addition, primary school teaching staff should be involved in learners' problems and create a warm atmosphere with firm boundaries concerning unacceptable behaviour, consistently applying non-hostile and non-violent punitive measures for the violation of school rules (Venter, 2013:134).

For the whole-school approach to managing bullying amongst primary school learners to be effective, parents, educators, and other adult school stakeholders should take authority and responsibility to curb bullying behaviour among primary school learners.

Awareness campaigns about bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners should be advocated at all schools and the consequences of bullying for both the bully and the bullied should be part of classroom teaching. The serious effects of bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners need to be emphasised all the time. What is more, learners' parents should be prepared to handle bullying incidents that occur in their respective homes. Parents have a big responsibility regarding to the tackling of bullying behaviour.

The parents of bullies should help their children in several ways (Suckling and Temple, 2002:63; Krige *et al.*, 2002:16). These include:

- Listening carefully to their children.

- Praising their children as much as possible for good behaviour and actions. Teaching their children, the difference between assertive and aggressive behaviour.
- Monitoring their children's friends and encouraging healthy, positive friendships.
- Working closely with their children's schools.
- Letting their children know when their behaviour is unacceptable, while indicating that they are still loved and cared for.

As for the parents of the bullied learners, they could help in the following ways (Suckling and Temple, 2002:64-65; Krige *et al.*, 2002:16):

- Encouraging their children to talk about the problem.
- Listening to their children.
- Sharing with their children that nobody deserves to be bullied.
- If a child struggles to speak about his or her emotions, parents could ask him or her to write a letter, a story, or a poem about the issue.
- Ask their children to suggest possible solutions to bullying behaviour.
- Teaching their children assertive behaviour.
- With the permission of their children, parents should speak to educators or school heads.

6.5.11 Getting Professional Help.

Educators should avoid labelling learners as bullies and victims. Instead, they should consider multiple explanations for the observed bullying behaviours that look beyond the individual and use socio-ecological lens to explore the contribution of individuals, peers, educators, families, schools, communities, and the wider societal environment. They should use the whole-school approach to develop anti-bullying activities and create a safer and caring school climate. Indeed, the whole-school approach that involves all stakeholders in the change process includes multiple activities designed to address different aspects of school practice.

6.5.12 Focus on Ways to Promote Social and Emotional Learning and Develop Learners' Competencies

The professional help that the bully and the victim should get may involve an educational psychologist or a school counsellor. The educational psychologist should work on building the bullying child's self-esteem by identifying his or her personal strength that will attract potential friends. Learners should learn to replace negative statements about themselves with positive, realistic ones (Crothers and Kolbert, 2008:135, in Venter, 2013:248). Both the victim and the bully need to be taught social skills about strong friendship building.

6.5.13 Recommendations for the Formulation of Separate Anti-bullying Policies

Primary schools need to have separate anti-bullying policies. The latter should be incorporated into schools' overall code of conduct. An anti-bullying policy drafted by any school should be clear and involve stakeholders such as principals, educators, governors, parents, and learners. An effective anti-bullying policy should contain the following:

- An aim or statement of what the school wants to achieve regarding bullying behaviour.
- A clear definition of what constitutes bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners.
- Concerning strategies for the prevention of bullying in the primary schools, the latter should have an inclusive anti-bullying policy that urges learners to refrain from perpetrating bullying within and outside school premises, encourages co-operative behaviour, and rewards good behaviour.
- A statement that indicates how, where and when should learners, staff, and parents report bullying incidents.

- A declaration on how stakeholders, particularly all teaching staff, support workers, playground and lunchtime supervisors, and ancillary workers should respond to bullying.

6.5.14 Provision of Training

For bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners to be curbed, stakeholders need to receive more effective training. This will send the strong message that bullying behaviour in primary schools will not be tolerated. Such training should be on-going as it would be a way of capacitating and skilling primary school stakeholders to deal with bullying effectively. The provision of an educator's manual that outlines key anti-bullying strategies for the entire school staff would help significantly. After the initial training, regular staff discussions and group meetings should be convened in order to discuss anti-bullying efforts and improve school practices. Furthermore, effective workshops on the identification and management of bullying behaviour in primary schools need to be organised by the district or circuit.

6.5.15 Recommendations for Effective Supervision and Monitoring of Learners

School management, in conjunction with educators, non-educators, and pupils, need to develop a system of good supervisory and monitoring measures that help to prevent bullying behaviour in primary schools. A good supervision and monitoring system also facilitate early intervention. The abovementioned measures might include the appropriate supervision of school activities on a rota basis. Bullying hot-spots and hot-times need to be identified to ensure a quick response. All learners, particularly the seniors, should be regarded as a resource to assist with countering bullying behaviour in primary schools.

6.5.16 Classroom

Learners should be involved in the development of class rules against bullying behaviour and the enforcement of school rules in the classroom. Furthermore, regular class meetings to discuss bullying behaviour, peer relationships, and class rules need to be held. In the school, learners from a class should undertake activities that create an awareness of the impact of bullying and support the development of strategies to address bullying.

6.5.17 Partnerships with the School Community

To fight bullying behaviour among primary school learners, a strong partnership between the school and its surrounding community should be created and enhanced. Similarly, a positive school-police relationship should be created. Partnerships between the school and child- and youth-serving organisations for the provision of positive extra-curricular activities should be encouraged.

The partnerships between the school and the surrounding community should spread anti-bullying messages and the principles of best practice. In addition, primary schools should create meaningful partnerships with learners' parents, families, and the community at large. Community centres and primary schools need to create an environment that is welcoming and inclusive with a 'zero tolerance' for bullying. Furthermore, the school community should be invited to participate in school events and school meetings. In this way, the members of the community would be instructed on how to notice bullied children as well as on how to tackle bullying.

6.5.18 The Whole-School Approach

For the eradication of bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners, whole-school approach strategies should be implemented. This is because this approach

implies that all staff members, school management, and the nearby school community accept responsibility for children/learners' bad behaviour (Du Plessis, 2011:6). The school should teach learners' parents, learners, and the entire community how to report to the school any unacceptable behaviour displayed at home and in the community.

6.5.19 Communalitarian model to curb bullying in primary schools

Communalitarianism is a philosophy that emphasises the connection between and among individual members living in a designated communal environment, work together, share common resources for the benefit of the entire community. However, members can individually own resources that are individually amassed. Big projects such as water reticulation, schools, health centres, domestic animal grazing areas, roads etc are communally owned and shared. Conflict resolutions are done via traditional methods under the guidance of local councillors, chiefs or headman.

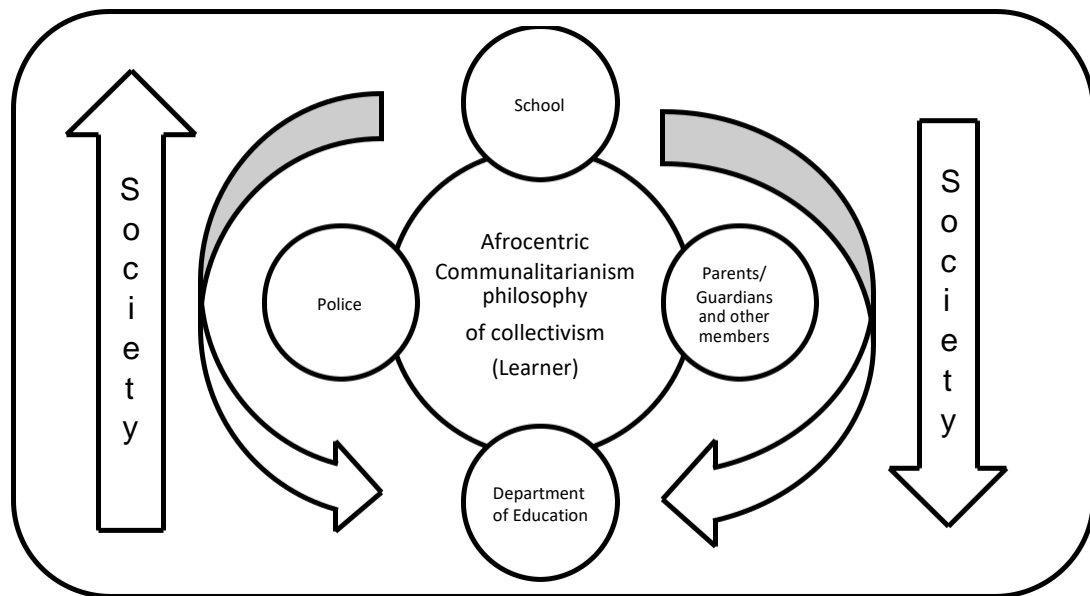


Figure 6.1: Afrocentric Communalitarian model for curbing violence in schools (Nyoni and Lidzhegu, 2019)

The model encourages every member of the community to take part in developing sustainable violence de-escalation methods that will make primary schools safe:

- Schools can adopt a police officer who should work with schools in combating crime in schools.
- Organised groups of parents to patrol routes learners take to and from schools.
- Community based groups such as church organisations and other service groups can provide counselling, extended learning programmes after school activities and other crime prevention programmes.
- State and local governments can develop model school safety plans and provide funding for schools to implement the programmes.
- High visibility of both members of community and the police in and around schools to suffocate opportune spaces for bullying and drug abuse.
- Universities can offer conflict management courses to educators and/or assist school management team in implementing violence prevention curricula.
- It takes a village to raise a child hence the community must interact with children to experience, grow and develop in a safe and healthy environment.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Upon completing this research study, it is essential to make recommendations to assist other researchers interested in conducting research in ways of addressing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners through a whole-school approach. Thus, the following topics for further research that emerged should be explored to address the limitations of the current study.

All primary school stakeholders are actively involved in developing a whole-school approach to fight bullying behaviour. However, no emphasis was placed on the role that district senior managers, circuit managers, school inspectors, as well as

the province can play in reducing the extent of bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. This is an area that could be investigated further.

This study only included school managers, learners, and SMT members in probing the extent of bullying, policy implementation, anti-bullying policy, and intervention strategies. Thus, it would be important to get inputs from educators, SMT members, school governing bodies, and learners' parents on these issues, since they are also involved in the lives of the learners.

Moreover, since this study only focused on the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools, future studies could be extended to secondary schools and kindergartens. Future study should also include secondary school principals, educators, and the SMT members in managing bullying behaviour. Communication with stakeholders is a key factor in addressing bullying behaviour among primary school learners effectively. Thus, it would be essential for all stakeholders to have a clear understanding of the definitions of a whole-school approach, bullying behaviour, as well as what is expected of schools. This can be achieved through communication and awareness campaigns. The present study discussed aspects of addressing bullying behaviour through a whole-school approach. Hence, future studies should further investigate the impact of stakeholder communication on bullying among learners.

Another important area to address relates to school principals' conception of their school climate that might influence their efforts to prevent bullying among primary school learners. A poor school climate may indicate that school personnel are less likely to respond effectively to bullying incidents. A poor school climate is associated with increased bullying and negative learner outcomes. Thus, it will be prudent for future studies to undertake deeper inquiries into the relationship between the school climate and the culture of bullying.

Learners should be encouraged to report bullying. In this regard, it would be helpful to place comment boxes where young people can anonymously alert staff to bullying behaviour.

The following are further recommendations for further research and training:

- Because the present research study focused on a whole-school approach to managing bullying in primary schools, further research studies may be conducted in secondary schools.
- Further studies could be undertaken on curriculum intervention and skills development training as an approach to reducing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners.
- While bullying behaviour seems to be a pervasive problem in most primary schools, there is a lack of anti-bullying policies and programmes. Therefore, systematic and continuous research is necessary to address the topic of a whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners.
- Educators, non-teaching staff, and other relevant stakeholders should be trained in terms of whole-school approach strategies, so that they would be able to deal with bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners effectively and efficiently.
- Some educators and parents regard bullying behaviour as an acceptable behaviour or as part of growing up, therefore research must be conducted to establish the reasons for such a position.
- The current study discussed the inclusion of all school stakeholders in addressing bullying behaviour and the need to have a clear understanding of the definitions of bullying and the whole-school approach to managing bullying. Thus, it would be important for future studies to investigate the effect of this on bullying amongst learners.
- Further investigations should be undertaken to identify schools with successful whole-school approach policies on managing bullying behaviour

as well as those that have been successful in lowering their bullying incidences.

- Finally, future research should include the implementation and monitoring of whole-school approach strategies in managing bullying behaviour among primary school learners.

6.7 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Limitations can be construed as research constraints that are out of the researcher's control. Such limitations relate to time, financial resources, access to information, and so on (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:275). The nature of this study only allowed this researcher to focus on and be limited to primary school learners. The study did not include secondary schools. Furthermore, during the process of the study, it was difficult to secure appointments for face-to-face interviews with the primary school community. In certain instances, the participants did not provide as much information as desired. In the current study, school administrators, support staff, and educators were reluctant to provide the researcher with data relating to the implementation of a whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour. In addition, the researcher encountered budget limitations that prevented him from covering the entire research site successfully. Other limitations included language and/or cultural barriers and shifts in environmental conditions during the study.

As for the delimitations of the study, they are parameters or borders of one's research (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:276). This study was limited to understanding the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour in primary schools situated in the Vhembe district of the Limpopo Province. This is because of their accessibility and proximity, as well as their relevance to the study - they all experience bullying amongst learners. Moreover, the researcher only focused on the understanding and perception of the school community regarding the whole-school approach in managing bullying behaviour.

6.8 MY REFLECTIONS ON THE STUDY PROCESS

In this study, it became evident that although bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners was increasing, it was overlooked or ignored by school authorities, parents, school communities, and the Department of Education (DoE). Where bullying was managed, this was done in isolation. Generally, primary school authorities have failed to implement a whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners.

The rationale for this study was to indicate that bullying behaviour was insidious and that its management required a whole-school approach. The latter implies that all school authorities, parents, learners, and school communities must take responsibility for learners' behaviour.

In the course of this study, I realised that primary school educators had a superficial knowledge of the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. To them, bullying behaviour amongst learners is an individual problem, not a systematic one that requires the entire school community to take responsibility for the behaviour of learners. In addition, I found that little had been done, in most primary schools, to combat bullying behaviour.

I further learnt that in some primary schools, bullying policies existed but were superficial and out-dated. Moreover, the primary schools applying the whole school approach did not include the entire school community, teaching and non-teaching staff, as well as school psychologists. Most rural primary schools did not have an anti-bullying policy and daily structured programmes guiding them on how to manage learners' behaviour.

Furthermore, I found that the DBE did not arrange workshops and seminars that address bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. It seemed that the DBE did not regard bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners as a serious problem that needed to be managed through a systematic approach.

I also established that bullying in primary schools was not only perpetrated by learners, but also by some educators who exerted emotional, physical and psychological bullying. These educators repeatedly harassed and hit learners. Due to this pressure, some learners drop out of school and join street kids who roam around villages and cities. I found such educators' actions disturbing and shocking as the effects of their bullying actions can be so severe that they lead to suicide. In conclusion, the DBE needs to create ant-bullying policies and arrange training workshops focused on bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners and the whole-school approach to managing bullying. The DBE needs to include all the professionals and experts in addressing bullying behaviour in primary schools.

6.9 SUMMARY

This chapter provided the research summary, and the overview of the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners. In addition, recommendations about the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners were made, so that the entire primary school community take responsibility for the misbehaviour of all learners. Furthermore, potential areas for future research were suggested.

The abovementioned recommendations about the whole-school approach to managing bullying behaviour require all members of the primary school community to take bullying behaviour seriously. Because bullying behaviour amongst primary school learners is multidimensional, its eradication requires the use of a holistic approach. All primary schools need to be proactive in the implementation of anti-bullying strategies. This would help to minimise bullying behaviour in primary schools. If these recommendations are considered by all relevant primary school stakeholders, South Africa could achieve zero bullying behaviour that would benefit future generations.

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Annexure 1: Formal letter of application

Enq: Lidzhegu M.E

Cell: 083 3597977/ 0843118844

P.O. BOX 3744

MAKHADO

0920

30 APRIL 2016

Department of Education

Vhembe District

P/Bag x2250

Sibasa

0970

Dear Sir/ Madam

Re: Request for permission to conduct educational research at primary schools.

As the above matter refers, I Lidzhegu Muvhoni Edward a registered student in DED (Doctor of Education Management) specializing in Education Management at the University of South Africa with the student number 31502741 under the supervision of Prof J Nyoni, hereby apply for permission to conduct research under the topic "A whole school approach to managing bullying behaviour among learners in primary schools".

During the study the following ethical standards will be followed:

- a. **Voluntary participation:** Participation will be voluntary. This means that participants will be given the right not to disclose the information that they do not wish to share with researcher. Participants will be allowed to withdraw from the study if they do not wish to continue with it.
- b. **Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality:** The information that will be given by the participants will be treated as confidential and they will not be required to provide names or contact details. Data will be treated as highly confidentiality.
- c. **Harm:** The research will not cause any harm to the participants.

The reseach will be conducted only in the primary schools with the intention of solving the problem of bullying behaviour among the primary school learners.

I sincerely hope that my request will meet your favorable consideration.

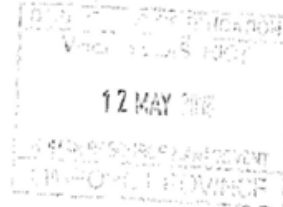
Yours faithfully

Lidzhegu M.E (University of South Africa).



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
VHEMBE DISTRICT



REF: 14/7/R
ENG: RAVELE N.P
TEL: 015 962 1029

MR LIDZHEGU M.E
P.O.BOX 3744
MAKHADO
0920

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AT
PRIMARY SCHOOLS.**

1. The above matter refers.
2. You are hereby informed that your request for permission to conduct research titled, *"A whole school approach to managing bullying behavior among learners in primary schools."*
3. We appreciate your commitment to ensure confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary participation by research subjects.
4. Kindly inform circuit managers and principals of primary schools prior to commencing your data collection.
5. Ensure that your research activities do not disturb teaching and learning in the schools.
6. Wishing you the best in your study.


DISTRICT DIRECTOR

2016-05-12
DATE

Thohoyandou Government Building, Old Parliament, Block D, Private Bag X2250, SIBASA, 0970
Tel: (015) 962 1313 or (015) 962 1331, Fax: (015) 962 6039 or (015) 962 2288

The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!

Annexure 3: Letter to Circuit

P.O. BOX 3744

MAKHADO

0920

Date: _____

The Circuit Manager

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

I hereby humbly request your permission to conduct research in primary schools.

I am a PHD student in Education Management at the University of South Africa. The research that I intend to conduct is based on the following topic: "**A whole school approach to managing bullying behaviour among learners in Primary schools**". The aim of the study is to investigate whole school approach strategies aimed at reducing bullying among primary school learners and to analyse and understand the nature and extent of the whole school approach in managing bullying behaviour in primary schools.

During the study the following ethics will be adhered to :

- a. Informed consent and voluntary participation: Participation will be voluntary. They will be allowed to withdraw from the study if they do not wish to continue with it.
- b. Privacy, Anonymity and Confidentiality: The information that will be given by participants will be treated as confidential . Participants will not be required to provide names or contact details . The information will be used for the intended purpose of the study only

I sincerely hope that my request will receive your favorable consideration.

Yours faithfully

Lidzhegu M.E(0833597977/0843118844)

Student Number: 31502741



DZINDI CIRCUIT
Private Bag x1406
LWAMONDO
0985

Ref: 31502741
Enq: Nemurate H
Cell: 076 411 2582

LIDZHEGU M.E
UNISA
P O BOX 3744
MAKHADO
0920



APPROVAL FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN DZINDI CIRCUIT SCHOOLS.

1. The above matter refers.
2. Your letter dated 17 MAY 2017 requesting to conduct research in Dzindi Circuit.
3. You are hereby informed that your request for permission to conduct research on *"A whole school approach to managing bullying behaviour among learners in Primary schools"* has been granted.
4. You are expected to adhere to research ethical considerations, particularly those relating to confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent your research subjects.
5. Yours in service.

TZNWZeva
CIRCUIT MANAGER (DZINDI)

19/05/2017
DATE

Dzindi Circuit Building next to Univen, Private Bag X 1406, Lwamondo, 0985

The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!

Annexure 4: Letter to principals

P.O. BOX 3744

MAKHADO

0920

Date: _____

The Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR PRIMARY SCHOOL.

I hereby humbly request your permission to conduct research in your primary school.

I am a PHD student in Education Management at the University of South Africa. The research that I intend to conduct is based on the following topic: "**A whole school approach to managing bullying behaviour among learners in Primary schools**". The aim of the study is to investigate whole school approach strategies aimed at reducing bullying among primary school learners and to analyse and understand the nature and extent of the whole school approach in managing bullying behaviour in primary schools.

During the study the following ethics will be adhered to :

- a. Informed consent and voluntary participation: Participation will be voluntary. They will be allowed to withdraw from the study if they do not wish to continue with it.
- b. Privacy, Anonymity and Confidentiality: The information that will be given by participants will be treated as confidential . Participants will not be required to provide names or contact details . The information will be used for the intended purpose of the study only

I sincerely hope that my request will receive your favorable consideration.

Yours faithfully

Lidzhegu M.E(0833597977/0843118844)

Student Number: 31502741

Annexure 7: Bullying in primary schools

EDUCATION



OUT OF HANDS Psychologists point to an upsurge of bullying in schools, and claim that the behaviour often goes unchecked. Picture: GALLI