

**AN EXPLORATION OF LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES OF
BULLYING AS AN ACT THAT PROMOTES EXCLUSION IN A
HIGH SCHOOL IN BOTHA-BOTHE DISTRICT, LESOTHO.**

By

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ABSTRACT

This study explored learners' experiences of bullying and how it makes them feel excluded in a school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho. A qualitative research method was applied, which included analysis of data obtained from narrative essays and from individual, semi-structured interviews. A narrative essay question was given to 76 Grade eight learners who participated in this study to write about *their experiences of bullying and how it makes them feel*. Out of these 76 Grade eight learners who wrote narrative essays, a purposive sampling was used to select 6 learners who seemed to experience multiple forms of bullying to participate in individual, semi-structured interviews. Various forms of bullying, the effects and factors that contribute to bullying which make learners feel excluded in a school environment are described. The study explicates that learners were exposed to multiple forms of bullying, for example, physical and verbal bullying. In addition, it was established that bullying exhibits psychological and emotional effects, particularly on the victims. Unique to this study were participants' perceived reasons why they think they are vulnerable to bullying and what they think triggers some learners to bully others. The study was brought to a conclusive end by highlighting the need for a systematic way of assessing and addressing the problem of bullying in schools. The study also highlighted that parental involvement is as crucial in dealing with cases of bullying as it is presumably caused by the way in which children are raised from their homes.

KEY WORDS:

Bullying, school violence, bully, victim, perpetrator, inclusion, exclusion, learners, experience

DECLARATION

I, Mots'elisi Lekena, declare that the work contained in this research report is entirely my own unaided work. It is submitted exclusively to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other university.

Signature:.....

Mots'elisi Anacletta Lekena

Signed on this day of 2016

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the study

The right to education is essential for every child. This premise stems from The Salamanca Framework for Action (UNESCO, 1994) which advocates education for all children. This right to education for all is also consistent with the initiative of inclusive education, which aims to provide education for *all* children in schools where they are not labelled or categorised as being different (UNESCO, 1994). In an effort to achieve education for all, the Lesotho government introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) policy in schools in order to enable all children to have access to education (Lesotho Education Act, 2010). Despite the Lesotho government initiative to provide access to education for all children, there are children who are not fully obtaining education due to a number of factors that hinder them from paying attention to the daily lessons (Ngakane, Muthukrishna & Ngcobo, 2012). Bullying for example, can be one of the factors that hinder learners' attention to what is taught in a classroom and can thus make them feel excluded at school.

It is in schools where the afore-mentioned fundamental right to education can be attained. For this reason, researchers have pointed out that schools should be safe havens (Neser, 2005) where learning opportunities are provided in a bullying free environment and where learners' sense of safety is provided and ensured. However, one wonders if this still holds sway in our present society where, according to Fareo (2015) there is an increasing spate of violence and bullying in schools. Bloch (2008) observed that schools were sites of exclusion and disappointment instead of havens that should be pointing the way to excellence and achievement for all. This excellence in teaching and achievement for all according to Prinsloo and Neser (2007) can be achieved only in a safe environment that is conducive to the attainment of educational goals. Nevertheless, schools seem to be sites where young people are at risk of falling victims to bullying (Burton & Leoschut, 2013) which thus infringes on their right to education in a safe environment, since they may struggle to concentrate in a classroom if they have a fear of being bullied.

School violence, particularly bullying is a worldwide concern that challenges and defies a school's traditional role as a place of safety, learning and encouragement (Leung & Ferris, 2008). Additionally, Fareo (2015) asserted that bullying is not only a pervasive problem in schools but it is also becoming a bigger crisis with vicious consequences. In equal vein, Coloroso (2002, pp.1-2) stated that "bullying among learners has led to serious school violence that in most cases resulted in death because of the use of weapons". These consequences of bullying can render schools as unjust, unsafe and deadly. Fagan, Wallace and Van Derbeken (1999) recounted a rather, horrifying incident that took place at Columbine High School, in the United States of America where twenty-three people were killed by two senior learners who wielded shotguns, and explosives. As though the bloodshed in this incident was not enough, the two senior learners ended their violent rampage by committing suicide. Notwithstanding that this was not the first instance of school violence worldwide, Fagan et al., (1999, p. A1) state that it was "one of bloodiest mass killings in US history" and the worst case of school violence reported at the time. This incident and many others that were reported, makes one realize that bullying is indeed a problem that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency in schools because it can create a sense of fear that is detrimental to the sense of comfort and safety needed in order for learning to occur.

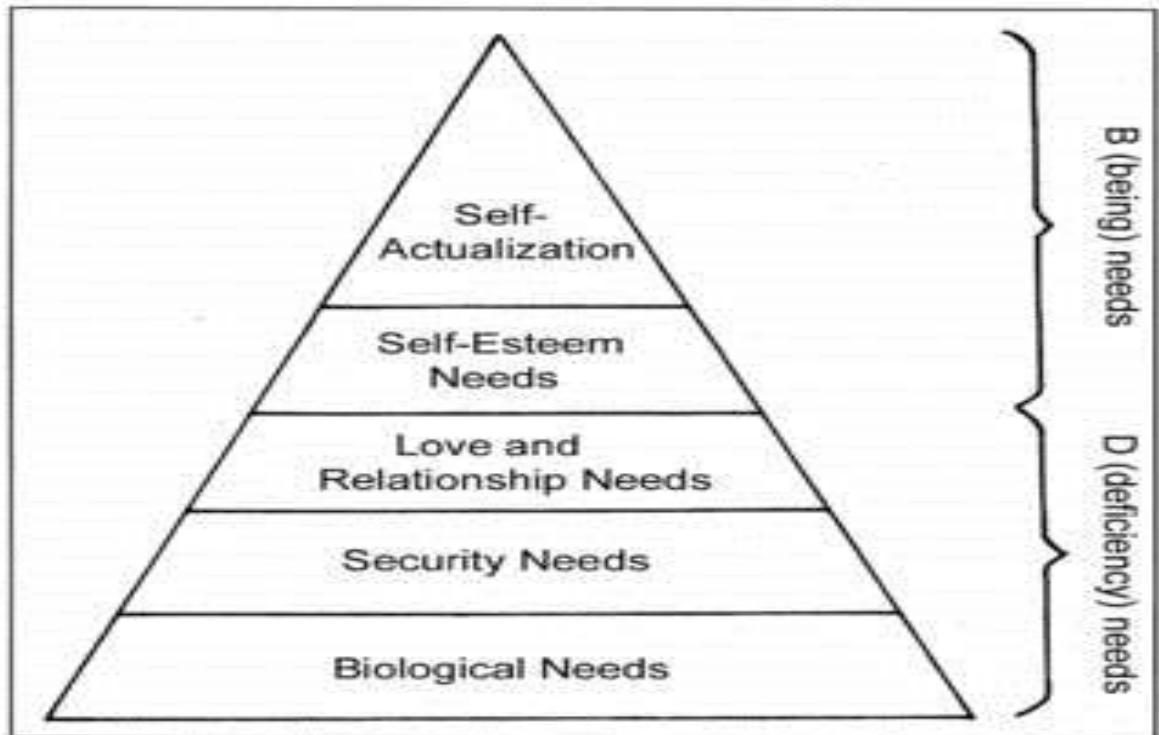
Studies have shown that school bullying is a phenomenon that affects majority of countries worldwide (De Wet, 2006; Isidiho, 2009; Olweus & Limber, 2010; James, 2010; Román & Murillo, 2011). Different countries have reported incidences of bullying in schools. From an international perspective, bullying incidents have been documented in countries like United Kingdom (James, 2010), United States of America (Roman & Murillo, 2011), Australia (Butler, 2006), Ireland (Livesey, 2010), to mention but a few. For example, in a study carried out in 2002 for the Department of Education in Northern Ireland (DENI) the findings revealed that 40 % of primary school pupils and 30 % of post-primary school pupils had been bullied (Ndebele & Msiza, 2014). While in USA, the findings of one study revealed that there is an alarming number of approximately 2.7 million victims of bullying in American schools (Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike & Akpaida, 2008). In Argentina, one study revealed that almost a third of secondary students report having their belongings taken from them or broken while in schools (Román & Murillo, 2011). Based on these statistics, it can be seen that bullying is prevalent in schools in international countries.

Africa is no exception to incidents of bullying in schools. Bullying incidents have been reported in countries like Nigeria (Egbochuku, 2007; Fareo, 2015); South Africa (De Wet, 2007; Protogerou & Flisher, 2012; South African Council of Educators, 2011, Burton, 2008) and Lesotho (Ngakane, et. al., 2012; Isidiho, 2009; Khanyela, 2012; Mosia, 2015). For example, the findings in one study carried out in one of the secondary schools in Nigeria revealed that 62.4 % of the respondents have been victims of bullying while 29.6 % have bullied others within the academic session (Fareo, 2015). Also, bullying has been reported to be as high as 61% in a sample of high-school students in Tshwane, South Africa (Protogerou & Flisher, 2012). Additionally, Burton (2008, p. 16) asserts that “a study undertaken by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) found that 15,3% of all South African learners have experienced incidents of school violence with approximately 1 821 054 learners having been either threatened, assaulted, robbed or sexually violated while at school”. These incidents of bullying and violence in South African schools are taking place despite the country’s constitution that is aimed to protect children from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation and to ensure their right to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources (Neser, 2005). Clearly, bullying is on the rise thus there is a need to examine closely the experiences of those who experience it.

Lesotho, which is the context of this study, is no different when it comes to incidents of bullying in schools. For instance, on the 3rd February 2012, two first year students were killed at Lerotholi Polytechnic (a technical college in Maseru district) by senior students during an annual initiation rite (Khanyela, 2012). In a separate event, a student in one of the high schools in Maseru stabbed and killed a fellow student in the school toilets during break time in November 2010 (Maama, 2010). These bullying incidents turn into serious crimes because learners carry weapons to school (De Wet, 2007). Furthermore, other studies conducted in some of the Lesotho schools do acknowledge the existence of bullying in schools. For example, Isidiho’s (2009) study found that bullying takes place in Lesotho schools and that 29.5 % of bullying in Lesotho happens in classrooms. Similarly, Mosia (2015) accentuates that bullying occurs in Lesotho schools and that 41.9% of respondents indicated that they have been bullied by other learners. Needless to say, bullying is a problem in schools world-wide that can make some learners feel excluded in the schooling environment and with the learning process.

In light of what has been reported about bullying, it is evident that bullying violates children's right to education in a safe and secure environment which is free from fear, harm and humiliation. When learners do not feel free and secure in a school that can create a learning barrier, which might prevent learners from actualizing their full potential. Bullying therefore, has to be addressed because it may hinder and prevent learners' progress towards self-actualization.

Figure 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



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Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs pyramid in

Figure 1 is used to demonstrate that the act of bullying may have impact on the levels of needs towards self-actualization thus giving further evidence to the reasons why bullying has to be addressed. For instance, a victim of bullying might feel insecure and afraid in the security needs level, thus making it difficult or preventing him/her to move towards the social needs level in order to reach the highest level in the hierarchy (which is that of self-actualization.) Based on this view Flourentzou (2010) stated that Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs allows one to state that the act of bullying prevents those affected by it from moving towards self-actualization as both parties experience a loss of safety, belongingness, self-esteem and finally a loss of control over their own lives. When one considers the consequences and effects of bullying it becomes clear that this problem requires intensive academic enquiry. This research forms part of that effort by

exploring learners' experiences of bullying and how this act of bullying makes them feel excluded in a high school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho.

1.2 Problem statement

A report submitted by the United Nation's Committee on the Rights of the Child (2001, p. 8), voiced its concern at the lack of measures and mechanisms in Lesotho to prevent and combat ill-treatment, violence, neglect, abuse and bullying of children. Another concern raised by the committee is that there is lack of awareness and information, including statistical data, on issues of ill-treatment, violence, neglect, abuse and bullying of children among the public (United Nation's Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2001, p. 8). This study is set against this background that, despite the efforts of the Lesotho Ministry of Education to make available education that strengthens the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms to all children, it appears that bullying still takes place in Lesotho schools. For example, in a study conducted in four of the primary and secondary schools by Isidiho (2009), the findings revealed that 35.6% of the learners investigated stated that bullying occurred every day at their schools and 69.2% of learners indicated that they sometimes feel sad and unhappy at school because of bullying incidents in their schools.

Notwithstanding that research has been undertaken on bullying in Lesotho, relatively little is said about bullying as it is experienced mainly by learners who have started high school and how the acts of bullying make them feel. De Wet (2007) added that although academic consideration of the bullying began in the mid-1960s and early 1970s, little evidence could be found of publications on the subject in the small landlocked Kingdom of Lesotho. Due to the absence of sufficient literature on bullying in Lesotho, this study will make a contribution to the body of knowledge related to bullying as it is explained and experienced by learners in high schools in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho. Furthermore, the researcher identified the need for intensified research with a dire need for the consistent application of research findings about bullying in the school systems to ensure that schools remain safe for learners to learn without making them feel excluded.

It is therefore of paramount importance that one makes an effort to understand learners' experiences of bullying and how it makes them feel in order to deal with it effectively. The research helps to clarify the forms and the effects bullying has on learners in this particular school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho. It also seeks to understand the underlying factors which contribute to bullying and how these make learners feel excluded in the schooling environment and learning process in a high school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho.

1.3 Purpose statement

The purpose of this study is to explore learners' experiences of bullying as an act that promotes exclusion in a high school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho. In trying to understand learners' experiences of bullying, the forms of bullying which are reported by the learners are explored. Furthermore, the effects bullying has on learners are examined. Also, the factors which contribute to bullying are discussed. Ultimately, the study explains how these (forms, effects and contributing factors) of bullying make learners feel excluded in the schooling environment.

1.4 Aims and objectives of the study

This study is conducted with the overarching aim of exploring learners' experiences of bullying as an act that promotes exclusion in a high school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho. This study thus aims to:

- Explore forms of bullying that make learners feel excluded in a school environment.
- Examine effects that bullying has on learners which might make them feel excluded in a school environment.
- Understand factors which contribute to bullying as an act that can perpetuate learners' exclusion.

1.5 Research questions

Every study begins with an appropriate research question which stresses the need to capture the central phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p.324). The central question of this study is:

- What are learners' experiences of bullying as an act that promotes exclusion in a high school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho?

The following sub research questions guide this study in answering the main question:

- What are forms of bullying that learners experience in a school that make them feel excluded in a school environment?
- What are the effects that bullying has that make learners feel excluded in a school environment?
- Which factors contribute to bullying as an act that can perpetuate learners' exclusion?

1.6 Clarification of relevant terms

1.6.1 Bully

A person who, either through physical or psychological means, intentionally attempts to or successfully inflicts harm on someone else (Olweus, 2003).

1.6.2 Victim

A child who is subjected to bullying from the bully (Olweus, 2003).

1.6.3 Bystander

A child who is not on the giving or receiving end of bullying but who observes or witnesses bullying take place (Coloroso, 2002).

1.6.4 Bullying

A learner is being bullied when they are repeatedly exposed to negative actions by one or more learners who have more power than the learner who is being bullied. Bullying occurs when that power is used in a hostile manner which may cause physical or psychological damage (Olweus, 2003).

1.6.5 Direct Bullying

Direct bullying involves either verbal or physical attacks on a victim (Atlas & Pepler, 1998).

1.6.6 Indirect Bullying

Indirect bullying involves more subtle forms of harassment, such as social isolation or excluding others (Atlas & Pepler, 1998).

1.6.7 Violence

The threat or use of physical force with an intention of causing physical injury, damage, harm or intimidation to another person (Hamburg, 1998).

1.6.8 School violence

Refers to the phenomenon of violence taking place within educational institutions (Baldry & Farrington, 1999).

1.6.9 Exclusion

Barriers which deny learners a full access to participate at academic and social level (Messiou, 2006).

1.6.10 Inclusion

Inclusion is about the presence, participation, and achievement of all learners in a school (Ainscow & Miles, 2005).

1.6.11 Inclusive education

It is significant to understand that inclusion does not only concern learners who are defined as having special needs. Inclusive education is far broader than that, for the purposes of this study inclusive education is concerned with any learner who may be experiencing any form of exclusion which may result from bullying. Messiou (2006, p.307) concurs this by stating that “focusing only on special needs is limiting as an agenda, since other factors that might bear on children’s participation might be overlooked”.

1.6.12 Experiences

The sum total of the conscious events which compose an individual life, that is, the actual living through an event (Webster, 1959).

1.7 Chapter outline

Section One - this section served to orientate the reader to the issue of school violence and bullying in general, as well as to the incidents of bullying reported in international and national countries. Further, it served to clarify the researcher’s aims for this report.

Section Two comprises of the literature review underpinning this research and the theoretical framework which is premised within inclusive education. This literature draws on several theories of and explanations for bullying, school violence, inclusion and exclusion whilst being firmly located within the Lesotho context.

Section Three involves the description of the qualitative methods used in this study. Further, it provides the context and defines the population and the sample with which the study will be conducted. In addition, data collection process is explained, as well as the procedures that are undertaken in analyzing data. Ethical issues involved in this research are also discussed in this chapter.

Section Four discusses the results of the research, with particular emphasis on addressing the research questions established for this study.

Section Five considers the results from chapter four within the context of previous research, while ascertaining its relationship to such literature.

Section Six provides the conclusions of this study, while examining its limitations and strengths. Recommendations are presented within this chapter to conclude the report.

1.8 Conclusion

In this chapter the introduction and the problem statement for this study were discussed. Furthermore, the aims and the research questions which are guiding this study are presented. It was determined that bullying is indeed a problem in schools and there is a need to be aware of learners' experiences regarding bullying.

In the following chapter, the literature which was reviewed for the purpose of this study is discussed.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The theoretical framework of this study is premised in inclusive education because it addresses bullying as one of the acts in schools which promotes exclusion. Olweus (2003) asserts that bullying is an act that socially isolates learners through intentional exclusion from school activities. That being the case, I reviewed literature on inclusive education and on bullying to become familiar with the body of knowledge around the phenomenon of bullying and how it might hinder inclusion and thus promote exclusion. This chapter utilises both international and local literature on the various forms of bullying which occur in schools. Moreover, the effects that bullying might have on the learners, as well as the possible factors which might contribute to bullying are discussed in this chapter.

2.2 Definition of inclusive education: how bullying hinders inclusion and perpetuates exclusion

Inclusive education is defined and conceptualized from the narrow or the broad view. The narrow view of inclusive education looks at inclusion from the perspective of accommodating only learners with disabilities and special needs in mainstream schools. However, Messiou, (2006, p. 307) asserts that concentrating only on special needs is limiting, since other factors (such as bullying) “that might bear on children’s participation might be overlooked”. Thus, by focusing mainly on disability other factors such as bullying that may require attention may be neglected, resulting in some learners feeling excluded in a school and learning environment.

Conversely, the broad view of inclusion focuses on accommodating all students in the mainstream setting (Kemple, 2004) even those learners who may be experiencing any form of exclusion in the school environment. Additionally, Ainscow, Booth, Dyson, Farrell, Frankham, Gallannaugh, Howes and Smith (2006) observe that inclusive education is more broadly concerned with reducing exclusion and increasing participation in schools. This also resonates with the key elements used by Ainscow and

Miles (2009) in attempting to define inclusion. They state that inclusive education is about presence, participation and achievement for all students (Ainscow & Miles, 2009). This requires learners to be there in schools and take part freely in school activities so that learning can be achieved. However, in the school environment where bullying takes place, free participation and achievement might be hindered and consequently cause learners to feel unsafe and excluded in a learning environment.

Furthermore, inclusive education is also seen more broadly as a reform that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners (UNESCO, 2001). In order to enable us to welcome this diversity in schools, it is essential to first identify practices that promote exclusion. Walton (2011, p. 243) argues that in order to be inclusive, “there is a need to first learn to question practices that continue to perpetuate exclusion”. This argument links with the proposition made by Slee (2011, p.171) that “in order to reframe inclusive education field, there is a need to identify and dismantle educational exclusion”. As literature demonstrates, bullying is a problem that continues to grow and creates environments less conducive for learning (Woolfolk, 2003) thus bullying in this study is regarded as an act which promotes exclusion, and consequently hinders inclusion.

Additionally, inclusion is viewed as a process of increasing the participation of learners in, and reducing their exclusion from culture, curriculum and communities of local centres of learning (Messiou, 2006). The principle of inclusion seeks to achieve education for all by restructuring schools as institutions that include everybody, support learning and respond to individual needs (Khoaeane & Naong, 2015) and ensuring that all children acquire education in bullying free environments. Dagnev (2013) argues that there is no commonly accepted notion of inclusion, but rather a range of varieties of inclusion. The author identifies inclusion as placement; inclusion as education for all; inclusion as participation; and social inclusion. For Dagnev (2013), inclusion is defined and conceptualized differently depending on the context. In order to achieve inclusion, Schoeman (2012) observes that there is a growing need for teachers to understand and assist learners with behavioral problems that act as a barrier to effective learning. In this case, bullying can be one of the behavioral problems that teachers ought to understand to avoid it from hindering effective learning. However, documentary evidence has revealed that in Lesotho, teachers are not trained in inclusive education and do not have

the professional skills needed for working or assisting learners in the inclusive or mainstream class (Khoaeane & Naong, 2015).

For the purpose of this study, inclusive education is defined as providing education for all learners from diverse backgrounds, in the bullying-free environment. This can include learners from ethnic and linguistic minorities, gays and lesbians, and those who are perceived as having disabilities (UNESCO, 2001). Some studies have shown that learners who are perceived as weak, less attractive, overweight, small, new, or immigrants tend to be victimized by bullying (Frisen, Jonsson, & Persson, 2007). These groups of people, as research has indicated, are vulnerable to being picked on by bullies. It can therefore be argued that learning might not take place effectively in a context where bullying prevails since some learners may feel unsafe and excluded in a schooling environment because of this phenomenon. Thus exclusion which is brought about by bullying in schools has to be investigated and dealt with effectively.

Since the researcher is using an inclusive education framework to explore bullying, it can be concluded that learning might not take place effectively in a context where bullying prevails since some learners may feel excluded in a learning process because of this phenomenon. Thus, inclusive education is therefore expected to eliminate social exclusion such as bullying in schools that emanates from attitudes and responses to diversity (Vitello & Mithaug, 1998).

2.3 Definitions: bullying and violence

Before one can engage in trying to effectively manage the problem of bullying and possibly eradicating it in schools, there is a need for a clear understanding of what bullying and violence are, as well as what constitutes these behaviors. In this way all stakeholders involved can share a common understanding of the problem and can attempt to find solutions to solving the problem in an effective manner.

2.3.1 Bullying and violence overlap

Although a broad phenomenon with multiple definitions, the majority of the scholarly literature on bullying does not treat bullying as a solitary topic; rather, bullying is commonly tied to the topic of violence. These phenomena (bullying and violence) will,

in some cases, be addressed simultaneously because scholarly authors have spoken of them as being closely related. Bullying and violence are defined as subcategories of aggressive behaviour (Olweus, 2003) thus they overlap to some degree. Similarly, Liang, Flisher, and Lombard (2007) reiterate that bullying and violence are related because they both denote a form of aggression. Burton and Leoschut (2013) indicate that many forms of bullying are violent in nature and they result in substantial harm to the victims which can make a victim feel excluded in the school environment or can result in one having no sense of belonging in a school.

2.3.2 Bullying

Despite the many proposed definitions of bullying by different researchers, one finds the definition offered by Olweus (1993) as yielding the better understanding of the phenomenon of bullying. Olweus (1993) defines bullying as the set of physical and/or verbal behaviours that a person or group of persons direct against a peer, in a hostile repetitive and on-going fashion, abusing power with the intention to cause harm to the victim (Olweus, 1993). This definition establishes a fulfilment of most of criteria in order for the behaviour exhibited to be defined as bullying. Based on the aspects mentioned above, one can conclude that a clearer and concise definition of bullying would take into account the following;

- The intention to cause harm;
- An imbalance of power between the victim and the aggressor; and
- The repetitive bullying situation.

In addition, the aspect of power imbalance is reflected in Glew, Rivara, and Feudtner's (2000) definition who observe bullying as a form of aggression in which one or more children intend to harm or disturb another child who is perceived as being unable to defend himself or herself. Kalliotus (2000, p. 50) on the other hand describes bullying as "being a repeated, psychological or physical act of aggression, which causes embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another". Kalliotus's definition of bullying exhibits aspects of repeated action and cause of harm thus sharing some common characteristics with Olweus's (1993). Emphasizing the aspect of harm, Beaty and Alexeyev (2008) define bullying as an aggressive behaviour displayed in an overt

manner in physical and verbal attack which can also take a covert form that includes socially excluding others and sending harmful messages about the victims.

Although bullying is generally seen as an act that is harmful to those individuals who are exposed to it, to some people bullying is “just part of growing up”. It “strengthens” a child’s character and is a “rite of passage” (Krige, Pettipher, Squelch & Swart, 2000, p. 4). There is a documented incident in Lesotho where two first year students were killed by senior students at Lerotholi Polytechnic institution in Maseru, Lesotho during an annual initiation rite (Khanyela, 2012). Clearly, viewing bullying as a rite of passage may bring about bitter consequences which can result in death. Although bullying incidents such as this one exist in Lesotho schools, it is worrying however that, “the topic has not received enough attention from the Ministry of Education and Training to regulate it, and there are few studies on the topic to describe the extent of the problem” (Mosia, 2015, p. 161). This therefore places an emphasis on the fact that bullying needs to be researched with urgency in Lesotho schools. Additionally, teachers’ approach to bullying is critical because how teachers address students’ aggressive behaviour can either reinforce or curtail it (Mosia, 2015). When bullying goes unchecked, it is likely to result in learning being perceived as an unpleasant experience for learners who are victims (Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008). A study by Isidiho (2009) concurs that students in Lesotho hardly report bullying incidents to their teachers. Reluctance to report to teachers is a concern that should be taken seriously by educationists, as teachers should be trusted to nurture all domains of development, including psychosocial development (Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 2006).

2.3.3 Violence

Violence can be defined as a “physical act that is destructive in nature and which is performed by someone for the purpose of either hurting or morally degrading another human being” (Burnett, 1998, p. 790). By adapting Burnett’s (1998) definition, school violence can then be conceptualized as destructive physical acts performed by learners with the purpose of inflicting physical harm or injury; or causing humiliation, degradation or psychological distress on another learner. Hamburg (1998, p. 3) defines violence as “... the threat or use of physical force with the intention of causing physical injury, damage, harm or intimidation to another person”. Violence in schools, on the

other hand is characterized by physical compulsion, physical injury, verbal aggression and bullying (De Wet, 2007). School violence, to put it differently, refers to the phenomenon of violence and crime taking place within educational institutions. It is observed that there are high levels of violence occurring in schools and these can be a cause for serious concern since it acts as a barrier to learning (Burton & Leoschut, 2013) thus infringes on children's right to education and promoting exclusion.

There are various forms of school violence. Benbenishty, Astor, and Estrada (2008) identified verbal, emotional and physical abuse, property damage, bullying and threats as forms of school violence. Burton (2008) describes four forms of school violence: threats of violence and harm, sexual violence, physical assault and robbery. In similar vein, Furlong and Morrison (2000, p. 71) adds that "... school violence is a multifaceted construct that involves both criminal acts and aggression in schools, which inhibits development and learning, as well as harming the school's climate." If school violence exhibits the above mentioned forms and presents a harmful school climate, needless to say some learners can be denied education due to an unwelcoming school environment. It is in this regard that Pillay and Ragpot (2010) observe that the safety of learners in schools has become questionable as an increasing number of incidents of school-based violence are being reported on a consistent basis.

According to Klewin, Tillmann, and Weingart (2003, p. 863-864), the academic debate on violence in schools is, to a large extent, concentrated on three clearly distinguishable categories of behaviour by learners:

- *Physical compulsion and physical injury:* This category always involves conflict between two or more individuals in which at least one side uses physical means (bodily force or weapons) to cause intentional harm, or at least threaten such harm, to the other side. In these cases, the harm itself is also physical in nature: the spectrum ranges from a slap in the face or a box on the ears, through broken bones to life-threatening injuries and even killing.
- *Verbal aggression and mental cruelty:* This category involves the marginalization or degradation of an individual by the use of insults, humiliation, or emotional blackmail.

- *Bullying*: This term refers to a special variation of violence, encompassing both the physical and mental components. It involves a victim/perpetrator relationship, in which the weaker individual is regularly taunted and oppressed. Bullying takes many different forms: physical and verbal attacks play a part, as do indirect strategies (such as exclusion from the group, the spreading of rumours).

As a process of socialisation, the school is believed to function as an extension of the learners' parents by, firstly, supporting parents in their tasks of raising and educating their children [in a safe environment], and secondly with educators "being in loco parentis" (Wilkins, 2005, p. 27). Educators in particular within the education system, in general, have the function of guiding and moulding learners by "introducing them to the workings and norms of society, supporting them in coping with life and enabling them to realise their potential" (Wilkins, 2005, p. 27). In view of this, it can be inferred that the function of the school is being a site of socialisation (Wilkins, 2005). However, when one examines bullying and violence which are taking place in schools it can be concluded that some schools are no longer sites of socialisation but rather they have become unsafe places where teaching and learning do not take place effectively.

In light with what has been discussed above, one realises that school violence and bullying can hinder inclusion thus leaving other learners feeling excluded and ultimately rendering schools as unsafe. A safe school according to Prinsloo (2005) is the one that is free of danger and where there is an absence of possible harm. In a safe school environment every learner should at least have the right to human dignity, the right to freedom and security (Lesotho Education Act, 2010; Republic of South Africa, 1996). Despite the initiatives of the Lesotho Education Act and the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa which state that everyone has the right to freedom and safety, newspaper articles seem to portray schools as far removed from being the "supposedly safe places" (De Waal, 2005, p.53) where learners can learn in a free of intimidation environment where violence and bullying do not prevail. However, according to research, "fewer than one learner in two million suffers a school-associated violent death" (Rabrenovic, Kaufman & Levin, 2004, p. 115). Nonetheless, violent incidents and fear of violence have a profound effect on the educational process. Schools with high rates of crime and violence are less effective in educating learners.

These schools have lower levels of learner achievement, higher rates of absenteeism, and more dropouts (De Wet, 2007).

2.4 Theoretical perspectives on school bullying

Theories provide us with an account of the world around us. Since this study is embedded within inclusive education, explanations are needed to understand bullying because it seems to hinder its victims' education. Most of the theories that directly address school bullying tie bullying and violence together, thus, these topics have been explored together from a theoretical perspective (Williams, 2008).

The following theories will be explored: functionalism, biological theories, and social learning theory.

2.4.1 Functionalism theory

Functionalism theory is a logical choice for examining school bullying, and it sheds light on students' perceptions of incidents of bullying in schools. The discussion of functionalism theory is drawn from Merton (1968) who noted that the social activities in which we engage and the cultural items we possess have a function for the social system. These activities fulfill a sociological function, and they are indispensable. While it could be argued that school violence and bullying fulfill psychological functions, such as support in the development of coping skills for the victims and perhaps even skills in persuasion for bullies, these are not sociological functions, which are the focus of functionalism (Williams, 2008).

2.4.2 Biological theory

Biological theories on the other hand, have also been used to explain bullying. Kauffman (2001, p. 346) notes in his discussion of conduct disorders that "genetic and other biological factors apparently contribute to the most severe cases of conduct disorder". There has been research suggesting that body types can be correlated with one's character and behavior (Shoemaker, 2000). Shoemaker pointed to research that demonstrates some relationship between genetics and both criminal activity and antisocial behavior, but he noted that researchers have not yet found the specific

“biological explanation of just what is being inherited to produce crime or delinquency” (Shoemaker, 2000, p. 33). While it may be possible to explain some specific behaviors from a biological perspective, William (2008) argues that it is difficult to do so with bullying because bullying can be a limited occurrence, and can be perpetuated by different types of individuals. Thus using biological theories to explain bullying falls flat.

2.4.3 Social learning theory

Social learning theory is founded on the assumption that people learn through observing others' behaviour, attitudes, and outcomes of those behaviours. Social learning theory proposes that “aggression is learned through the direct consequences of aggressive and non-aggressive acts and through observation of aggression and its consequences” (Kauffman, 2001, p. 347). This theory suggests that children learn specific aggressive responses from the observation of others who model the behavior. Children are also likely to engage in aggressive behavior if they do not see their models receiving negative consequences for the victimization of others. Kauffman (2001) makes reference to Bandura's famous Bobo doll experiment where he demonstrated that children learn and imitate behaviors they have observed in other people. The children in Bandura's studies observed an adult acting violently toward a Bobo doll. When the children were later allowed to play in a room with the Bobo doll, they began to imitate the aggressive actions they had previously observed. In view of this, social learning theory has also been used to explain bullying, in that some children can act violently towards others as a result of imitating others.

In summary, several theories provide insight regarding the phenomena of school violence and bullying. Functionalism falls short in providing an explanation of school violence and bullying because neither of these phenomena has a value, or function, for society that cannot be achieved another way. Biological theories may offer an understanding of extreme cases of criminal activity, but they do not assist in explaining the bullying that many students engage in during their school years. Social learning theory comes closer to explaining school violence and bullying, except that it misses the mark by not giving more credence to the environment in which the delinquent behavior takes place (William, 2008).

2.5 Locations of bullying

Violence does not take place in a vacuum; it transpires in various locations. Astor, Meyer and Pitner (2001, p. 512), discussed research relating to apartment communities providing evidence for the assertion that territoriality, which is defined as “achieving and exerting control over a particular segment of space,” is a possible theoretical concept that may help explain why violence in school occurs at certain times and in certain locations. Astor et al., (2001) connected the school settings with the idea of territoriality by noting that, as in the apartment complexes that were studied, schools have undefined spaces. These spaces are places where students and staff gather, such as cafeterias, auditoriums, and playgrounds, but there is little, if any, informal interaction. Teachers seem to feel that they are not responsible for these spaces, unless assigned to monitor those spaces. Since no one appears to be responsible for these spaces, there may be more opportunity to engage in questionable behavior in these undefined spaces (Astor et al., 2001).

Various authors have noted that there is much more bullying in school than there is on the way to and from school (Rivers & Smith, 1994). Within the school grounds, the playground is most common setting for bullying, followed by the hallways, classrooms, and washrooms (Whitney & Smith, 1993). Most bullying occurs on the playground or in the classroom (in Norway, 65 percent and 38 percent respectively; in the USA; 26 percent and 29 percent, respectively) but this type of behaviour also takes place along hallways/corridors, the gymnasium, the locker room, and the bathroom (William, 2008). Although a substantial portion of learners are bullied on their way to and from the school, this percentage is usually considerably lower than the percentage being bullied at school (Olweus, Limber & Mihalic, 1999). In study conducted in Lesotho, Isidiho’s (2009) found that 29.5 % of bullying in Lesotho happens in the classrooms. Astor et al., (2001) noted that in apartment complexes, there are higher incidents of crime in hallways, lobbies, stairwells, and elevators, since these are “undefined” spaces.

As it has been noted above, violence and bullying and other infractions of school rules occur in undefined spaces in schools. In view of this, Astor et al., (2001) note that when an individual is responsible for monitoring these spaces, it is more likely that problems will be addressed and reported. They concluded that obviously, these “undefined” spaces in schools need to be identified and reclaimed.

2.6 Prevalence of bullying

Prevalence rates of bullying have been studied by a number of researchers following on from Olweus' research findings in Norway. Studies from a number of countries such as England, Ireland, Australia, and the Netherlands (among other countries) have confirmed that rates of bullying are the same or higher. Another important finding from these researchers is that most learners who are bullied either do not report the bullying or they wait a very long time before doing so. The reasons include feelings of shame, fear of retaliation for reporting, and fear that adults cannot or will not protect the victim in the settings where bullying usually takes place, like the playground, the hallway of the school, or on the way to and from school.

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development in the United States estimated that 1.6 million children in grades 6-10 were affected by weekly bullying. Of those, 13 percent were bullies, 11 percent were victims, and 6 percent were bully/victims (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Morton & Scheidt, 2001). In a survey study of 15 686 United States Youths between the sixth and tenth grade, Nansel et al., (2001) found that 8.5 % identified themselves as victims of bullying only sometimes and 8.4 % stated that they were bullied once a week or more. Results from a large survey in Australian schools of more than 38 000 school children between 7 and 17 years established that peers bullied approximately six percent each week (Rigby, 1997). Sporadic bullying (which occurs monthly or even less frequently) also affected between 15.30 percent of all learners (Tanner, 2001; Whitney & Smith, 1993). One-half of these victims were either pushed or shoved, grabbed, or slapped in or around school, and one-quarter reported being kicked, hit, or bitten during the school year (Binns & Markow 1999). Peterson, Pietrzak, and Speaker (1998) found that 63 percent of learners had been verbally threatened during the past year.

According to more than 150 000 Norwegian and Swedish learners who completed the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire, 15 % of the learners in Norwegian or Swedish elementary and lower secondary/junior high schools (grades 1-9, roughly corresponding to ages 7-16) are involved in bully/victim problems. Approximately 9 % are victims and 7 % bullied other students. A relatively small percentage of the learners is both victim and bully (1-5 percent of the total learner population, or 17 % of the victims). 5 % of the learners are involved in more frequent bullying problems (as bullies or victims or

bully/victim), occurring once a week or more frequently. These figures emphasize that bullying is a considerable problem in Norwegian and Swedish schools affecting a very large number of learners (Olweus, 1999).

Furthermore, a large scale study conducted in 2007 by Plan International, a non-governmental organization on school violence in 49 developing and 17 developed countries, showed that more than half of sixth-grade primary students had been robbed, insulted or struck by peers at school during the month prior to the data collection (Román & Murillo, 2011). In Argentina, Román and Murillo (2011) study revealed that almost a third of secondary students report having school supplies or other objects they have taken to school taken from them or broken. Isidiho (2009) states that research in the United States of America revealed that half of all violence against teenagers occurs in school bullying, on school property, or on the streets near the school. Espelage and Holt (2001) believe learners in sixth and seventh grades are most likely to bully and be bullied because of the transition of these students into a new middle or junior high school.

In African surveys, Ndebele and Msiza (2014) cite a study by Egbochuku (2007) who found that in Nigeria 78% of learners in junior secondary school had been victims of bullying, while 71% had bullied others. From a South African perspective, South African Council of Educators (2011) observed that violence is a serious worry in both primary and secondary schools, across age, gender, race and school categories. Various surveys conducted in the Western Cape amongst learners and teachers found that the majority of schools reported problems with fighting, physical violence and bullying among learners (Kruger, 2011). In addition, bullying has been reported to be as high as 61% in a sample of high-school students in Tshwane in Gauteng (Protogerou & Flisher, 2012).

Some studies carried out on bullying in Lesotho indicate that the maltreatment of students exists in schools. New learners are socialized by senior learners into a school, and the socialisation done by both boys and girls is intended to humiliate the newcomers (Ngakane, et al., 2012). De Wet (2007) states that in Lesotho students become violent towards fellow students and teachers, but female students are mostly victims of physical and sexual aggression. In a study conducted by Isidiho (2009) in Lesotho high schools, the findings showed that more than one-third (35.6%) of the

learners who participated in the study were of the opinion that bullying occurred every day at their school. In the same study, findings reveal that almost one-quarter (24.0%) of the respondents said that learners were bullied once or twice a week, 7.6 percent said that learners were bullied once or twice a year, and 21.8 percent said never (Isidiho, 2009).

2.7 Forms of bullying which take place in school

2.7.1 Direct bullying

Bullying can take several forms. Findings of research on bullying behaviours have determined that bullying can assume both direct and indirect forms (Lee, 2004). Direct bullying is easily observable and subtle and it is not easily identifiable for those not involved (Ndebele & Msiza, 2014). According to James (2010) bullying can be physical or direct when it hurts an individual in a tangible way such as for example, hitting and kicking. Additionally, Banks (1997, p.1) indicates that kicking, hitting, pushing, punching and spitting are some of the behaviours that form part of the repertoire of direct physical bullying. He further asserts that many studies on bullying have revealed that boys typically engage in direct bullying methods (Banks, 1997). Burton and Leoschut (2013) indicate that many forms of bullying can be direct (hitting, kicking, threatening, extortion) thus are violent in nature and they result in substantial harm to the victims. The physical form of bullying behaviour according to Squelch (2002, p. 1) includes: kicking, hitting, punching, biting, pinching; taking personal belongings; demanding money; forcing someone to do something they don't want to; humiliating and damaging property.

Gumpel (2008) categorizes bullying into two principal subtypes: (1) physical bullying which is manifested in acts of aggression with the aim of achieving social dominance; and (2) social bullying which involves manipulation of social relationships in order to ensure humiliation and alienation. For example, gossiping, threats of exclusion and social isolation. Conversely, Isidiho (2009) asserts that the most basic distinction is between physical and psychological forms: physical includes hitting, beating and kicking, while psychological forms include verbal abuse, name calling, threatening, gestures, stalking behaviour, malicious telephone calls to a student's safe space (or

home), repeatedly hiding victims' belongings, excluding the victim from desired activities, and spreading malicious rumours about someone. In view of psychological form of bullying behaviour Squelch (2002, pg. 1) states that it includes: spreading rumours; exclusion; dominating a person; using intimidation to extort goods from the victim and frightening a person deliberately.

Olweus (1991, 1994) observed that boys are generally more violent and destructive in their bullying than girls are, making greater use of physical means of bullying. Girls tend to use more indirect and subtle forms of harassment, including rumour-spreading, malicious gossip, and manipulation of friendship (for example, depriving another girl of her best friend). In a study of several middle schools in Rome, Baldry (1998, p. 361-378) found that the most common types of bullying reported by boys were threats, physical harm, rejection and name-calling. For girls, the most common types were name-calling, teasing, rumours, rejection, and taking of personal belongings. In addition, Olweus, et al., (1999), in their widely publicized research, agreed that boys are much more likely to bully others than girls and a relatively large percentage of girls report that they are bullied mainly by boys. They also observed that bullying occurs among girls but much more among boys. Girls, instead of using physical means, resolve to use more subtle and indirect ways such as slandering, spreading of rumours, intentional exclusion of others from their group, and manipulation of friendship relations.

2.7.2 Indirect bullying

Indirect bullying as Marais and Meier (2010) state, can take the form of name calling, teasing, taunting, mocking, as well as intimidating other learners. It can also consist of indirect actions such as stealing or damaging other learners' belongings or hurting them emotionally. Baldry and Farrington (1999) identify forms of bullying in Italian school and findings revealed that victims there were called nasty names, they were rejected, they spread rumours about them, and they had their belongings taken away. Indirect bullying also employ actions used to intimidate and demean individuals without causing direct physical pain and can include behaviours such as damaging other people's property, extortion, locking a person in a confined space, threatening with a weapon and taking people's possessions (Baldry & Farrington, 1999) . This type of bullying

behaviour according to Juvonen and Graham (2001) is more prevalent among older youth. Indirect bullying includes spreading rumours and social exclusion (Burton & Leoschut, 2013).

Verbal bullying is seen as a subcategory of indirect bullying. The verbal form of bullying behaviour includes: teasing, mocking, taunting, humiliating; verbal threats; name-calling; swearing; threatening and embarrassing gestures; insulting and using abusive comments (Rozen, 2008, p. 2). Generally, verbal bullying is the most common (Ngakane, et al., 2012; Isidiho, 2009) in Lesotho schools but not frequently reported to school authorities. A study on bullying in Lesotho by Mosia (2015) found that verbal aggression is the most prevalent form of bullying and that it is the least attended to by teachers who are ignorant about children's psychosocial development, as they may think no 'real' harm has been done. In the same study, students' noted several aspects of verbal bullying, namely: name calling, jokes, gossip, insults, teasing and threats, which add up to 73.3%, as the most serious type of bullying that schools in Lesotho need to address (Mosia, 2015).

2.7.3 Cyber bullying

While the Internet has become a major part of the daily lives for millions of adults, so too has it become a part of the lives of children. In 2001, it was estimated that 17 million youth between the ages of 12 and 17 used the Internet (Lenhart & Madden, 2007). However, some learners use internet as a platform to bully others. Okoiye, Anayochi, and Onah (2015, p. 110) posit that cyber bullying is manifested in the form of verbal threats, attacks and taunts from peers through social networking websites, such as Facebook and Twitter. Although cyber bullying is still a relatively new phenomenon, Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) argue that the little data currently in existence indicate that the negative effects of cyber bullying are at least similar to those of more traditional forms of bullying.

Since most youth have their own cell phones, and since most of these phones possess text, picture, and video capabilities, the ability to send malicious information through the cell phone increases tremendously (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). Unfortunately, these advanced cell phones have taken cyber bullying to another level as there have been increased instances of students photographing or videotaping other students in the

bathroom or in locker rooms and then distributing the photos to other students in school (Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007). In fact, despite the intense popularity of web sites such as Facebook and MySpace, Bauman (2009) conducted a study that indicated that cyber bullying occurs more often via text messaging than it does through these and other types of social networking web sites. In a study of 1,588 youth, Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) found that 55% of cyber bullying occurs through instant messaging and 27% occurred through social networking web sites. Mitchell, Finkelhor, and Wolak (2004) conducted a study that concurred with these results when they found that roughly 65% of Internet harassment occurred through instant messaging and chat rooms.

These type of bullying, and many others which have been discussed are major types of violent and aggressive behaviour reported by schools as a very common trend and it is not a strange phenomenon to the learners (Isidiho, 2009). Results in a study conducted by Isidiho in one of the schools in Lesotho showed that more than 35.6% of the groups interviewed reported that different types of bullying occurred every day at their school.

2.8 Effects of bullying

Bullying can be linked to effects which may include depression, high level of anger, decreased academic achievement, negative perceptions of school environment and many other effects which will be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs. Notably, bullying can have effects on all of the learners in school, be it the bullies, the victims and the bystanders. According to Twemlow, Sacco, Williams (1996, p. 303) “Schools are stages for the evolution of dramas involving the interplay of the bullies and their victims provoked on by the bystanders”. On a similar note, Olweus (2003) observes that, bullies and victims occupy key positions in the configuration of bully/victim problems in a classroom, but other students also play vital roles and display different attitudes and reactions toward an acute bullying situation. Laner, Benin and Ventrone (2001) observe that some of the bystanders are believed to be sympathetic to victims thus leading them to intervene in a bullying situation.

2.8.1 Effects on the victims

In research carried out by Glew, et al., (2000), they observed that children who are victims show higher levels of fear and anxiety than non-victims do. Raising similar point are Batsche and Knoff (1994) who observe that victims of bullying often fear school and consider it an unsafe and unhappy place. It is stated that learners who are bullied at school find it difficult to make new friends with peers and show poor social adjustment (Nansel et al., 2001). Bullied learners tend to feel stupid, ashamed, and unattractive, and gradually begin to view themselves as failures (Isidiho, 2009). Nansel et al., (2001) found that children involved in bullying had problems with psychological adjustment, academic achievement, perceived school climate and peer relationships.

In 1999, the United States of America (USA) Department of Education (1999) estimated that almost 1 million learners of 12 to 18 years of age (4%) reported being afraid (during the previous six months) that they would be attacked or harmed in the school vicinity. About 5 % reported avoiding one or more places in school, while 13 % reported being targets of hate-related language (Isidiho, 2009). In a study conducted by Liang, et al., (2007) in South Africa, they observe that in those involved in bullying, 19.3% were victims and they were found to exhibit higher levels of violent and anti-social behaviours. Isidiho (2009) cites a study in America where findings revealed that victims often fear school and consider it an unsafe and unhappy place and that as many as 7 % of America's eight-graders stay home at least once a month because of bullies (Isidiho, 2009). Thus Absence from school owing to fear of violence directly affects the psychological well-being, academic involvement, and performance of the bullied learners. A study consistent with these findings by The Global Campaign to end Violence in Schools called 'Learn without Fear' found that victims of bullying loose self-esteem, feel shame, suffer anxiety and come to dislike school and play truant to avoid victimization (Newell & Owen, 2008, p. 41).

Some incidents of bullying at school can have negative effects, with children suffering from high levels of anxiety, loneliness, sadness, insecurity, substance abuse, delinquent behavior, post-traumatic stress disorder, sexual disorders, eating disorders, risky sexual behavior, and risk for re-victimization (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Saunders, 2003). Adolescents who report more than one type of victimization (for example, sexual abuse, physical abuse, peer victimization) have proven to have significantly higher rates of

symptoms such as anxiety or depression than adolescents who experience only one single type of victimization (Finkelhor, Ormrod & Turner, 2007). Victimization of bullying can disrupt adolescents' emotional and social development even as they move on into adulthood (Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007). Being a victim of bullying is linked to other deviant behaviors such as vandalism, shoplifting, dropping out of school, drug use, and violent behavior such as fighting (Olweus et al., 1999).

Additional effects of bullying on victimised children may include headaches, stomach aches, school absenteeism, and in extreme cases can lead to suicide (Ma, Stewin & Mah, 2001; Olweus, 1993; Slee, 1995). Depending on the situation, some individuals who are victimised as children report psychological harm into adulthood, including continued distress, self-blame, fear, and internalised problems, such as depression (Pepler & Craig, 2000; Smith, 2000). Burton (2008) adds that lower academic achievement can be noted to learners who are being bullied. Psychologically, they experience negative impacts on their cognitive development and the development of their self-worth (Burnett, 1998; Burton, 2008). Thus, bullying is not healthy for learners as it causes learners to lose concentration, disrupts the social and learning environment of classes, and ultimately makes learners feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

In accordance with the discussion above, it can be seen that the effects of bullying are quite tremendous. This forms the basis to argue that learners cannot thrive when they are afraid thus they will probably feel excluded in the learning process when they do not feel free in schools. Isidiho (2009) assert that bullying affects the behaviour of learners, some learners stay away from certain places in the school or on school grounds, some stay away from school-related activities, while some decide to stay out of school and at home. Since intimidation and fear are prime consequences of bullying, they seem to hinder inclusion in schools thus perpetuate exclusion.

2.9 Possible factors that contribute to bullying

Research has shown that bullying is indeed a problem in schools. And so, possible causes are given for the bullying incidences that occur in schools. Possible causes include among others family factors, school factors and the desire to gain status. These factors are discussed in detail below.

2.9.1 Family factors

The context where learners find themselves in, play a vital role in the way they behave. Thornberg (2010) indicate that children begin to bully because of being exposed to negative social influences. Bullying has also been attributed to causes which include family factors such as harsh parenting style, family conflicts and abuse (Mestry and Khumalo, 2012; Protogerou & Flisher, 2012). According to the South African Council for Educators (2011, p. 26) for example, “a national survey found that even though the majority of South African parents are against corporal punishment, 57% smack and 33% beat their children”. Based on this, one may realize that parenting style also plays a role in the early socialisation of children regarding bullying behaviour (Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003).

The way parents discipline their children and their use of aggression, may teach children that aggression functions as a tool to obtain what one desires (Fraser, 1996). Research suggests that the families of bullies are conflictual and often their parents use aggression and other power assertive techniques to manage behaviour (Schwartz, 1993). For this reason, children who are exposed to these kind of acts tend to think that aggression can be used as an instrument to obtain desired goals. Exposure to violence throughout early childhood and adolescence is also considered a critical factor in predicting whether an adolescent will be violent (Henrich, Brookmeyer & Shahar, 2005). Brezina (2008) suggests that school violence is an adolescent’s expression of a need for autonomy and freedom – needs that are not being met within their home environment. School violence then is used as a means of compensating for these feelings of weakness and lack of power in the home, by demonstrating power and control in the school environment over weaker peers (Brezina, 2008).

When children are disciplined with force, they begin to understand that when something needs to be changed to better serve their desires, physical violence may be necessary. According to Lee (2004), the reason why young children may revert to acts of bullying may be that they themselves are victims of bullying at home or in other settings. They then come to school where they either vent their anger on others, or revert to the same behaviour modelled to them at home. It has been shown that bullies often come from homes where physical punishment is utilized and where they are taught to strike back physically when dealing with a problem (Banks, 1997). Children who have been

physically abused and those who are exposed to violence in their families show physical and verbal aggression towards their peers because they may have had minimal or no exposure to positive modelling of how to deal with frustrating emotions daily (Baron, Byrne & Branscombe, 2006).

Furthermore, there have been many suggestions that exposure to television violence and violent games may be linked to violence in children (Funk, Baldacci, Pasold, & Baumgardner, 2004). Bandura's famous Bobo doll experiment is relevant here as well in that it reveals how children can be violent because of the games they play. Additionally, researchers led by Kris Bosworth of the University of Arizona, collected information from 558 learners in grades 6 to 8 in Arizona, United States (Goldboom, 2000). They divided the learners into three groups: 228 who rarely or never bullied anyone; 243 who reported a moderated level of bullying; and 87 who reported excessive amounts of bullying. Those who reported the most bullying behaviour had received more forceful, physical discipline from their parents, had viewed more television, and showed more misconduct at home. Thus parents have a great role to play when it comes to socialisation of children, and which programmes their children have to watch and not to watch on television. As the early socialisation of the child starts at home, Isidiho (2009) suggest that it is important that parents should explain to their children that all forms of bullying is wrong, that it is socially unacceptable, with an understanding of how bullying may affect the bully, and how the victim may feel.

The unjustifiable use of power over a child therefore communicates acceptance of using force on others, and this does not help the child to develop internal control mechanisms of behaviour such as reasoning, problem solving, patience (Hoffman, 1960). According to the 'cycle-of-violence hypothesis' victims of violence become executors of violence themselves (Hoffman, 1960). Therefore, the use of power on children increases chances that they will use violence on others who are less powerful than them (Mosia, 2015).

2.9.2 School factors

Bullying may also result from school related factors. Negative school climate, inadequacy of teachers as role models; lack of appropriate training for teachers, overcrowded schools; and deficient organizational structure of the school are cited as contributory to bullying behaviour (Marais & Meier, 2010; Mestry & Khumalo, 2012).

This could mean that bullying rates can be influenced by how the school personnel react to bullying. In other words, if in a school, teachers do not see anything wrong with bullying, the problem might be high in such a school. Marais and Meier (2010, p. 54) observes that “if teachers yell at learners, while exhorting them not to yell, learners are taught that undesirable behaviour is appropriate when you are an adult or if you have the power in your hands”. Limbos and Casteel (2008) argue that the design of the school, such as class size; educator-learner ratio; social climate of the school and resources available to learners at school may all contribute to the violence plaguing schools.

It has been reported that the school environment plays a role in the frequency and severity of bullying problems. Lack of proper supervision by teachers may contribute to this. Bullying problems can be greatly minimized in severity by appropriate supervision, intervention, and creation of an atmosphere that is conducive of not bullying in a school (Isidiho, 2009).

2.9.3 Bullying as a desire to gain status

Bullying is likely to be motivated by a desire to gain status or maintain a position of dominance among peers (Prinstein & Cillessen, 2003). Thornberg (2010) adds that bullying takes place because it is an expression of a struggle for status, popularity, and power. Thus, bullies may use aggressive behaviour as a way in which to publicly display dominance over weaker peers, in an effort to gain status. Additionally, Marais and Meier (2010) argue that many learners misbehave because they want to gain attention and/or recognition. Thus, bullies think that when they bully others they will gain popularity and be respected by all learners at school.

Alfred Adler’s theory of Individual Psychology shows that people strive for superiority by attracting attention – whether negative or positive – so as to mask their perceived weaknesses (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 2003). Therefore, youngsters who fail to positively deal with their transition into adulthood or high school, and have not been equipped with proper interpersonal skills, would take out their frustration on weaklings (Mosia, 2015). In vein of this, Isidiho (2009) states that perpetrators of bullying get some relief from their own feelings of powerlessness by controlling someone else.

Against the background of the literature reviewed above, it is clear that bullying is prevalent in schools and that its effects are quite tremendous to those who are exposed to it. Additionally, bullying seems to influence the safety situation at a school negatively, and in turn impacts on learners' achievement negatively by making them feel excluded in the school environment hence a need for further research on this phenomenon.

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, a discussion of what inclusive education entails and how it has to be understood with regard to inclusion and exclusion was made. Emphasis was drawn mainly from Slee's work, who argues that in order to be inclusive we first need to be cognizant of the exclusionary practices, hence the exploration of bullying in this study. In order to address research questions which guide this study, a vast literature was used to highlight forms of bullying, the effects of bullying, as well as factors that contribute to bullying as one of the exclusionary practices in schools.

The next chapter discusses the methods that underpin this study.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter involves the description and exploration of the methodological facets of this study. It includes a consideration of the research approach and design. It also sketches the context; defines the population and the sample with which the study will be conducted. In addition, it discusses data collection process, taking into account, methods and instruments utilized to ensure both credibility and trustworthiness. The data analysis technique employed and the ethical concerns underpinning this study are explained.

3.2 Research approach

The study focused on exploring learners' experiences of bullying as an act that promotes exclusion in a high school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho. In order to understand learners' experiences of bullying, qualitative research was a chosen approach for this study, as it "aims to understand and represent the experiences and actions of people" (FitzGerald, 2008, p. 299). According to Leatherman (2007) the goal of qualitative research is to allow the investigator to interpret and bring to light an understanding of particular subjects and events, which will not necessarily be achieved quantitatively. In addition, Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.17) view qualitative study as any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at "by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification". So with regard to the topic of this study, a qualitative approach, rather than quantitative was best suited to this study, since the topic is not concerned with quantity but rather the interest is on the experiences of learners from their own point of view.

Furthermore, a qualitative approach is best suited for this study because of its advantages, which McMillan and Schumacher (2006, p. 24) highlighted as having the ability to answer research questions and also to "offer a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential in understanding the phenomenon" from participants' point of view. In this case the central phenomenon of interest is bullying. A qualitative approach is important in this study as it helps advance

the field of educational knowledge by exploring learners' experiences of bullying as one of the exclusionary practices from learners' point of view. In further supporting this approach, Creswell (2007, p.37) asserted that "qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to people and places under study". The natural setting in this case is learners who are experiencing bullying in this particular high school. Conducting qualitative research therefore, according to Leatherman (2007, p.3) "allows the investigator to interpret and bring to light an understanding of particular subjects and events" which would not necessarily be achieved quantitatively.

3.3 Research design

McMillan and Schumacher (2006, p.20) elucidate that research design describes "the procedures for conducting the study, including when and under what conditions the data will be obtained". This research is empirical in nature, in that it "accepts our (participants) experience of the world as a valid way of deriving new knowledge" (Fraser, 2004, p.18). Since this study aims at conducting research *with* children, rather than research *on* children, it will enable learners to become active participants in the research process. Subsequently, experiences will be heard, resulting in what the researcher hopes to be documentation of actual feelings and experiences of learners, for the purposes of creating new knowledge and understanding of bullying among learners in a high school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho.

The phenomenological research design is used in seeking to explore the meaning of the lived experiences of several learners about the concept of bullying as a phenomenon (Creswell, 2009, p. 51). The phenomenon (bullying) under study is explored and described in learners' own words, to provide a description of their human experiences in the context of their personal and school lives. The learners were engaged through the research process to enable them to make sense of their lives through engaging in narrative essay writing and interviews regarding their experiences of bullying. This research design (phenomenological) guided and assisted the researcher in finding answers to the research questions. It also helped in explaining how learners experience bullying. That being the case, a phenomenological research design appeared to be a pertinent design for this study.

3.4 Site and participants sampling

A variety of sampling procedures are available for qualitative research. In some cases, it is advantageous to select sampling methods that allow for the identification of a group of individuals with diverse experiences (Patton, 2002). Some selection procedures produce very heterogeneous samplings that describe “central themes that cut across a great deal of variation” (Patton, 2002, p. 235). This section discusses the place where this study will be taking place and the justification of why this specific place was chosen. Also, the criteria of choosing participants and the reasons for my choice will be discussed in this section.

3.4.1 Selecting a school

It is vital for the researcher to make selections of sites and samples of time, places, people and things to study that are relevant or most suitable for the study to be conducted in. In the view of Marshall and Rossman (2010, p. 102) when the focus of the study is a particular population, the researcher should present a strategy for sampling that population. For this reason, this study was conducted in one co-educational, urban high school in the district of Botha-Bothe in Lesotho. A convenient sampling was used in choosing this school, which means that this selection of school was made on the basis of accessibility to the researcher (MacMillan & Schuman, 2010). Due to time and financial constraints, the school was conveniently selected because it was easy to access as the study was self-sponsored.

3.4.2 Selecting participants

Patton (2002, p.231) stated that sampling strategy involves choosing participants who are information rich because they are “unusual or special in some way, such as outstanding successes or notable failures”. In order to directly address the research questions, this study sampled those individuals who were information rich. The focus of this study is on Grade eight learners in the high school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho and their experiences of bullying in their school. This choice of participants was informed by Papalia, et al., (2006), which stated that the transition from junior to middle or upper school contributes to increased stress and behaviour problems as the

youngsters find themselves ill-prepared for the challenges brought by their transition. Some literature described bullies as youngsters who have a poor self-concept and may mask their insecurities in academic work and interpersonal skills by bringing others down (Frisen, et al., 2007). Bullying therefore may compensate for bullies' weaknesses in other areas of development.

Seventy six Grade eight learners whose parents/guardians gave their consent formed a sample of this study. A narrative essay question on the following topic; "*My experiences of bullying in my school and how it makes me feel*" was given to 76 learners. On the basis of their responses, purposive sampling was used to select 6 learners who indicated they experienced different forms of bullying, to participate in semi-structured individual interviews. Through purposive sampling "participants and sites are specifically selected as they will purposefully inform an understanding of the research problems for the research study" (Strydom & Delpont, 2012, p.392). In the similar vein, Merriam (2001, p.61) acknowledges that purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the "investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned." MacMillan and Schumacher (2010, p.326) indicated that through purposive sampling, the researcher searches for *information-rich* key informants, groups, places or events to study.

3.5 Data collection method

Relying on one method of data collection increases the possibility of not obtaining rich data. In this study, the data gathering process in trying to understand learners experiences of bullying in a high school in Botha-Bothe district in Lesotho involved two phases. The initial phase consisted of narrative essay writing followed by semi-structured interviews.

3.5.1 Narrative essay

One of the methods that learners were provided with to communicate their experiences of bullying was through narrative essay writing. This method of data collection was mainly used to accommodate learners who might not feel comfortable to articulate their experiences through talking (which is the major data collection method for this study).

Consequently, this method gave those learners an opportunity to write their experiences of bullying which they might feel uncomfortable to discuss through interviews. The significance of using narrative essays to collect data as observed by Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber (1998, p. 7) is that data from narrative essays can be collected as stories that provide coherence and continuity to one's experience. They further indicated that narrative essays can be analyzed along myriad dimensions such as contents, structure, style of speech, motives, or attitudes of the narrator (Lieblich et al., 1998, p. 9). All the (76) narrative essays were read, and based on their contents, structure, and style of speech, narrative essays which indicated that the learners have experienced different forms of bullying were picked. They were invited to participate in an interview, which was phase two of data generation, to further elaborate on their experiences.

3.5.2 Interviews

The major data collection method which was used in this study is semi-structured individual interviews. In trying to understand learners' experiences of bullying as exclusionary practice; individual, semi-structured, and face-to-face interviews were conducted with 6 Grade eight learners who experienced different forms of bullying in their narrative essays. Semi-structured interviews according to Hagan (2000, p. 174) "generally provides for open-ended responses to questions" as such the participants had the opportunity to share their experiences in an unrestricted manner. In addition, semi-structured interviews allowed for participants to provide information that is important to them but not necessarily reflected in the interview questions.

During the semi-structured interviews, a set of interview questions were used to guide opportunities to explore issues of bullying that the students experienced in school. Interview questions asked participants to define bullying, recall their experiences of bullying and how bullying makes them feel. Individual and face-to-face interviews were used in this study to enable the researcher to obtain information through probing the respondents. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006) probing calls for elicitation, elaboration for details, further explanations and clarification of responses. In addition, the use of individual interviews eliminates the danger of "one person

dominating the conversation” (Messiou, 2006, p. 308) which may be a potential problem in group interviews.

However, like any other data collection tool, interviews are criticized of being subjective and that, “depending on the training and expertise of the interviewer, the respondent may be uncomfortable in the interview and unwilling to report true feelings” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p.205). To limit this subjectivity, McMillan and Schumacher (2006) suggest that the interview should be thought of and used as a neutral medium through which information is shared. In this study, an attempt was made to limit subjectivity by assuring the participants that whatever they discuss will remain confidential and that they should feel free. In addition, the interview for each individual took place in a secure environment where learners felt comfortable to express themselves without fear of being overheard by their peers and/or teachers. In support of this, Brooker (2001) suggests that being in a familiar environment with trusted adults results in young children responding more positively to being interviewed.

Moreover, despite the idea that interviews can yield useful information and allow participants to describe detailed personal information, there is a possibility that the interviewee may provide responses that he/she feels the researcher would want to hear (Creswell, 2008, p. 226). In an attempt to mitigate this disadvantage, respect for participants was displayed and maintained at all times. In addition, genuine interest and compassion were showed to the respondents in order to maintain feelings of trust, and allowed participants to express their thoughts in their own way and not putting “words in their mouths” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2009, p.147). Another issue that needed mitigation is emotional reactions. Due to the nature of the study, there was a possibility of emotional responses which needed to be taken into consideration. In cases where participants display emotional reactions, the participants were given the choice of suspending the interview to the next day if they wished, to avoid participants from giving false information in an attempt to seek acceptance by the researcher.

The interviews were recorded on audio-tape and then transcribed. Permission to do so was sought and given by all participants, none of whom expressed any concern about being recorded.

3.6 Data analysis and interpretation

As with all data, analysis and interpretation are required to bring order and understanding of a study. According to Froggatt (2001, p.433) “good analysis depends on understanding the data”. Thematic content analysis was found as the most appropriate method for data analysis in this study. Thematic content analysis is defined as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). There are several factors informing the decision to use this method. Content analysis is considered a useful and powerful tool for qualitative research. Some reasons for this include: its applicability to a wide range of text data, flexibility and data that is independent of theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006); and it is able to elicit rich and meaningful information from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Further, content analysis is able to cope with data that is not structured (Krippendorff, 1980). Despite, being able to cope with unstructured data, an advantage of this technique is that it is systematic and transparent, thus where errors do occur it is possible to rectify these. Finally, it is considered to be simple in its technique; yet it is able to produce complex accounts of the data (Krippendorff, 1980).

Once all the participants’ interviews took place, the audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim. Terre Blanche and Kelly (2004) recommended that once the process of transcribing is complete, transcripts should be checked for reliability, by listening to audio recordings a second time while reading the transcribed material. This process was carried out by reading the transcripts several times in order to be familiar with them; the scripts were then coded into themes (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Kelly, 2006) and subthemes before related themes were grouped together for further analysis. The themes were then interpreted and examples drawn from the script to support identified themes. Merriam (2001, p.279) affirmed that “data analysis is the process of making sense of data and it involves consolidating, reducing and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read”. However, Hays (2010) argued that in analyzing data it is vital to acknowledge that true objectivity can never be achieved, but that the researcher’s interpretations should be as objective as possible.

In terms of this research and understanding learners’ experiences of bullying, the themes which emerged from data were identified and were closely linked to the research

questions. In the final analysis, themes were represented to match results to literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is seen in the chapter that follows.

3.7 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness according to Langer and Furman (2006, p.444) “is established when the research findings reflect the meaning as described by the participants.” They further stipulate that the researcher can utilize strategies such as reflexivity, audit trail, member checking and peer reviews. These strategies are important in order to be able “to establish some level of confidence in the research study to represent the meaning of its participants” (Lietz et al., 2006, p.443). To ensure that the data in this study is credible and trustworthy, the transcripts were checked against the recordings and necessary corrections were made. The transcripts were then taken to the participants to go through to ensure that what they said during the interviews was captured in the transcriptions.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Any research study undertaken should be based on mutual trust, acceptance, co-operation, dignity and respect of the research participants. As a result, ethical principles were applied in this study to ensure that no one is harmed as a result of their participation. Below are the key ethical considerations which were pertinent to this study which guided me to avoid abusing participants in the name of research.

3.8.1 Access to conduct the study

An application to conduct this study was submitted to The University of the Witwatersrand Ethics Committee for ethical clearance. Once clearance was obtained from the Wits Ethics Committee, permission to conduct the study in a high school in the district of Botha-Bothe was requested from the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho. When permission was granted by the Ministry of Education and Training, the researcher requested permission from the principal of the school where the data was collected.

3.8.2 Voluntary participation

The researcher ensured that no participant was coerced into participating in the study by emphasizing that participating in this study is purely voluntary and that should participants decide to withdraw at any stage, they will be allowed to do so without any penalty charged. Voluntary participation allowed the participants the freedom to decide whether to contribute to research and furthermore it protected the participants' freedom to withdraw from the study at any time (Whitley, 2001). This was assured to all participants, and was emphasized in person and included on the information sheet.

3.8.3 Informed consent (Appendix E, F, G)

Informed consent formed the ethical basis upon which this study was established. It entailed providing the participants with all the relevant information they required in order to make a considered choice about participation (Whitley, 2001). All the relevant information included procedural information, for example, duration of their participation; a point of contact concerning the research; risks or benefits of participation and researcher expectations of the participants (Whitley, 2001). In the study, due to learners being under the age of 18 years, consent was first obtained from the learner's parents/guardian/caregiver. Each parent/guardian/caregiver received an information sheet, stating that their child was invited to participate in the study. Consent was obtained from only 76 parents/guardians/caregivers. Learners, whose parents/guardians/caregivers gave consent, were provided with their own information sheet inviting them to participate in the study. The information sheet was written in simpler language to ensure that the learners completely understood what they were consenting to. The consent forms which needed to be signed by parents'/guardian/caregiver as well as learners, included the following: i) a consent to participate in the essay writing ii) a consent to participate in individual interviews iii) a consent to be audio recorded.

3.8.4 Violation of privacy and anonymity

In order to protect against violating the participants privacy, the researcher ensured that they remain anonymous. Babbie and Mouton (2007, p. 523) stated that a respondent is

considered anonymous when the researcher cannot identify a given response with a particular respondent. The researcher achieved this by ensuring that participants names were made known by using codes. Further, participants were guaranteed that should quotations be used, these would be sanitized of any identifying information and codes will be used. Codes were chosen randomly and have no relation to the participants.

3.8.5 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an ethical requirement in a research study. The information provided by the participants; particularly sensitive and personal information was protected and was not made available to anyone (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2007, p. 143). In line with this, participants were once more assured that only the researcher, and potentially the research supervisor, would view the narrative essays. Participants were also assured that any resulting notes from this study will be kept safe and will be destroyed after five years.

3.8.6 Compensation

Participants in this study were not paid or bribed to take part in the study in order to avoid the study being compromised.

3.8.7 Publication of findings

The publication of the research results is important as a way of communicating the results to the scientific community. However, it was ensured that participants will not be identified by name or by any other means.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter described the research methodology which was used in the study. The research design and approach that underpinned this study was discussed. Different sampling methods which were employed in this study were highlighted. The discussion of how data was collected and how it will be analysed was made. The purpose of this methodology is primarily to explore learners' experiences of bullying; the types of

bullying, the effects of bullying as well as the factors which contribute to bullying as a practice which promotes exclusion in a high school in Botha-Bothe district Lesotho.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of data collected using, narrative essays and semi-structured interviews with learners in Grade eight in a high school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho.

4.2 Participants

4.2.1 Narrative Essay

From 105 learners in Grade eight, only 76 returned signed consent forms from parents/guardians and also provided their assent to participate in this study. Thus, only 76 learners constituted a sample of this study in order to establish whether bullying does occur in this particular school. The narrative essay question was, *'my experiences of bullying and how it makes me feel at school'*. The researcher requested participants to indicate their gender and age in order to get a sense of how old and how many males and females took part in this study.

TABLE 1: Participants in narrative essay by gender and age

| Class level | Total number of participants | Number of male participants | Number of Female participants | Age range of participants |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Grade eight | 76 | 27 | 49 | 13-17 Years |

4.2.2 Interviews

While majority of the participants' responses from the narrative essays seem to experience one form of bullying, there are a few individuals who seem to experience different forms of bullying. Against this background, the learners who indicated to experience different forms of bullying in their essay constituted a sample of participants who were asked to expand on certain issues on the basis of the one-on-one interaction with the researcher through semi-structured interviews. It was through these interviews that the researcher experienced that although participants may have common experiences, their perceptions of the realities of bullying seem different thus each one of them carried different scars. Of significant importance to note is that this study presents only a part of the bullying experience from the victims' point of view, what is not included are the voices of bystanders, perpetrators, teachers, parents.

Ethical issues were adhered to, thus to ensure anonymity, the researcher assigned the following codes to the participants who voluntarily participated in the semi-structured interviews; Participant A, Participant B, Participant C, Participant D, Participant E and Participant F.

TABLE 2: Participants in interviews by gender and age

| Participant A | Participant B | Participant C | Participant D | Participant E | Participant F |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Female | Female | Female | Female | Male | Male |
| 13 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 13 | 14 |

The reason why females are a dominating gender in these interviews may be that majority of males who were invited for interviews indicated that they are uncomfortable and shy to be interviewed. This might be due to the fact that the researcher was

someone they were not familiar with and that she was a female. This is despite the researchers' initiative to visit participants' classrooms several times before the interviews in an effort to familiarize the participants with the researcher.

Although this study is aimed at exploring learners' experiences of bullying as an act that promotes exclusion in a high school in Botha-Bothe district Lesotho, there were however some unique ideas which emerged from narrative essays which were found insignificant to discuss in detail. For instance, one of the ideas which participants discussed in the narrative essays is the issue of bullying in the community. Some learners indicated in their essays that bullying happens even in their communities where a group of people from a particular village violate people from other villages. They also wrote about instances where they witness their fathers beating their mothers where there have been misunderstandings. For example, an extract from one of the essays read as thus, *"I experience bullying most of the time at home. Although I am not being bullied directly, but it [bullying] happens at my home. When my parents are arguing, it ends with a fight. My father beats my mom and in that way he bullies her"*. An issue such as the one highlighted by the participant above, is not discussed in detail, reason being that the overarching question for this study focused on bullying at school and not so much on what happens at home or in their communities.

Figure 2: Learners experience bullying by indicating forms, effects, factors, locations and reasons for not reporting bullying

| CATEGORY 1: LEARNERS' DEFINITIONS OF BULLYING | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing something that causes pain • Harm someone intentionally • Abusing someone • Hurting someone else • Making someone feel uncomfortable • When someone does something bad to someone else. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CATEGORY 2: FORMS OF BULLYING | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Physical | | | Verbal | | | Emotional | | | | | |
| Beating | Pushing | Punching | Name calling | Insults | Damaged belongings | Threads | Belongings taken | | | | |
| CATEGORY 3: EFFECTS OF BULLYING | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Psychological | | | | Emotional | | | | | | | |
| Thoughts of dropping out of school | Suicidal thoughts | Feeling out of place | Sadness | Helpless | Anger | Degraded | Frustrated | Embarrassed | Depressed | Hopeless | |
| CATEGORY 4: FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO BULLYING | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Physical Factors | | | | | Social Factors | | | | | | |
| Weight | Standing out | Looking different | Desire to gain status /Fame | Family background | Jealousy | | | | | | |
| CATEGORY 5: LOCATIONS OF BULLYING | | | | | | | | | | | |
| School Premises | | | | | Off School Premises | | | | | | |
| Classroom | Toilets | Playgrounds | On the way | Home | | | | | | | |
| CATEGORY 6: REASONS FOR NOT REPORTING BULLYING | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Self-Protection | | | | | Lack of trust from adults | | | | | | |
| Avoid being bullied again | Avoid embarrassment | No action taken after reporting | Scared to tell other people | | | | | | | | |

From the narrative essays and interviews five major categories were identified;

- 1) The forms of bullying which were categorised as; physical, verbal and emotional bullying.
- 2) The effects of bullying which were categorised as; psychological and emotional effects.
- 3) The factors which contribute to bullying which were categorised as; biological, social, and personal factors.
- 4) The locations where bullying takes place which were categorised as; within school premises and off school premises.
- 5) The reasons for not reporting incidents of bullying which were categorised as; self-protection and helplessness.

From participants' responses in the narrative essays on their experiences of bullying, it is clear that their responses were generally shaped by how bullying incidents make them feel. Furthermore, it seems that this essay writing provided learners with psychological relief through the open expression of strong emotions. This could be seen through their use of words like "*being bullied makes me feel very very sad*".

As earlier chapters have shown, bullying is a common experience in schools, and responses of learners in this study indicate that bullying does occur in this particular school. The findings in this study reveal that most participants who wrote the narrative essays reported being victims of bullying, while less participants indicated to witness bullying incidents. Only a few participants reported having bullied others. The majority of learners in this school are victims of bullying and this could be that learners might not have wanted to label themselves as bullies. Of those who were invited for the interview, all six participants indicated that they were victims of bullying. It would have been interesting to get further clarification from the bullies themselves but the two participants who have indicated bullying others stated that they are uncomfortable to be interviewed.

4.3 Category 1: Bullying definitions

In order to be able to fully grasp the concept of bullying, an understanding of participants' definitions of bullying was needed. These definitions encompassed the learners' perceptions of how they viewed bullying. In the narrative essays, some participants defined bullying as an act that is aimed at causing pain and harm. Quite a few participants defined bullying as abuse. During the interviews, for the most part, learners had similar definitions of bullying. For instance, to the question 'What do you understand by bullying?' Participant A replied, '*Bullying is like forcing someone to do something that they are not willing to do either by using physical effort or by just hitting someone*'. Similar sentiments were expressed by Participant B who said that '*Bullying is something that people can do to hurt you. People can bully you by beating you up, forcing you to do things you don't want to do*'. In the same vein, Participant E is of a view that bullying exhibits an element of forcing someone into doing what they do not want. This participant further expands by stating that when one is being bullied, they are forced to be what they are not. Participant C on the other hand, understands bullying to be, '*when someone makes someone to feel uncomfortable. Maybe by beating them up*'. Participant D defines bullying as '*when someone does something bad or something really really hurting and you feel so bad*'. Participant F describes bullying as '*any act that causes intentional harm*'.

These definitions, which are offered by participants, suggest two major components of bullying: physical and emotional. Most learners are of a view that there is a physical and emotional component in bullying through the use of words like '*force*' and '*hurt*' '*harm*' '*beat*'. Despite the fact that the majority of participants defined bullying fairly accurately, they seemed to take the issue that bullying is a repetitive action at face value. Also, the idea that it is an action that is done deliberately seemed to have been ignored by majority of learners who were interviewed, it has been highlighted by Participant F who included '*intentional*' in his definition. These definitions indicate that participants have a clear independent understanding of the phenomenon of bullying though their understanding of it seems limited.

4.4 Category 2: Forms of bullying

As the above data indicates, (figure 2) bullying takes different forms from direct physical actions such as beating, to threats of various sorts, to name calling. Participants responses in the narrative essays and interviews reflected three major forms of bullying which they experience, namely: physical, verbal and emotional bullying.

4.4.1 Physical bullying

One of the forms of bullying that participants seem to be subjected to is physical bullying. From narrative essays, some were subjected to physical incidents such as beating, punching, pushing, and biting. They used phrases such as *'he pushed me against the wall'*, *'they punched me on the face'*, *'he tried biting me'* *'he bit me when I refuse to give him my food'*. It seems as if males in this particular school can be rough, since reports of physical bullying are significantly lower with females. Among the participants, almost all reported that they are being beaten, hit, kicked, and punched by the bullies. For instance, this finding was confirmed by Participant A who stipulated aspects of physical bullying by stating that *'they take all of your stuff and beat you up...'* and Participant B who reported that *'Like if someone say, give me your pen and you don't want to give that someone your pen, they start beating you'*. Interesting to note from the above quotations from participants, is their use of the second person 'you'. This implies that self-disclosure is not easy. In as much as the participants reported that they are bullied in different ways, they seem to find it hard to admit that they are victims hence the use of the second person or perhaps they use it possibly as a technique to distance themselves from their emotions and scars which are brought about by these bullying acts.

Although participants seem to experience physical forms of bullying, Participant D's description raises a measure of concern regarding how she perceives bullying to be. When she is asked how she is being bullied, she said *'like maybe when we are just playing with them (the older ones), like kicking them, they will yell at us and beat us'*. It may be deduced from this response that victims of bullying are, in some cases physically bullying the perpetrators. It was observed that Participant D believes that bullying only occurs when an older person hurts a younger person and not vice versa.

When asked whether the participant is not bullying an older person by kicking them when they are playing, she responded by saying *'Ah no. Since the bully is much older I don't think I can bully that person'*. This response further affirms the observation that although some participants have an idea of what bullying is, but their knowledge underpinning this concept might be seen as limited. It may be inferred therefore that physical bullying does take place in this context on both victims and perpetrators, although participants might not be conscious of it.

It appears that despite the beating, kicking, punching behaviors, that are taking place in school, none of the participants have reported any of these incidents to the teachers. The participants highlighted the negative effects of informing the bully of the intention to report by indicating that bullying will intensify if they report. This sentiment was echoed by Participant A who stated that *'We do not usually report bullying because of the fear of being exposed and that if you do report to a teacher and then the teacher does not believe or doesn't work out that problem, then what is going to happen to you when the bully finds out that you have reported? They are going to bully you even more'*. It can therefore be concluded that failure to report these physical acts is one of the contributory factors to physical bullying being the most common form of bullying among these participants.

Additionally, most of the participants indicated that the perpetrators of these beatings, pushing and hitting are mainly males. This gender difference relating to physical bullying seemed in accordance with Banks (1997, p.1) who indicates that kicking, hitting, pushing, punching and spitting are some of the behaviours that form part of the repertoire of direct physical bullying. He further asserts that many studies on bullying have revealed that boys typically engage in direct physical bullying methods (Banks, 1997) and this is consistent with the findings in this research in that participants reported that boys are the ones who beat and push them. This is affirmed by Participant B who stated that *'in most cases boys are the ones who push and beat us'*.

4.4.2 Verbal bullying

While some participants indicated that bullying involved physical actions, other learners stated that they experience or are exposed to other types of bullying besides the physical. It seems that some participants are subjected to verbal bullying as one form of

an indirect bullying. Indirect bullying as Marais and Meier (2010) stated, could take the form of name calling, teasing, taunting, mocking, as well as intimidating other learners. This form of bullying which is put forward by Marais and Meier (2010) seem to be consistent with this research in that the participants in this research demonstrated how they are being called names, insulted and mocked by other learners. From the narrative essays some who were bullied experienced incidents of name calling. Revealed by the findings above, the most common form of bullying is verbal bullying (name calling). Words which were used in some essays include; *'they call me stupid'*, *'they always say I am a coward'*. Based on this finding, it can be deduced that name calling is the most dominant form of verbal bullying in this particular school since perpetrators may feel that no visible harm is done when calling others names. Also some extracts from interviews which affirmed name calling as one of the forms of bullying that participants experience was echoed by Participant A who stated that *'Yah there are other ways of bullying other than being physical, like using...the words... like using vulgar words, like insulting, I can't say them'*. From this response one realises how intense this form of bullying is, clearly the "insulting words" this participant is being called are so bad that she felt embarrassed to even utter them. Perhaps not saying these 'vulgar words' can be attributed to the fact that, the society that she comes from instils in her the respect and humbleness especially when it comes to elders. Since the researcher was much older than the participant, this might have been the reason why the participant could not share those vulgar words that she was being called by the bullies.

Some learners are labelled and given names because of their health limitations. Participant D reported that bullies call her *'a nerd and a jerk'* because she is wearing spectacles to correct her eye sight. Although this form of bullying does not cause direct physical pain, these kinds of names can intimidate and demean individuals thus leaving them intensely traumatised (Marais & Meier, 2010). The occurrence of this form of bullying is also revealed by Participant E words who reported that *'...like telling you how stupid you are or telling you about the features of your body...so you end up wanting to change your features and yourself...like they tell you how fat you are (teary)'* One could see how devastated this participant was; she could not help it but shed tears when sharing her experience of being called names. Although researchers like Olweus (2003) asserted that girls are subjected to verbal bullying such as gossip by other girls,

the findings in this research reveal that girls are called names by boys and none of them seem to be subjected to gossip.

4.4.3 Emotional bullying

Other participants included as part of their definition of bullying a discussion of the emotional aspect. Some indicated in their narrative essays that they experienced incidents where things (such as lunch food and money) are taken away from them. When participants in the interviews are asked how they are being bullied, Participant F responded with, *'bullying is when somebody goes out of their way to make someone's day miserable'*. To this same question, Participant C stated, *'It's [bullying] making somebody feel uncomfortable either physically or emotionally'*. While some made a reference to emotional bullying, Participant F spelt it out in a little more detail, denoting that emotional bullying can be classified as ignoring and or pretending. When asked to expand more on this he replied: *'being ignored by people that you think are your friends is so painful and makes you emotional'*. In this regard, Participant F seems to be experiencing emotional bullying and his perpetrators seem to be his friends. Another issue he raised with regard to his friends was that, *'I think they are pretending to be my friends so that they use me to get them stuff like money and food'*. Other learners made a similar connection in elaborating about emotional bullying.

Taking other peoples belongings and mostly food is worth noting as this kind of bullying might be practiced in this particular school because the school does not serve lunch for learners so they need to come with food from home. The bullies, in this regard may be from the struggling families where it is difficult to come with 'good' food to school. Most common to how they are bullied emotionally was indicating how their belongings and personal items like food and money are taken away from them, which thus impedes so much on their emotions. Participant D expanded on the emotional element by adding that sometimes bullies just do things that messes up with ones emotions like *'scribbling in your notes, just to make you cry for no reason'*. Some participants mentioned being threatened as something that occurred in school, on what appeared to be a regular basis. This also can be categorised under emotional bullying. This could be seen through the use of words like *'they threatened to beat me, 'they told me they are going to do something bad to me' 'said he will see me after school when I*

refuse with my things'. Sentiments like these ones reveal that, the victims' emotions are stirred and they keep worrying about what it is that bullies are going to do to them. Also, they reported things like, *'he forced me to write notes for him'*, *'took my lunch money'*, *'took my pen and refused to bring it back'*, *'scribble in my note book'*, *'throw my school bag on the floor'*. Clearly, these statements impact negatively on the emotions of those whom these words are directed to. However, some participants did not indicate how they were being bullied. This finding suggests a form of helplessness and despair among learners who have been intensely traumatized.

4.4.4 Cyber bullying

Although literature seem to suggest that cyber bullying is one of the emerging forms of bullying, participants in this study did not report to have been bullied online or through social networks or electronically. The lack of cyber bullying in this school could be attributed to schools' strict regulations on learners' use of cell phones during school hours. In many schools (in Lesotho), learners are either not allowed to bring cell phones to school or are required not to use them during school hours. In addition, many schools are not equipped to give learners computer literacy, and schools which give such programmes may not all have internet connection which would allow learners to communicate among themselves through e-mails or social networks.

4.5 Category 3: Bullying locations

Bullying does not occur in a vacuum. There are specific places where bullying mostly takes place. The findings in this study revealed two major locations, namely, within school premises and off school premises.

4.5.1 School premises

Many participants, who reported to be victims of bullying in the narrative essays, experienced bullying mainly in the school premises. Most of the participants who reported to experience bullying in the school premises, while some participants were bullied (during break and/or lunch time) in the toilets, other participants were bullied in the classroom, (during class or during study period). Participant F elaborated on how he

is bullied in the toilets. He stated that *'they [bullies] do it during recess while we are in the toilets. Like...they hit your head against the toilet seat for no reason. Sometimes they tell you to 'man-up' by telling you to hold your pee and deny you access to use the toilets. It is very hurting'*. It seems as if most of bullying incidents occur in the toilets. This finding that bullying happens in the toilets implies that bullying usually occurs in areas with minimal or no adult supervision. Furthermore, the most striking place of all these locations where bullying occurs is the classroom. One of the participants indicated that *'bullying usually happens in the class, when we have a free lesson or sometimes when a teacher is still in class but writing on the board'*. If most cases of bullying, as reported by participants happen in classrooms, the question that one finds significant to ask is, what are teachers doing to control bullying? This finding highlights teacher's lack of vigilance and commitment in familiarizing themselves with these places where bullying seems to occur. Thus teachers should refrain from trivializing this behaviour, and take the bullying phenomenon more seriously.

4.5.2 Off school premises

Despite the researchers focus being on bullying at school, findings from the narrative essays revealed that bullying happens off the school premises. One of the participants from the interviews further affirmed this by stating that perpetrators threaten to bully them off the school premises by uttering the following words; *'he said I will see what he will do to me after school if I refuse to give him my food' 'they told me that I should make sure I run for my life once I get out of the school gate'*. These quotations imply that perpetrators are quite aware that what they are doing is inappropriate hence why they ensure that they bully others after school – off school premises. Some participants did not specify where bullying occurs. This can be attributed to the idea that they sometimes feel helpless thus stating where these incidents happen will not yield them any good results, in that bullies may feel exposed and therefore bully them even more.

4.6 Category 4: Contributing factors to bullying

Several of the participants seemed to be in agreement of the various reasons why people bully, or picked on other learners. They identified some characters or factors that

contribute to their vulnerability to bullying in their essays. The factors that they have provided are categorized into two, namely: physical and social factors.

4.6.1 Physical factors

Some participants attributed being vulnerable to bullying to what can be categorized as biological factors. Based on the participants' responses factors such weight, size (physical appearance) standing out and looking different, one's character etc. seem to be the most prevalent factors which contribute to bullying.

4.6.1.1 Weight and size

Some participants shared their experiences, where they think they were picked on because of their weight. Participant E, talked about being picked on, but not knowing why, so she attributed it to her weight. She talked about her experience and recalled, *'Like they tell you how fat you are or how thin you are, those kinds of things. It just makes you feel like...wow...this isn't good you know. Or telling you how your family isn't supporting you, like when you are thin or something...making it like you don't have enough to eat or something'*. When Participant D was asked if there were particular reasons for picking on someone she stated: *'size and weight I guess...I mean...It could be anything...they will find something'*. In the same vein, Participant B indicated that bullies are never happy with anything, whether one is too thin, medium size or too fat, they are vulnerable to bullying. The implication in this finding is that when it comes to weight bullies pick on anybody, thus making it difficult to distinguish the specific weight of victims who are at a higher risk of being picked on. It should not be surprising that those in the younger grades are more likely to be bullied, as those who are older are more aware of the resources around them and the tactics to deal with bullies.

It appears that not only would some participants get picked on, on the basis of their weight. Another factor that was highlighted by participants was size. While weight referred to how heavy someone was, size seemed to refer more to the relative size of an individual as compared to others. Found within the interview data were discussions of people who were "bigger" or "smaller" and the role that their size played in whether or not they were bullied or bullied others. Bullying by bigger learners seemed to be

dominating throughout the participants' responses. For instance Participant A discussed how older learners make smaller learners suffer. She noted '*the other one will be bigger and the other one will be smaller. Obviously the bigger one bullies the small one*'. These comments referring to bigger individuals doing the bullying were not as specific as those of other participants who noted characteristics in addition to the bully being bigger. While Participant A noted that it was the bigger guys who bullied others, Participant C also made a grade distinction that mostly senior learners bully junior learners '*I can say they are using their power as seniors to destruct the juniors*'. In this regard, it implies that bullying does not only happen in the same grade or class level, but rather at all levels since senior learners seem to exercise their powers by bullying junior learners. This also can be attributed to the issue of size in that learners in higher grades are undoubtedly bigger than those in the Grade eight class.

The responses from the participants generally reveal that those who were smaller in size were likely the victims of bullying. This finding seems obvious given that those who were bigger were the ones who bullied; it seems apparent that their victim would be smaller. While some of those who mentioned the size of the victims as being smaller than the bigger bullies, many of those who mentioned the victims being small did not mention the size of the bully, though that was implied. However, size can be implied in other ways than being reduced to bigger, as when Participant A discussed those who she had seen as the victim of bullying '*I guess it ranges whether you are strong enough to fight...one can be big but you find they are not strong*'. Another issue noted that linked to strength, was that the one that shows weakness becomes vulnerable '*You show weakness, they will find something to get you on even if they have to make it up*' Participant F asserted.

4.6.1.2 Standing out and looking different

Besides being bullied for weight, and size, learners who were different and stand out seemed more likely to be the target of bullying. Some of the differences mentioned by learners in the interviews as possible reasons people were bullied included: learners with accents, smart students, and other aspects that were seen by some students as different from the rest of the students like wearing spectacles. Participant C stated that she is called '*Miss know it all*' because she stands out academically. She described herself as an A student and she thinks that is one of the reasons she became a target of

bullying. Similarly, other participants seem to believe that bullies are mostly on the failure curve and so they do not want to fail alone that is why they make learning difficult for others. Participant F stated *'if you look at them [bullies] they don't perform well at all in class so I think they get jealous of me because I used to pass well'*.

Another point which was discussed on the issue of looking different pertained to wearing spectacles. It seemed to be uncommon for learners in this grade to be wearing spectacles and those who do wear them, are often bullied. Participant D stated that *'Like they say...I am a jerk because I am wearing glasses [spectacles]...and a nerd'*. This finding implies that learners with difficulty of sight become vulnerable because they are perceived as different.

4.6.1.3 Character

Character also comes out as major cause of bullying as evidenced by the number of learners who mentioned it. As one participant indicated *'definitely if you are nice and kind trying to be friends with somebody, they get you and start bullying you'*. Other characters which were mentioned by participants which made them vulnerable included; being quiet, shy, sweet and gentle, always smiling, when one has low self-esteem, When one can't speak up for themselves. Participant D stipulated that *'I am one person who is lazy to talk and even when you do something wrong to me I don't say anything'*. Additionally, Participant C thought that *'they look at us and see who the shy one is, that shy one is sure not to tell the teachers'*. Some participants thought they are being bullied because they appear to be too sweet and always smiling *'when they always see you smiling, they take chances and start bullying you'*. Sharing the same view is Participant B who believes that *'people who appear to be tough are never bullied because they think they are strong'*.

Some of these factors seem to be inborn characters for these participants thus making it quite frustrating for them to change their characters in order to escape bullying. This further emphasizes the idea that bullying needs to be addressed in schools and children need to be taught of how to accept others.

4.6.2 Social factors

Some factors which participants attributed to bullying were categorised as social factors. They include; a demand to be recognized or seeking popularity/fame, family background, academic achievement among others.

4.6.2.1 Desire to gain status or fame

A desire to gain status and fame among peers is one of the reasons given for bullying by the learners in this study. They believe that some learners bully because they want to be recognized that they exist and be respected for torturing others. Furthermore, majority of participants believe that people end up bullying others because they think that *'bullying is cool'*. This implies that when the bully is perceived to be doing a "cool" thing when he/she bullies others. The finding that highlighted this is affirmed by Participant F who stated that *'I feel that the person who bullies others is the person who wants attention from other people. So if you don't get it, you are going to try by all means to get it and they think that bullying is being cool, you know. The people are going to look up to you and say, this guy is cool you know. They all look up to you and become afraid of you'*. On the same note of demanding fame and popularity, Participant D stated that *'if they [bullies] beat you up and you end up in the hospital, they will go and advertise to people that oh I am strong, you can never do anything to me. So they show off their strength so that all the people may know them'*.

4.6.2.2 Family background

Other participants mentioned causes which may trigger bullying included previous abuse of the now bully, and witnessing parents fight at home. Participant C is of the view that bullies copy what happens in their homes and practice it at school, She said, *'Or maybe, them [bullies], they have experienced bullying and they want to do it to others. So that we can all experience that'*. In this view, Participant F added by stating that, *'So I think, when one has experienced abuse before, they also become bullies because my old teacher used to tell me that the way you are brought up at your home you become that. So if you are brought up in a home that has abuse then you turn to think that that's the way life is. Yah, you think that's how life should be'*. In this regard,

some participants are of the view that other learners end up being bullies because they come from families where violence prevails. This can be interpreted to mean that, bullies themselves are victims of bullying from their homes thus taking their anger out on other learners. This view is further confirmed by a Participant D in the interview who stated that *'sometimes these bullies' parents are always fighting and they beat their children always...children end up copying that behavior and do it at school'*.

4.6.2.3 Jealousy

Jealousy also seemed to be the other main driver of bully behaviour. There is diversity at school, in terms of capabilities and learners achievement. Some participants seem to be socialized in such a way that whenever the next person seems to achieve more than them, they develop an element of jealousy. This jealousy was attributed mostly to academic achievement. Majority of participants seem to think that bullies turned to bully them because they are not socialized to accept defeat. They even went to link this jealousy to family upbringing by indicating that *'some bullies get punished at their homes when they have failed'* (Participant F). This implies that bullies might feel the need to bully others so as to destruct those who perform better than them in order for all of them to fail. Learners who seem to be getting high grades in class run a risk of being vulnerable to bullying.

These factors reveal that learners are vulnerable to bullying and thus pose a challenge to teachers, parents, and caregivers to protect learners from exploitation by bullies. A phrase from the essay which read: *'I think they bully me in order to have my money'* suggests that bullies are also insecure and vulnerable because of some personal struggles which they may be faced with. Majority of learners seem to believe that they are targeted by bullies because they perform better than their perpetrators in academic tasks and thus making them (bullies) jealous. This is affirmed by phrases such as *'I pass very well, that's why they bully me'*, *'mostly, bullies fail at school so they make sure we all fail by bullying us'* (Participant D).

4.7 Category 5: Effects of bullying

Responses to the question that sought to ascertain the effects of bullying on the teaching and learning situation revealed that bullying can result in dire consequences for the victims which may affect learning adversely. Based on the findings from the interviews and narrative essays the effects of bullying are categorized into emotional and psychological.

4.7.1 Emotional effects

Results in this study showed that bullying exhibits a vast number of emotional effects. The majority of participants who reported being victims of bullying experienced sadness while other participants feel helpless, while some participants feel degraded as a result of bullying. One of the effects of bullying which was put forward by the majority of participants stated in the interviews that they always feel scared and embarrassed. They went further to assert that when one is going through emotions of embarrassment and being afraid, the effect this has on their learning is that *'I will not be able to properly concentrate on their studies'* Participant B affirmed. On the issue of not concentrating in class, Participant A, C, E and F indicated that failure to concentrate in class hinders their learning and thus cause deterioration in their academic performance. Participant C went further to exemplify and stated that *'...like, if you are an A star girl, you will basically drop because you will be thinking about what happened and how you can deal with it [bullying] while in a class and not pay attention to what a teacher has to say. You are always scared of what that person is going to do next'*.

Another feeling that seems to impact so much on their emotions is that of helplessness and unhappiness. Participant A stated that when one is bullied they feel helpless that they wish something can be done to make it stop. When she was asked whether she tried reporting to her teacher (perhaps something would be done to make it stop) she replied; *'I have never! I mean its very embarrassing to report such behavior especially when you are never sure how the teacher will respond to what you told her'*. In this regard, Participant D said that when one feels helpless, they end up feeling *'unwanted'* while Participant C states that *'when there is nothing that can be done when you are bullied,*

you end up feeling like you are in a wrong place'. Participant F indicated to go through tremendous emotions which make him feel annoyed and always angry.

These emotions and feelings which learners seem to experience imply that the teaching and learning is hindered thus making it difficult or impossible for learners (especially victims) to achieve good results. Also, when they do not have a sense of belonging, this ultimately makes them feel *'unsafe'* when they are at school.

4.7.2 Psychological effects

Besides some of the emotional effects presented above, participants in this study highlighted some of the thoughts which seem to have effects on the way they think resulting from bullying. Some of these psychological effects include among others, wanting to drop out of school and wanting to commit suicide. In this regard, this is what Participant A said, *'When you are continuously being bullied, you feel helpless, you feel criticised, and when you are being criticised day in and day out, and when you think of going back to that place again, you really don't feel like going back'*. Still on the issue of not wanting to go back to school due to bullying, Participant B added that *'if you are on your way and you meet that somebody who beats you. You are going to end up hiding yourself when you see him. Because you will be thinking, am I going to come across this guy after school, lunch, and break?'* When asked where she hides herself, Participant B responded, *'Anywhere in the school where no one can see me because my parents won't allow me to leave school'*. She went further to say that *'Because sometimes you are scared of the bully. You start making up lies so that you might not end up going to school. Because to your mom, you can't just say you are not going to school without a reason. So you end up saying you are sick while you are not'*.

Sharing similar sentiments is Participant D who said that *'some people might just drop out of school and never go back because of bullies. They will just drop out of school and be street kids. If they think of going to school they just think of the bullies and they never go back to school again. Because we don't find school safe. Because if I can decide to tell the principal or the teacher they say they will beat you up again and so sometimes dropping out is a solution'*. Some participants seem to think deep about this issue of dropping out of school, they even consider how their parents would feel about them leaving school. They ultimately do what they think is best for their parents which means

staying at school despite the ill treatment they get from their fellow school mates who bully them. Confirming this finding is Participant E who stated that *'It makes me feel like I want to drop out of school but then I think of my parents. They paid my school fees so I don't want to disappoint them'*.

Although wanting to leave school appeared to be the solution to escape from bullying for most participants, what seems to be the solution for Participant F to escape bullying is to commit suicide. Participant F is of the view that, dropping out of school is just a temporary solution to escape bullying since the perpetrators are sometimes people from home. Although looking at what is happening is not the focus of this research, but it is worth noting that it seems bullying does not only take place at school, it extends beyond school premises. When asked if he has shared any of his experiences and suicidal thoughts with anyone, Participant F said *'I just don't feel like talking about it. It's just something that I don't really want to share with other people. It's just...(pause) I sometimes feel like the people that I might share these experiences with them might tell those guys and so that might make matters worse'*. Participant F went further to state that he gets very angry *'that...you know, sometimes being too angry can lead to wanting to take your own life and that kind of stuff because that's what happens when you get bullied. You get so angry that you feel like you are the one to blame for the whole situation. And I think killing myself would be a permanent solution'*.

These findings indicate that bullying indeed has dire effects on victims. These effects whether emotional or psychological can impact tremendously on teaching and learning since they make learners feel excluded at school. As it has been put forward by participants themselves, bullying makes them feel like they do not belong at school and that they have come to a wrong place. This implies that bullying has to be addressed so to avoid learners to have the aforementioned effects.

The above findings confirm that victims of bullying typically are very unhappy children who suffer from depression, helplessness, hopelessness, sadness because of bullying. They may even try to avoid school in an effort to escape the bullying. Some victims may feel so frustrated and distressed that they commit, or attempt to commit, suicide. These effects might affect learners' emotional development and functioning. It is also anticipated that such negative emotions could contribute to the youth being trapped in a cycle of exploitation and not being able to cope psychologically within the learning

environment and broader society. Furthermore, should these feelings persist; these learners may engage in self-destructive behavior such as alcohol and drug abuse in an attempt to escape these feelings. These findings further indicate that bullying can present those who are exposed to this phenomenon with psychological, emotional and physical effects.

4.8 Category 6: Reasons for not reporting bullying

Most of participants who are victims of bullying did not report the incidents of bullying.

4.8.1 Self-protection

The findings from narrative essays reveal that the participants do not report bullying to avoid being bullied again, other participants avoid embarrassment, while some indicated that there was no action taken after reporting, other participants stated that they were scared to tell other people. However, some participants did not provide any reason for not reporting. From the reasons provided for not reporting bullying, it can be deduced that a conscious decision was taken by learners not to report as a measure of self-protection (avoid being bullied again, avoid embarrassment, scared to tell other people). The research findings highlight that most participants do not report incidents of bullying. From the reasons provided for not reporting bullying is absence of action following the reporting.

4.8.2 Lack of trust from adults

The absence of action can also be a contributory factor and concern of participants who did not provide any reason for not reporting incidents of bullying thus leading to lack of future reporting owing to a lack of trust in adults who are entrusted with protection powers. Participant B reported that '*I told teacher about it [bullying] but she did not do anything after that*'. This absence of action may perpetuate bullying as bullies do not face any consequences, possibly increasing the risk of heightened victimization.

Taking action when bullying has taken place may ensure that perpetrators take responsibilities of their actions hence this may discourage further offenses. This research finding implies that many learners have lost a sense of trust in reporting.

Against this background, it can be concluded that learners have a perception that bullying is not taken seriously. This perception can be linked to ineffective response taken or no action taken by adults to bullying. This finding further implies uncertainty among learners whether to report bullying which probably contributes to a sense of helplessness among victims of bullying.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings from narrative essays and interviews. The findings reveal that participants experience different forms of bullying, which have tremendous effects on their emotions and psychological well-being. One of the factors which were attributed to bullying included among others, social factors which looked specifically at the way in which children are socialized from their homes. The findings presented also revealed the locations where bullying takes place and it was reported that bullying happens mainly at unsupervised places in the schools.

The next chapter provides the discussion and summary of the findings.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

5.1 Discussion

This part will elucidate the connections between some of the results and the literature. The findings of this study indicate that bullying is a prevalent phenomenon in the Lesotho school under study. The results of this study yield timely, informative, and enlightening insight into a topic that has impacted lives everywhere. As this research and the literature demonstrate, bullying is a problem that continues to grow and continues to create environments less conducive for learning (Woolfolk, 2003).

Learners generally had an idea of what bullying entails and identified kicking, beating, calling names, bad treatment of others, hurting other people, forcing others to do what they did not like, and forcibly taking other peoples belongings as the dominant forms of bullying at the school. The issue of '*calling names*' in the participants' responses seems to resonate with findings by Livesey (2010) that frequently reported behaviour was bullying by which mean names, comments or rude gestures are made. Generally, verbal bullying is the most common form of bullying in Lesotho schools (Ngakane, et al., 2012; Isidiho, 2009) with several aspects of name calling, insults, teasing and threats. The findings in this study resonate with the research above because name calling was the most reported form of bullying by the participants.

Verbal bullying in Lesotho may be attributed to the fact that perpetrators are aware that it might be hard for the victims to report them since there is no evidence of harm. They (perpetrators) can easily deny if they are reported to the authorities thus authorities may find it hard to believe the victim. Another reason could be that, majority of learners in Lesotho come from homes where they herd cattle. The language that is used in herding cattle is predominantly vulgar perhaps they get used to calling animals names so much that it becomes a normal language to them (thus transferring it to other learners). Mosia (2015) indicates that verbal bullying is regarded as the most serious type of bullying which adds up to 73.3 % that schools in Lesotho need to address.

In addition, this study also provided evidence that bullying in Lesotho is a manifestation of gender inequality. Females often bear the brunt of being physically bullied. The

females who were interviewed uttered the following words; “ *I was pushed against the wall by a boy in my class*”. Most often violence in schools is perpetrated by boys (De Wet, 2007) and this type of violence in the view of Bhana (2005) may be seen as a violent expression of masculinity. The same is true in the context of Lesotho. Males, in the context of Lesotho, generally exercise their masculinity on to females by either pushing, shoving, teasing and intimidating them to indicate that they are somewhat superior than them. More often than not, males are perceived to be stronger than females physically, perhaps that explains why they bully females physically. Also, male dominance in Lesotho is deemed as appropriate by the society, thus this might also explain why physical bullying is commonly exercised by males upon females.

Other concerns raised by the Participants in this study which included making others feel sad, degraded, frustrated, confirm findings by De Wet (2005) that bullied learners may fear rejection, being excluded or ignored, or may fear being ridiculed in class. When learners are feeling degraded and frustrated, their participation in class will be affected. They may feel shy and afraid to raise their opinion with a fear that, if their point of view is in opposition with that of the bully, they may be laughed at and ridiculed. This therefore hinders the inclusive education agenda in that some learners are unable to participate due to a fear that is inflated in them by the bullies.

Furthermore, learners are very likely to experience bullying in one form or another; they may be the victim, bully, or even a witness in the bullying. As it has been indicated in the findings in the previous chapter, some learners who perceive themselves as victims are somewhat bullies. This was depicted when one of the participants from the interviews stated that when she kicks someone older than her, she does not regard that as bullying. Although this learner does not regard herself as a bully, but the literature affirms that by kicking others, especially if it is something that happens every now and then, that is regarded as bullying. In this regard, it can be inferred that learners lack a better and thorough understanding of what bullying is. They seem to perceive themselves as victims of bullying while in actual fact they are perpetrators of bullying themselves.

Bullying has also been defined as “direct behaviors such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, and stealing that are initiated by one or more students against a victim” (Banks, 1997, p. 1). More indirect bullying consists of “causing a student to be

socially isolated through intentional exclusion” (Banks, 1997, p. 1). A few participants in this study mentioned the idea of being isolated or ignored by one’s peers as bullying. This implies that learners’ understanding of bullying is limited to certain forms of bullying such as beating, hitting, and punching which have direct physical contact. Being isolated can result into learners’ feeling lonely and out of place thus making them feel excluded in the schooling environment.

Another form of bullying which was addressed in this study was emotional bullying. It was observed that emotional bullying is difficult to define. As Simmons (2002) noted, it is difficult to get assistance with these more relational types of bullying, since officials tend to take it less seriously. They tend to “downplay the problem or blame the victim” (Simmons, 2002, p. 204). He further states that some see it as just another part of growing up, which is a common response even to physical and verbal bullying. Perhaps, this is why majority of participants in this study raised concerns about not reporting incidents of bullying due to the fact that there seem to be no action that is taken after reporting. Most of the participants indicated that they do not report bullying to avoid being bullied again. This implies that, instead of putting an end to bullying after reporting, it escalates. In view of this, Mosia (2015) observes that if teachers ignore incidents of bullying, such behaviour becomes reinforcement to the bullies. However, Beaty and Alexeyev (2008) argue that novice and incompetent teachers are inefficient in addressing learners’ needs through their teaching, and may not even attend to cases of bullying referred to them.

Effects of bullying include psychological and psychosomatic distress and severe emotional problems (Rigby, 2003). This resonates with the findings in this research since majority of the victims of bullying in this study were said to be scared, very unhappy, sad, always annoyed quiet and skeptical about mixing with other learners and generally threatened. In addition to these effects Saunders (2003) assert that even so much as a single incident of bullying at school can have negative effects, with children suffering from such maladaptive outcomes as heightened levels of anxiety, loneliness, sadness, insecurity. Being a victim of bullying can be linked to other deviant behaviors such as vandalism, shoplifting, dropping out of school, drug use, and violent behavior such as fighting (Rigby, 2003). The findings in this study resonates with Rigby research in that majority of participants stated that they do not feel free at school because of

bullying, hence they think dropping out of school is the solution to escape bullying. In the similar vein, this finding is consistent with what Olweus and Limber (2010) documented that bullied children are more likely than non-bullied peers to want to avoid school.

As the findings in this study have indicated, learners reported to go through a vast number of emotional and psychological effects which reinforce them to think of ways of escaping bullying. Majority of them seem to think that dropping out of school is the only option to avoid being bullied. In extreme cases, some seem to think that committing suicide is the most effective way to escape bullying since when one drops out of school, they may be faced with incidents of bullying even out of school premises. Although the focus of this study was on learners experiences of bullying in school, the fact that bullying still happens even beyond school premises cannot be ignored. This implies that some learners are not only victims at school but also at homes, thus there is a need to address the effect and impact of bullying even beyond schools.

Moreover, one of the effects of bullying which was reported by participants is lack of concentration which ultimately leads to deterioration in learner performance. Chabalala (2011) explains that learners who are targets of bullying are fearful and spend their energy worrying about when and how they will be bullied again and this has an impact on their studies, because instead of them concentrating on their studies, they concentrate on what they can do to protect themselves against bullies and how the bullying will take place. In the same vein, Livesey (2010) report that within the school environment, the victim of bullying may have impaired concentration and decreased academic performance. This is also affirmed by the findings in this study, because participants stated that their school work has deteriorated due to bullying. This deterioration, can be attributed to the idea that they lose concentration on what the teacher says in class and spend most of the time thinking about how they can escape bullying.

From the findings, bullying has been attributed to several causes at school such as; jealousy, family background or treatment from home, biological factors, with size as the greatest contributor (with older learners bullying the younger ones). In this regard, James (2010) states that in western societies, bullying involves the abuse of power by one or several persons who are perceived as more powerful, often due to their age, physical strength and, broadly involves older pupils victimizing younger children.

Furthermore, the issue of family background as contributing to incidences of bullying is also reported by Mestry and Khumalo (2012) whose research participants had the perception that learners with discipline problems come from a family background where there was physical abuse, conflict and domestic violence. The participants in this study revealed that sometimes bullies themselves are victims of violence from their homes, and that they are sometimes corporally punished by their parents and they take that pain out on innocent learners through bullying. Protogerou and Flisher (2012) also add that bullying is often attributed to personality and family characteristics reinforced by growing up in families that tolerate aggression and the use of power-assertive discipline, such as corporal punishment. This literature is consistent with the findings in this research because majority of participants indicated that they believe that the way bullies are raised at their homes impacts on their bullying behaviour. This finding can also be linked to Bandura's social theory of learning which posits that children learn from imitating adults, when adults are violent children are at the risk of being violent as well.

On the issue of jealousy, bullies could be angry at the way they are treated by teachers and therefore seek revenge elsewhere as shown in a study by Marais and Meier (2010) where respondents believed that learners' disruptive behaviour amounted to retaliation for punishment by teachers. Similarly, Chabalala (2011) also shows that learners who excel academically may become victims of bullying as bullies become jealous when someone progresses faster than them. The findings from this study correlate with the Chabalala (2011); Marais and Meier (2010) since participants in this study seem to believe that jealousy is the driving force to bullying because bullies are jealous of their performance in school. This is affirmed by participants who indicated that they get higher scores in class and they attributed the fact that they do better academically to being vulnerable to bullying. This academic excellence can be linked to the assertion of participants who stated that bullies are jealous individuals. One of the reasons which was attributed to their jealousy is the idea that the victims perform better than them.

Seeking fame and popularity among peers was one of the reasons given for bullying by the learners in this study. This need for status by bullies is also documented in the literature. When students find that putting others down gives them approval from their peers and makes them feel more important, popular and in control, they are likely to do it repeatedly (Aluede et al., 2008; Chabalala, 2011). Similarly, as Protogerou and

Flisher (2012) and Kruger (2011) show, bullying behaviour between peers is a way of gaining social power, status or popularity in the school setting. However, Alfred Adler's theory of Individual Psychology shows that people strive for superiority by attracting attention – whether negative or positive – so as to mask their perceived weaknesses (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 2003). This concurs with the finding that bullies are also vulnerable individuals who may bully to hide some of their weaknesses.

General appearance was another topic that was revealed in the interviews. There was noticeable mention of appearance especially the notion of body weight, as a factor in many incidents of bullying that were reported by the participants. Some participants attributed their vulnerability to their physical appearance, specifically body weight. They believe that they are being bullied because they are 'fat' or 'thin'. Research that addresses bullying related to weight is limited. The findings of some studies have shown that those students who are perceived as weak, less attractive, overweight, or small tend to be victimized by bullying (Frisen, et al., 2007). In another study it was found that "weight-related teasing is prevalent among adolescents and occurs across ethnic groups" and that this kind of teasing has become a greater problem (Benas & Gibb, 2008, 144). On the same note of physical appearance, another study found that females who were considered obese had a greater likelihood of negative feelings about their physical appearance, poor self-concept, and depression (Adams & Bukowski, 2008).

The findings of this research also highlights the locations where bullying is likely to take place. Isidiho's (2009) study found that 29.5 % of bullying in Lesotho happens in classrooms. This finding correlates with what the participants in this study have reported that bullying takes place in the classroom when a teacher is writing on the board or during unsupervised study. Similarly, a study by Mosia (2015) found that learners reported that bullying happens mostly in classrooms (36.7%), followed by sports fields (21.1%) and the school hall (9.5 %). Another worrying finding in this study that requires to be noted is the issue of not reporting bullying incidents. A study by Isidiho (2009) concurs that learners in Lesotho hardly report bullying incidents to their teachers. Reluctance to report to teachers is a concern that should be taken seriously by educationists, as teachers should be trusted to nurture all domains of development, including psychosocial development (Papalia, et al., 2006). Participants in this study

also revealed that sometimes they report and nothing is done to the bullies this is why they end up being reluctant to report. In this regard, a simple observation supported by literature notes that novice teachers are so overwhelmed by the teaching process that they focus only on delivering the content and fail to be vigilant, or may have poorly planned lessons that do not address all learners' learning needs, thus creating time for bullies to aggress others (Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008). Some experienced teachers may feel overworked and tired such that classroom control becomes another person's job and this could lead to great impairment to learners' education if they learn in such unsafe classrooms.

5.2 Data addressing research questions

In the following section, an attempt to answer research questions is made.

5.2.1 What are the forms of bullying that learners experience in a school that make them feel excluded in a school environment?

Learners experienced different forms of bullying which fell into three main categories. The first category related to physical forms of bullying which include among others, beating, hitting, pushing. The second category is verbal bullying which includes name calling (insults, vulgar language). In the third category, bullying was attributed to emotional bullying. In this regard, learners felt that bullying leaves them with emotional scars. They highlighted that when their belongings are destroyed and taken away from them, this impacts negatively on their emotions. Despite the responses being generally similar, the results revealed that name calling is the most common form of bullying in this particular school. It appears that learners tease one another by calling them names such as nerds, stupid, fat. Perhaps perpetrators are practicing this form of bullying because they realize that even when the victims report them to the authorities there would be no evidence to prove that they have in fact been bullied.

5.2.2 What are the effects that bullying has on learners which might make learners feel excluded in a school environment?

In terms of the effects that bullying has on the victims, participants expressed feelings of anger, sadness, frustration, embarrassment; which come as a result of bullying, and majority of them felt that dropping out of school is the solution to escape the bullying. However, they find it hard to leave school because they believe that their parents would be very disappointed with their decisions since they have invested a lot of money in their education. These effects fell into two categories, first being emotional effects which include feelings of sadness, anger and frustration. The second category relates to mental thoughts which impacts on their psychological thinking. Suicidal thoughts and wanting to drop out of school can be attributed to psychological effects.

5.2.3 Which factors contribute to bullying as an act that can perpetuate learners' exclusion?

Regarding what participants seem to think triggers bullying, the findings were categorized into three factors, namely: social, biological and personal factors. The participants felt that bullying is influenced by the family background of perpetrators. They seem to think that most of the perpetrators of bullying come from violent and broken homes where they witness violence almost on daily a basis and they bully others when they get to school because they think that violence is a way to go. This finding is linked to social learning theory which posits that children learn by imitating what others do. One participant even used a phrase "*violence breeds violence*" to affirm this. Furthermore, another factor was attributed to individual's biological makeup. Under this category, participants discussed some of the biological factors which make them vulnerable to bullying. They indicated that aspects of age, weight and being different such as wearing spectacles to correct eye-sight make victims easy targets on bullying. With regard to weight, learners who appear to be *fat* or *thin* seem to be the ones who are frequently humiliated and ridiculed because of their weight. The last category was attributed to personal factors. Participants indicated that sometimes perpetrators bully because of their personal reasons. For instance, they may be jealous on the learners who seem to excel academically thus resorting to bully them which will ultimately result in deterioration in their school work. They also seem to believe that perpetrators of

bullying are individuals who seek attention, demand and strive for recognition so they bully to attain all these.

The next chapter discusses the limitations of this study. Based on the findings recommendations are made.

CHAPTER 6. LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Limitations of the study

Through this study, key questions have been answered. However, this study cannot be rendered plausible if limitations are not acknowledged. In the following sections some of the limitations of this study are identified.

6.1.1 Limitations in the design of the study

Firstly, this research is limited due to the sample size of the school that participated. Although 76 learners is an acceptable sample size for a qualitative research study of this nature, the data that was collected was limited to one school. Also, only learners in Grade eight participated in this study, this meant that even the findings are considerably limited perhaps learners from other grades might have different experiences. It is for this reason that the data collected is limited to the experiences of the participants in this particular school in Botha-Bothe district, and may not give a true reflection of the experiences of all Grade eight learners in all high schools.

6.1.2 Limitations in the execution of the study

Besides the limitations discussed in the above section, the execution of the study must be taken into consideration. Although the limitations of the data collection methods were elaborated on, the execution of data collection proved to have its own limitations. One of the limitations was in relation to time constraints. Collaborating and meeting with the participants proved to be a challenge due to the classes and extra-mural activities of the participants. Hence, having to meet with learners during lunch hour when they are supposed to be eating could have limited their responses, due to learners wanting to get interviews done quickly. As a result of this, learners could have held back the information to keep the interview short so that they have time for their lunch. To one participant, it was evident that articulating their experiences of bullying evoked emotions to the extent that she cried. In this regard, to some participants this may have

also been the case, perhaps they held back information to avoid negative emotions from being evoked.

The second limitation was in relation to essay writing. Most learners wrote short essays leaving only minimal written data to work with. It was emphasized at the start of the research that their essays are not going to be used to grade them which possibly made learners not to put much effort in to writing those essays.

6.1.3 Strengths

The methodology adopted for this study would provide valuable and credible information with regard to the research topic. Although the findings cannot be generalized to all learners in Grade eight, this research gave 76 learners the opportunity to voice their experiences so that there may be measures that can be taken to minimize incidents of bullying and to deal with bullying effectively. Furthermore, it allows the school and all stake holders to take cognizance of the effects that bullying has on the victims thus enabling them to implement strategies to control bullying in order to avoid learners from experiencing these tremendous effects.

6.2 Recommendations

As the findings of the study show prevalence of bullying in this high school in Lesotho, the study recommends that a more representative national survey be carried out by the Ministry of Education and Training to ascertain the severity of the challenges bullying pose. The curriculum can also play a major role in assisting students in developing their self-concept. For example, through literature learners can see characters who are in similar circumstances as their own and read about how those characters deal with the various situations. Another curricular element that might help alleviate bullying is the implementation of a social justice curriculum in Lesotho schools. Through looking at issues of power, inequality, and injustice, learners will see the impact that their actions, and those of others, have on society. By so doing, they will gain an understanding of what is right through examining what is wrong, and hopefully this will translate to their treatment of others and how they allow themselves to be treated.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho provides professional development which focuses on different aspects of bullying that will assist teachers in understanding the nuances of bullying. Professional development can provide teachers with strategies for addressing bullying in the classroom through curriculum. It can also help teachers learn how to get students to assert themselves when confronted by a bully. Teachers can also learn about different forms of bullying beyond the physical and verbal forms of bullying. Relational aggression appears to be a form of bullying which many teachers are unfamiliar with, but it is a form of bullying that hinders the learning process for many learners.

Additionally, teachers need to be convinced that the social climate of the classroom is crucial to learners' development and learning. Although teachers are trusted to groom learners to compete and pass state standard tests, they also need to focus their attention to teasing and bullying that take place in class and deal with it effectively. Concurring this view is Sapon-Shevin (2003, p. 10) who asserts that "creating students who can pass tests but who treat one another cruelly or indifferently is not a formula for successful schooling or a democratic society". In view of this, it is truly essential to make teachers aware of the importance of attending to issues of bullying in schools.

Education is believed to be a three legged pot, which involves a child, teachers and parents. When three parties are actively involved in teaching and learning, good results may be obtained. As the findings in this study revealed, majority of learners believe that parenting has a greater influence in the way some children behave. Most of the participants are of the opinion that, "*violence breeds violence*". In other words, when parents corporally punish their children or if they are violent towards them, chances are, their children might turn into bullies. Based on this, parental involvement is found to be crucial. Parents have a great role to play when it comes to socialisation of children, as the early socialisation of the child starts at home. Through the socialisation process, children acquire both appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. To be successful in this, adults should reward acceptable behaviours and ignore/punish unacceptable behaviours. Normal socialisation includes a number of values and habits. From childhood, parents and family members should teach children to abstain from bullying and evil acts; most especially, to stay away from peers who exhibit bullying behaviour. Parents need to be

made cognizant of the effects that their children's' upbringing may have on both their children and others.

Although this study was not aimed at exploring the preventive measures of bullying, the researcher felt a need to recommend one to avert the circumstances that give rise to bullying. One of the techniques which can be practiced in schools to prevent bullying is by implementing zero tolerance policies. Zero tolerance policies refer to consequences that are predetermined for infractions of specific school rules. The National Center on Educational Statistics reported that zero tolerance policies are in place in 79% of all schools for tobacco and violence, 90% of all schools for drug and/or alcohol possession, and 90% of all schools for weapons and firearms (Morrison & Skiba, 2001, p. 174). If there is zero tolerance on bullying, some learners may refrain from bullying others with a fear of being punished for infringing the zero tolerance policy.

To make school a better environment and to support the intellectual, emotional and social growth of learners, serious intervention programmes need to be undertaken. Researchers (Olweus, 1993; Pepler & Craig, 2000; Smith, 2000) provide several strategies that address ways to help minimise bullying. These are:

- making adults aware of the situation and involving them
- making it clear that bullying is never acceptable
- holding a school conference day devoted to bully/victim problems
- increasing adult supervision in the yard, halls and washrooms more vigilantly
- laying emphasis on caring, respect for others and safety
- emphasising the consequences of hurting others
- enforcing consistent and immediate consequences for aggressive behaviour
- following up on all instances of aggression
- improving communication among school administrators, teachers, parents and students
- having a school problem box where learners can report problems, concerns and offer suggestions

- teaching cooperative learning activities
- helping bullies with hot-temper and to develop feelings of empathy
- encouraging positive peer relations among learners.

6.3 Implications for further research

This research could be replicated to include a larger variety of schools and experiences learners from other grades. The research could also be extended to include learners' experiences from other geographical areas like rural areas. This would allow a broader spectrum of experiences, as different schools and different learners may exhibit different experiences. In this regard, the schools and relevant stakeholders will support all learners' needs and combat issues of bullying to make all learners feel included and to eliminate exclusion as much as possible in schools. Further investigation also needs to be conducted into long-term effects of bullying, on those who take part in bullying acts. Perhaps research could be conducted with people who are no longer in schools and find out how bullying (during their school years) has affected them.

6.4 Conclusion

This study was initiated in response to my suspicion that learners are experiencing bullying in schools in their day to day school life and that the experiences that they have make them feel excluded in the school environment. Also, the study was motivated by literature which reveals that bullying is prevalent in schools world-wide. Against this background, the study attempted to establish whether the above finding holds in Lesotho schools. The study confirmed that bullying takes place in Lesotho schools. It was also revealed that learners are experiencing different forms of bullying, they experience tremendous effects, and they also provided factors which contribute to bullying. Generally, the experiences which these learners have seem to hinder the effective teaching and learning thus impeding on the inclusion agenda. I therefore regarded it as a need to interrogate bullying for the field of inclusive education because in order to be inclusive, we first need to interrogate exclusionary pressures which are experienced by learners and address them effectively.

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Appendix A: Information letter to the ministry of education

The Ministry of Education and Training

Senior Education Officer

P.O. Box 230

Botha-Bothe 400

Lesotho

Dear Sir/Madam

Request: to conduct research in a school in Botha-Bothe district.

My name is Mots'elisi Lekena. I am a Masters student (student number: 886287) at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my Master's degree, I am conducting research within the field of inclusive education. This research report project is entitled: **An exploration of learners' experiences of bullying as an act that promotes exclusion in a high school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho.** Literature indicates that incidence of bullying seems to be on the increase in schools and that it can make some learners feel excluded in the school and learning environment. I am interested in finding out the experiences that learners have regarding bullying at school and how bullying makes them feel. For this reason, I wish to request your permission to collect data from (Botha-Bothe High School) in Botha-Bothe district.

Participation will require that all learners in Grade eight, with their assent as well as their parents'/guardians/caregivers' consent partake in a narrative essay writing which will be used as a pre-selection method. Grade eight learners will be requested to write a narrative essay for duration of 40 minutes, during their guidance and counselling lesson, on the following topic: *My experiences of bullying at my school and how it makes me feel.* Based on their responses, six learners who indicated to experience different forms of bullying will be invited to participate in individual semi-structured interviews which

are estimated to take 45 minutes to an hour per participant. The interview process will take place on the school premises, at a time that will not interfere with teaching. The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their consent to participate at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participation in this study is voluntary and so participants are not going to be paid for taking part in this study.

The data that will result from this study will be documented in a research report and it is envisaged that the research findings be used for academic purposes including conference proceedings and publications. All research data will be stored at the Wits School of Education and it will be destroyed between 3-5 years after the research has been completed. The data collection process is proposed to take place in August, and data collection process is estimated to take over a period of 5 days. I have chosen this school because it is in an area that is accessible to me.

If you have any queries or questions you would like to ask, please don't hesitate to contact me at; (+27) 73 321 5080 (South Africa) or (+266) 6321 4342 (Lesotho) or email me at lekenamotselisi@gmail.com.

I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully

Mots'elisi Lekena

Appendix B: Information letter to the principal

The Principal

(Schools name)

Dear Sir/Madam

Request to conduct research at your school

My name is Mots'elisi Lekena. I am a Masters student (student number: 886287) at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my Master's degree, I am conducting research within the field of inclusive education. This research report project is entitled: **An exploration of learners' experiences of bullying as an act that promotes exclusion in a high school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho.** Literature indicates that incidence of bullying seems to be on the increase in schools and that it can make some learners feel excluded in the school and learning environment. I am interested in finding out the experiences that learners have regarding bullying at school. For this reason, I wish to request your permission to collect data from your school.

With your permission, parents'/guardians/caregivers' consent, and learners' assent, six learners in Grade eight will be interviewed. The main criterion in selecting these participants will be based on the responses from the narrative essay that I will request all the Grade eight learners to write. A narrative essay will be written by Grade eight learners for duration of 40 minutes, during their guidance and counselling lesson, on the following topic: *My experiences of bullying at my school and how it makes me feel.* I am intending to select six learners who will indicate to experience different forms of bullying and invite them to participate in individual semi-structured interviews which are estimated to take 45 minutes to an hour per participant. The interview process will take place on the school premises, either during lunch, after school or during a learner's free lesson so not to interrupt teaching. The responses from the participants will be audio-recorded in order to ensure accurate data collection. The audio recorded responses

will also be helpful in that I can always refer to the responses during transcription and for data analysis.

The data that will result from this study will be documented in a research report and it is envisaged that the research findings be used for academic purposes including conference proceedings and publications. The name of your school will never be divulged in the research write up and all participants' details will be strictly confidential. I assure you that all participants' names and identities will not be mentioned at any point within the research or any other academic publications. To ensure this confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used. The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way in this research and they can withdraw their consent to participate in the study at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study and participation is voluntary.

All research data will be stored at the Wits School of Education and it will be destroyed between 3-5 years after the research has been completed. The data collection process is estimated to take place in August, and it is estimated to take over a period of 5 days.

I humbly invite your school to participate in this research.

Should you require further information please don't hesitate to contact me on; (+27) 73 321 5080 (South Africa) or (+266) 6321 4342 (Lesotho) or email me at lekenamotselisi@gmail.com. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Mots'elisi Lekena

Appendix C: Information letter to participants (learners)

Dear Learner

My name is Mots'elisi Lekena. I am a student at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. In order to complete my studies, I have to conduct a study in a school. My research topic is: **An exploration of learners' experiences of bullying as an act that promotes exclusion in a high school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho.** Literature indicates that incidence of bullying seems to be on the increase in schools and that it can make some learners feel excluded in the school and learning environment. I am interested in finding out the experiences that learners have regarding bullying at school. For this reason, I would like to invite you to partake in this study to share the experiences that you have regarding bullying at school and how bullying makes you feel.

Since you are not yet 18 years old, I will ask permission from your parent/guardian/caregiver to allow you to participate in this study. With the permission of your parent/guardian/caregiver as well as yours, I will ask you to write a narrative essay for 40 minutes, during your guidance and counselling lesson, on the following topic: *My experiences of bullying at my school and how it makes me feel.* Based on your response, you will be invited to participate in individual semi-structured interview discussion which is estimated to take 45 minutes to an hour. I would like to record your responses in order to make sure that I capture everything that you say because this will help me when I transcribe and analyse data. This study will take place on the school premises at a time that is convenient to you, either during lunch, after school or during your free lesson.

Please understand that your participation is voluntary so you may choose not to participate or may withdraw your permission to participate at any time during this project without any penalty or punishment. This is not a test or for marks so if you agree to participate, you will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way or given any money for participating. You are also advised to understand that you will not be pressurized to answer any questions that you are not willing to or you are not feeling comfortable to answer. I do not expect there will be any risks in participating in this study.

The data that will result from this study will be documented in a research report and the research findings will be used for academic purposes including conference proceedings and publications. I guarantee you that neither your name nor the name of your school will be revealed in any publications or in the final report of this study. To ensure this confidentiality, I will use pseudonym (fake name) instead of your own name in the research write up. The information that I will collect will be stored at the Wits School of Education and it will be destroyed between 3-5 years after the research has been completed.

If you would like to ask me any questions, please feel free to contact me using details below.

(+27) 73 321 5080 (South Africa) or (+266) 6321 4342 (Lesotho) or email me at lekenamotselisi@gmail.com.

Thank you very much for your help.

Kind regards

Mots'elisi Lekena

Appendix D: Information letter to parent/guardian/caregiver

Dear Parent/Guardian/Caregiver

My name is Mots'elisi Lekena. I am a Masters student (student number: 886287) at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my Master's degree, I am conducting research within the field of inclusive education. This research report project is entitled: **An exploration of learners' experiences of bullying as an act that promotes exclusion in a high school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho.** Literature indicates that incidence of bullying seems to be on the increase in schools and that it can make some learners feel excluded in the school and learning environment. I am interested in finding out the experiences that learners have regarding bullying at school. For this reason, I wish to request your permission for your child/ward to take part in this research.

Participation will require that with your permission, your child/ward will write a narrative essay for duration of 40 minutes, during his/her guidance and counselling lesson, on the following topic: *My experiences of bullying at my school and how it makes me feel.* If on his/her response, he/she indicates to experience different forms of bullying he/she will be invited to participate in individual semi-structured interview discussion with me. The interview discussion is estimated to take 45 minutes to an hour. With your consent, the responses will be audio-recorded in order to ensure accurate data. The interview process will take place on the school premises, at a time that will not interfere with teaching. Participation is completely voluntary and there are no negative consequences should you and your child/ward choose not to participate. In agreeing to your child's/ward's participation, please be advised that you will not incur any expenses and your child/ward will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way or given any money for participating in this study. Furthermore, your child/ward will not be pressurized to answer any questions that he/she is not willing to answer.

The data that will result from this study will be documented in a research report and it is envisaged that the research findings be used for academic purposes including conference proceedings and publications. The name of your child/ward or the name of his/her school will never be divulged at any point within the research or any other

academic publications. To ensure this confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used in the research write up. All research data will be stored at the Wits School of Education and it will be destroyed between 3-5 years after the research has been completed.

If you would like a copy of the questions I will be asking, please do not hesitate to contact me using details below.

(+27) 73 321 5080 (South Africa) or (+266) 6321 4342 (Lesotho) or email me at lekenamotselisi@gmail.com.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Mots'elisi Lekena

Appendix E: Principal’s consent form

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to allow your school to participate in the research project called:

An exploration of learners’ experiences of bullying as an act that promotes exclusion in a high school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho.

I, _____ the principal of _____

Permission to conduct research

I agree that research be conducted in my school.

YES/NO

Sign _____ Date _____

Appendix F: Parents' consent form

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to allow your child to participate in the research project called:

An exploration of learners' experiences of bullying as an act that promotes exclusion in a high school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho.

I, _____ the parent/guardian/caregiver of

Permission to write a narrative essay

I agree that my child/ward may write a narrative essay on his/her experiences of bullying at _____ school. YES/NO

Permission to be audiotaped

I agree that my child/ward may be audiotaped during interview. YES/NO

I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only. YES/NO

Permission to be interviewed

I agree that my child/ward may be interviewed for this study. YES/NO

I know that he/she can stop the interview at any time and doesn't have to answer all the questions asked. YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- My child's/ward's name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that the name of his/her school will not be revealed.
- He/she does not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- All the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of this project.

Sign _____ Date _____

Appendix G: Learner consent form

Please fill in the reply slip below if you agree to participate in my study called:

An exploration of learners’ experiences of bullying as an act that promotes exclusion in a high school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho.

My name is:

Permission to write a narrative essay

I agree to write a narrative essay on my experiences of bullying at school. YES/NO

Permission to be audiotaped

I agree to be audiotaped during the interview. YES/NO

I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only. YES/NO

Permission to be interviewed

I would like to be interviewed for this study. YES/NO

I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don’t have to answer all the questions asked. YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- My name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- All the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of this project.

Sign_____ Date_____

Appendix I: Interview guide

Opening remarks

My name is Mots'elisi Lekena. As I have indicated in the information sheet, I am conducting this study in fulfillment of my Master's degree at University of the Witwatersrand. Hopefully, this research will not only be beneficial to me as a researcher in learning about your experiences of bullying at school but also to other students as well as principals, teachers, and parents. And perhaps, your experiences might encourage them to put in place strategies to control bullying. Thank you for accepting to participate in this study.

I am going to start off by asking you introductory questions to get to know you better.

Introductory Questions

1. Can you please tell me about how school was when you were in primary?
2. How did you feel when you have to move from primary to high school?
3. Is high school the same as you thought it would be? Please share the experiences you have had in high school.

It has been a pleasure finding out more about you.

The following questions have been designed for the interview:

What are forms of bullying that learners experience in a school that make them feel excluded in a school environment?

I am now going to ask you questions about the forms of bullying that you experience in your school that make you feel excluded.

1. How would you define bullying?
2. Are there different forms of bullying as you understand it? Can you please tell me about them (different forms of bullying).
3. Which of the forms above have you experienced? And how does each one of them work?

4. Please describe how these forms of bullying make you feel excluded in a school environment.

What are the effects of bullying that make learners feel excluded in a school environment?

At this juncture, I am going to ask you questions about the effects of bullying that make you feel excluded in a school environment.

1. How does being bullied at school make you feel?
2. Have these feelings ever been shared with anyone in particular? Who?/ why not?
3. What are your reactions to those who bully you at school?
4. From 3 above, why do you react the way you do?

Which possible factors contribute to bullying as an act that can perpetuate learners' exclusion?

At this moment, I am going to ask you questions about factors that you think contribute to bullying which is an act that promotes exclusion.

1. What do you think are the reasons you are being bullied?
2. Can you describe the students who bully others in school? And what are your thoughts about them?
3. Under which circumstances do you think some students end up being bullies?

Closing remarks

(Let me briefly summarize the information that I have recorded during our interview). We have now come to the end of our interview process. I, once again, truly appreciate the time you took for this interview. Is there anything else you think would be helpful for me to know that I didn't cover in our interview?

Appendix J: Ethics committee clearance letter

Wits School of Education

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01 July 2015

Student Number: 886287

Protocol Number: 2015ECE025M

Dear Mots'elisi Lekena

Application for Ethics Clearance: Master of Education

Thank you very much for your ethics application. The Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate has considered your application for ethics clearance for your proposal entitled:

An exploration of learners' experiences of bullying as an act that promotes exclusion in a high school in Botha-Bothe district, Lesotho

The committee recently met and I am pleased to inform you that clearance was granted.

Please use the above protocol number in all correspondence to the relevant research parties (schools, parents, learners etc.) and include it in your research report or project on the title page.

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

All the best with your research project.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'M Mabete'.

Wits School of Education

011 717-3416

Cc Supervisor: Dr Moeniera Moosa

