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**TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL BULLYING: INSIGHTS FROM TWO
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN CAPE TOWN.**

by

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Education

in the Faculty of Education

at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology

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Mowbray

May 2013

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perspectives on school bullying with insights from two primary schools in Cape Town. The topic of 'bullying' is not a new one in research; however this study investigated the factors affecting teachers' perspectives on school bullying and how these perspectives affect the way teachers responded to incidents of bullying. The concepts of habitus, capital and field were used to provide a theoretical lens through which to examine the topic.

The study was based on a small sample of 31 teachers drawn from two primary schools. The study employed a mixed-method approach in which quantitative and qualitative principles were applied. The study consisted of two phases in which data collection took place. The first was a questionnaire, while the second involved interviews. The application of two data-collecting instruments helped to ensure triangulation, thereby enhancing the credibility of the process.

Findings indicated that teachers have various conceptions of bullying; this is partly determined by their gender, but also by the way in which they grew up and experienced bullying themselves as children.

DECLARATION

I, **Gerarde Osman**, hereby declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

.....

Signed

.....

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank:

- my supervisor, Dr Chimbiwso Kwenda and co-supervisor, Mr Jeremy Koeberg, for their guidance, patience, encouragement, inspiration and support – the driving force towards the success of my thesis;
- my wife and children, for their love and support;
- the principals of the sample schools, as well as the teachers who unselfishly gave of their time to participate in the study. Without their cooperation, this thesis would not have been possible;
- Ms Corrie Uys for her assistance with the analysis and presentation of the data;
- Elizabeth Van Aswegen for proofreading and editing the thesis.

DEDICATION

**This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Bertha, my daughter, Kendall and son, Caleb.
Thank you for the time that you have afforded me over the years.**

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GLOSSARY

Respondents People who participated in the questionnaire

Participants People who participated in the interviews

Ijime Japanese term to describe bullying

LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

WCED Western Cape Education Department

DoE Department of Education

CPUT Cape Peninsula University of Technology

SASA South African Schools Act

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 provides the reader with a broad description of what this particular study comprises. The researcher explains his reasons for wanting to pursue the topic of bullying. In this chapter, the research title, as well as the research questions addressed during the study, can be found.

1.2 Research problem

The title of this study is, “Teachers’ perspectives on school bullying: insights from two primary schools in Cape Town”. The research investigates how teachers construct an understanding of and respond to school bullying. At the end of the study, recommendations are made on how to address bullying and prepare primary school teachers to deal with bullying more effectively.

1.3 The purpose of the study

This study explores the influences on primary school teachers’ perspectives on school bullying and how these perspectives affect their behaviour towards bullying incidents. Mishna et al. (2005:719) posit that “research is lacking on teachers’ understanding of bullying and on factors that influence their views”. This study presents data gathered from a group of 31 primary school teachers.

Teachers’ understanding of bullying, including its definition, is derived from various sources, including individual experiences as children or adults, and literature read by the teacher. This study aims to explore the various factors that have contributed to teachers’ concepts of bullying. These factors may be the teachers’ attitudes, behaviours, understanding, knowledge and personal experiences with regard to bullying. Through this study, I hope to determine if and how these factors affect the way teachers respond to bullying.

Part of the researcher’s purpose is to determine whether teachers allow these factors, be they internal or external, to affect how they respond to bullying. As teachers spend a large amount of contact time with learners, teachers’ perceptions on bullying may play an

important role in reducing or eradicating bullying incidents at school (Dake et al., 2003:347). The study will also shed more light on how well teachers are able to deal with bullying incidents at school.

1.4 Research questions

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of the study is to examine teachers' perspectives on school bullying. Teachers were drawn from two primary schools in Cape Town. A teacher's perspective on bullying could be influenced by a number of factors (e.g. understanding, attitudes, behaviour, knowledge, personal experiences, opinions, literature, policy, and support structures). Based on this, the study also includes the following research questions.

1. What are the factors that might affect the teacher's perspective on bullying?
2. Do teachers allow these factors that influence their perspective to affect how they respond to bullying?

To assist in addressing the above research questions, I relied upon the mixed-method research approach. A discussion of the mixed-method approach will take place later in Chapter 3 of the thesis.

1.5 Focus of the study

The study aims to explore teachers' attitudes, behaviours, understanding, and personal experiences of bullying, and to determine whether any of these factors affect the way teachers respond to bullying, as well as the opinions teachers may have regarding bullying within the school.

Teachers work not only to educate learners, according to the *South African Schools Act* (DoE, 1996), but work also to manage the behaviour of the learners within the classroom and the school. An important task of a teacher is to socialise the learners so that they may become valuable citizens of the country (Beran, 2006:120). As teachers, it is our duty to protect our learners from any kind of violence, be it physical, emotional or psychological, and to ensure that learning occurs within a safe and secure educational environment. The Department of Education (DoE) of South Africa (DoE, 1998:6) states that every learner has the right to "non-violence and the freedom and security of a person".

Bullying, however, creates both a socially toxic environment and an unsafe learning environment, and may have negative consequences for both the learner and the teacher. Crothers and Kolbert (2008:133) contend that “childhood bullying has increasingly been recognized as one of the most common and widespread forms of school violence”. There is pressure on teachers to respond effectively. Mishna et al. (2005:734) note that “teachers are in the front line in addressing bullying”. This is since teachers spend a large amount of contact time with learners. Teachers’ perceptions of bullying thus play an important role in how the problem of bullying is addressed (Dake et al., 2003:347). According to De Wet (2007:193), “learners in schools, where problems of bullying are ignored and aggressive behaviour is not addressed, are likely to become more aggressive and less tolerant as well”.

The literature review discusses various definitions developed by diverse social science researchers. The literature review also reveals that much of the research involving bullying at school revolves around learners and the effects that bullying may have on them. These effects refer to the consequences of bullying on both the victim and the perpetrator. The literature introduces the reader to the two types of bullying and briefly discusses the characteristics of each.

A delimitation of the study is that it is only concerned with bullying, even though there are other forms of physical violence that occur in schools.

1.6 The significance of the study

Educational authorities, parents and society assume that teachers should view school bullying as behaviour that is unacceptable at school. Mishna et al. (2005:719) posit that “research is lacking on teachers’ understanding of bullying and on factors that influence their views”. Very few studies exploring the views teachers have of bullying have been conducted. One study, conducted with pre-service teachers, investigated and assessed teachers’ beliefs and knowledge about bullying (Nicolaidis et al., 2002; Bauman & Del Rio, 2005:434). It reveals that pre-service teachers did not have a clear understanding of the nature of bullying. The teachers acknowledged that bullying could be physical or psychological; however many of them failed to mention that it occurs over a period of time, and for it to constitute bullying, a power imbalance must be present.

What makes this study different, is that it diverges from the studies that investigate the types of bullying occurring at schools and the effect these may have on the child. A unique feature of this research is that teachers had to share their own experiences with regard to bullying

and that no such study has ever been conducted in schools of the Steenberg area of the Western Cape. It examines the various factors that affect teachers' perspectives on bullying and their reactions to bullying situations. These factors include their own experiences of bullying as a child, their own understanding of what they think bullying may be, and the effect it may have on the children with whom they interact.

Part of the study is also to determine whether teachers allow these personal perceptions and experiences of bullying to affect how they respond to bullying behaviour today. Inferences made will not only be based on qualitative data, but also on quantitative data which will be obtained during the study.

The analytical lens used to support the study will be that of Pierre Bourdieu's three concepts of capital, field and habitus. These concepts will be integrated into the discussion of the literature review with regard to the factors that may affect teachers' perspectives on bullying.

1.7 Background to the study

Bullying among school children is not a new phenomenon. It is something that has been prevalent in society for generations and is regarded as a form of violence. Research conducted on bullying in the last 35 years in Europe, the United States, Japan, Canada and Australia, indicates that bullying is a worldwide problem. Bullying is thus not restricted to a particular area in the world, an ethnic or cultural group, or to race, creed or gender.

An important responsibility of the teacher is to protect the child from any kind of harm, be it physical, emotional or psychological. These responsibilities are clearly defined in the *South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996* (DoE, 1996) and are embodied in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996* (South Africa, 1996), Chapter 2, which deals with the Bill of Rights. Some of these basic human rights have become difficult to enforce, owing to the increase in violence at our schools.

1.8 The effect of bullying

Bullying within schools has contributed to the increase in school violence, making it difficult for teachers to carry out their responsibility to keep learners safe. In the USA, victims of bullying have responded by shooting others and often themselves, seeing this as the only method of retaliation (Bauman & Del Rio, 2005:429). The Columbine High School shooting (DeLara, 2006:1) in April 1999 is one such case, in which two learners killed their

classmates, a teacher and then themselves. These learners felt that the school and the teachers did nothing to protect them from being victimised by the other learners. Aluedse (2006:41) states that “the sense of powerlessness experienced by children who are victimized can be so profound that some victims of bullying react with self-destructive acts or lethal retaliation”. If bullying behaviour is not stopped, it may become habitual. Learners who bully others have a strong chance of becoming aggressive adults and may end up having criminal records (Aluedse, 2006:42; Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008:212).

1.9 The point of origin

Bullying can be an indication that the child who is bullying others may be experiencing or is exposed to aggressive or violent behaviour in his/her life (Bullock, 2002). Children who bully may thus be imitating what they have seen and learned at home or at school (Bullock, 2002: 130). Bullying behaviour learned elsewhere may be enacted at school. This argument is supported by Bandura’s theory (Swartz et al., 2008:131) on personality development which states that “most behaviour is acquired through observing others and modelling our own behaviour after theirs”. More often than not, this type of behaviour is displayed at school (Dake et al., 2003:347). Bullying may start as early as pre-school and continue into adulthood.

Ellen deLara (2006:4) contends that “all children from kindergarten through high school are affected by bullying in some form each day at school as a bystander, recipient or perpetrator”. Various studies conducted have revealed that bullying is more prominent in primary school, with a steady decrease in secondary school (Rigby, 2005:149). Bauman and Del Rio (2005:429) state that “several countries have determined that more than 15 percent of school children are actively involved in bullying, with the number of victims in elementary grades twice that of secondary students”.

1.10 Research methodology

In conducting this particular study, the researcher relied upon the mixed-method or the multi-method research approach. The researcher therefore employed both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques within the study. Denscombe (1998:84) notes that “using the multi-method [approach] produces different kinds of data on the same topic”.

The data collection instrument used for the quantitative section of the research was a questionnaire in the form of a Likert scale. In this part of the study, respondents were

presented with statements and were required to select the option that best matched their degree of agreement with the statement.

The qualitative section of the study is a series of interviews with primary school teachers. The interviews provided the participants with an opportunity to speak more personally about bullying. This method allowed the participants to speak freely about bullying as they experienced it both as children and adults. Participants provided the researcher with greater clarity and reasons for their particular answers to questions – information unobtainable in Likert-scale questionnaires.

The analysed data obtained from the Likert-scale questionnaire was placed in cross-tables in order to read and understand the information effectively. The responses from the interviews were summarised into identified categories. A more in-depth discussion of the research method will take place later in Chapter 3 of the thesis.

1.11 Outline of chapters

Chapter 1 clearly defines the title and deliniates the research problem; it explains the significance of the study and provides the reader with information on the background to the study. This chapter defines what the purpose of the study is and presents the research questions that will be addressed. The chapter also gives a brief description of the approach used during the study, as well as the reasons for the researcher's selection of the particular approach. This chapter also gives a succinct description and an explanation of what is covered in the other chapters of the thesis.

Chapter 2 discusses the literature reviewed by the researcher. Literature that may strongly influence the findings of the study is discussed in greater depth in this section. This chapter presents information on how bullying has been constructed as a concept by various social science researchers. The theoretical framework that supports the study is integrated with the literature reviewed.

Chapter 3 provides detailed information on the mixed-method approach employed by the researcher as well as a brief description of the quantitative and qualitative approaches. This chapter explains why the particular research approach used in this study was selected. A more in-depth description of the data-collection instruments is given in this chapter. This discussion revolves around the advantages of using the various data-collection instruments. It describes how the researcher selected his sample sites and collected data, and describes

the data analysis procedures in greater detail. The procedures followed by the researcher to ensure the success of the study are discussed in this chapter. This chapter also describes the ethical issues involved in carrying out the study.

Chapter 4 presents the collected data, which is accompanied by description, analysis and a discussion of the findings. This chapter also lists the questions posed to the participants in the interview. Questions on a more personal level were also asked to determine the background of the participants. These questions were intended to give the reader an overall clearer understanding of the participants. Data obtained from the Likert-scale questionnaire is presented in tables accompanied by a description of the data. A summary of the participants' responses obtained from the individual interviews is also presented within this chapter.

Chapter 5 deals with conclusions reached from the analysis of the data. In this chapter, the researcher will reflect on the research process. The study's findings are linked to literature in the field in order to gain deeper insight into their significance and meaning in the context of the study. Recommendations with regard to the study will also be made in this chapter.

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter reiterated the research problem as well as the research questions. It also provided an explanation of the purpose of the study. The chapter introduced the research methodology employed during the study, while simultaneously providing reasons for the researcher's choice of research approach. A brief outline of the various chapters in the thesis was given. The next chapter deals with the literature review regarding teachers' perspectives on bullying, types of bullying, and the extent of bullying as a phenomenon throughout the world. The theoretical framework that supports the study is incorporated in the literature review to ground the research within its particular research paradigm.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided the reader with the title of the study, “Teachers’ perspectives on school bullying: insights from two primary schools in Cape Town”, as well as the research problem and the background to the problem of bullying. Chapter 1 clearly demonstrates that bullying is a global phenomenon that requires serious attention.

An explanation of the purpose of the study was provided in Chapter 1, which also presented the research questions addressed during the study. The research approach and methodology used for the study were also introduced in Chapter 1. The chapter also provided a brief overview of the remaining chapters in this study, as well as a short description of the theoretical foundation upon which the study is based.

2.1.1 Overview of Chapter 2

Chapter 2 contains a review of the relevant literature in the field. Other aspects discussed in this chapter are the various definitions pertinent to this study, descriptions of the various types of bullying, and the effects that bullying may have on a child, according to the literature. The chapter also briefly discusses the extent of bullying as a phenomenon within schools around the world. The theoretical framework of habitus, field and capital developed by Pierre Bourdieu that supports the study is discussed in depth in this chapter.

2.2 Previous studies

Numerous studies have been conducted on bullying in the last 35 years. Most research on bullying revolves around the interpersonal problems experienced by the bully, the extent of bullying, intervention programmes employed to minimise bullying, and the effect bullying has on the victim (Baldry, 2004; Dyer & Teggart, 2007). Very little research appears to have been conducted on teachers’ understanding of bullying and how this influences their attitudes towards it (Craig et al., 2000; Nicolaidis et al., 2002; Mishna et al., 2005; Nesdale & Pickering, 2006).

Other studies have examined the role that peers play in bullying episodes, and the effect that bullying has on them as bystanders or witnesses (Pellegrini et al., 1999; Salmivalli, 1999; Espelage et al., 2000). Studies have been conducted on the socio-economic conditions and societal attitudes that may foster or contribute to bullying behaviour (Mishna, 2004:234; Mishna et al., 2005:719).

One study conducted in the Free State, South Africa, concentrates on learners' experiences of bullying and their perspectives of it (De Wet, 2007), while another study explores teachers' perceptions of bullying prevention strategies (De Wet, 2006). While studies similar to this on teachers' perspectives on bullying have been conducted internationally, no such studies appear to have been done in South Africa.

Studies conducted with teachers on bullying involved pre-service teachers and teachers in Canada, the USA and the United Kingdom (Craig et al., 2000; Nicolaidis et al., 2002; Bauman & Del Rio, 2005; Ferguson et al., 2007). The studies examined contextual factors of bullying and characteristics of teachers to determine their attitudes towards bullying. These contextual factors explored the various forms of bullying, reasons that might cause children to bully, and places where bullying was likely to take place. This research has placed great emphasis on the child and the types of bullying that have occurred in schools.

The current study diverges from the approach of studying the child and the factors that may lead a child to develop into a bully; instead it places emphasis on the teacher and the factors that may have influenced his or her own understanding of bullying as a concept. It investigates how bullying is perceived through the eyes of the teacher and the way he or she reacts to bullying situations.

2.3 Constructing an understanding of bullying as a concept

Childhood bullying is one of the most common forms of school violence (Crothers & Kolbert, 2008:133). Bullying involves multiple incidents targeted at one particular person over time rather than a single incident. Bullying occurs with greater frequency, and may have a greater and longer lasting effect on a victim's mental health and school performance than other forms of violence. An important trait of school bullying is that it does not occur in isolation, but normally in the presence of an audience. Beran (2006:121) states: "85% of bullying episodes take place in front of peers." This audience plays an important role in either reinforcing or reducing bullying behaviour. Children may encourage or discourage the bully to continue with his/her behaviour.

2.4 Bullying as a concept in social science

Over the years researchers have developed various definitions to describe school bullying. These definitions have much in common.

In Japan, the word *ijime* is used, in North America, 'peer victimisation' and in the Scandinavian countries, 'mobbing' (Craig et al., 2000:6; Greeff & Grobler, 2008:127). Although these terms differ from one another, they characterise and mean the same thing that is, bullying. However it is important to note that bullying is not to be confused with harassment or assault, as these may be carried out randomly and may occur in isolated incidents (Aluedse, 2006:38). Bullying must not also be confused with fighting between learners which may occur between two of equal strength (Reid et al., 2004:242).

Children involved in bullying either directly or indirectly can be categorised into three groups. Those directly involved are the bully carrying out the action, and the victim of the bullying. The bully may also have been a victim at one stage of another bully and he/she will direct his/her aggression onto another child as a form of revenge. Those indirectly involved in bullying are classified as bystanders or witnesses (Fox & Boulton, 2005; Espelage, 2008).

2.4.1 Defining bullying from various conceptual constructions

Bullying can be described as an intentional, repeated, harmful action, which is carried out physically, verbally or socially by a person or a group of people on a less powerful person causing injury or distress to the person (Bauman & Del Rio, 2005:428; Eisenberg & Aalsma, 2005:88; Beran, 2006:120; De Wet, 2006:62; Ferguson et al., 2007:401; Crothers & Kolbert, 2008:133). The perpetrator, commonly known as the bully, controls and creates fear in his/her victim. Bullies can be described as impulsive. They have dominant personalities and they may have difficulty adjusting to rules and discipline. They are often involved in fights and encourage violent activities and behaviour.

Bullock (2002:130) defines bullying as "repeated, unprovoked, harmful actions by one child or children against another". Victims of bullying are often unable to defend themselves. The victim is normally younger, quiet, insecure, anxious, cautious and sensitive (Bullock, 2002: 131). Bullying causes the victim to feel stress, not only because of the action taken against him/her but also of the fear of what might happen in the future. The victims perceive themselves as oppressed. Children are not always bullied by older children, but also by

children of the same age. In these cases the bully will usually have a more dominant personality than his/her victim.

Bullying can also be described as deliberate aggression. Rigby (1997:11) defines bullying as, “cruel, abusive behaviour which is persistent and pervasive and causes suffering to individuals, which is severe and sustained”. The bully carrying out the actions may be more powerful in terms of physical strength, size, social status, and age, or may have the support of friends, thereby making the bully-victim dynamic an asymmetric power relationship. This asymmetric relationship can be described as one-sided where the power exists with only one person. Beran (2006:120) describes a bullying incident as, “when someone with these characteristics dominates and humiliates another student who does not demonstrate one or two of the described characteristics”. The bully feels the need to dominate others and has little empathy for his/her victim (Bullock, 2002:131).

Aluedse (2006:38) contends “bullying occurs when one or more children repeatedly hurt another child through words or actions”. A leading Norwegian researcher, Dan Olweus, who is considered a pioneer in research on bullying, defines bullying as: “A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students (cited in Green, 2007:333).” This negative action may occur as either physical or verbal abuse with an intention to hurt.

It is thus clear that bullying consists primarily of three characteristics. Firstly, it is an act that is repeated over time. Secondly, harm is done to an individual, and thirdly, it is apparent that an imbalance of power exists between the individuals. Empirical studies have revealed that bullies are stronger, more assertive and impulsive in their behaviour than their victims (Mishna, 2003:515). This power imbalance alluded to earlier may be physical strength, size of the perpetrator or his/her popularity among peers.

2.4.2 Types of bullying

According to Baldry (2004) and Aluedse (2006), bullying can be categorised into two forms, direct bullying and indirect bullying. Both of these forms of bullying are executed by both boys and girls.

Direct bullying is easier to detect as it involves physical contact, therefore making it action-orientated. This type of bullying occurs in the form of physical assault, such as hitting, pulling of hair, punching, poking, kicking, pushing, smacking, taking possessions such as lunch or

money, damaging possessions and forcing someone to do things against his/her will (Craig et al., 2000; Bullock, 2002; Eisenberg & Aalsma, 2005; Beran, 2006; De Wet, 2006; De Wet, 2007).

Another form of direct bullying is known as verbal bullying. In these cases, the bully uses words to hurt or humiliate his/her victim. This type of bullying may occur in the form of taunting, teasing, name-calling, threats of harm, hate speech, passing degrading remarks about the victim (this may be with reference to the victim's physical appearance) or verbally abusing a victim (De Wet, 2006; De Wet, 2007). Physical and verbal bullying predominately occurs in the playground, before and after school and during school excursions (Bullock, 2002; Greeff & Grobler, 2008).

Indirect bullying can be divided into two types: relational bullying and emotional bullying. These are less easy to detect, making it more difficult for teachers to respond. Relational and emotional bullying makes the victim feel alienated and alone. Relational bullying is purposeful and is aimed at destroying a victim's relationship with others and spoiling their reputation (De Wet, 2007:194). The bully will not direct his aggression at the victim but instead influences others with whom the victim comes into contact. Relational bullying can involve social exclusion from a group, spreading nasty rumours about a person or gossiping (De Wet, 2007:194).

Emotional bullying occurs in the form of humiliation, blackmailing and terrorising. Studies conducted by Björkqvist et al. (1992); Baldry (1998); Owens et al. (2000) and Roland and Idsøe (2001), revealed that girls are more prone than boys to engage in relational bullying. In general, boys rely more upon overt forms of bullying – (hitting, kicking and threatening, for example). Although bullying usually occurs out of teachers' sight, subtler bullying can occur within the classroom (Mishna, 2003; Reid et al., 2004). These behaviours include social exclusion, such as name-calling, gossiping, teasing or refusing to work with someone in the class.

2.4.3 Effects of bullying

Being bullied may not be as physically dangerous as being assaulted with a weapon, but the consequences of bullying may have far-reaching effects for both the victim and the perpetrator (Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008:211). Bullying may affect the victim's physical, emotional, social and educational wellbeing (Mishna, 2003; Bauman & Del Rio, 2005; De Wet, 2005; Mishna et al., 2005; Ferguson et al., 2007).

Victims of bullying can be divided into two groups, namely, the passive victim and the provocative victim. The passive victim is quiet, anxious and will not defend him/herself, therefore making him/her an easy target, while the provocative or aggressive victim behaves in ways that others find irritating or simply is disruptive (Mishna, 2003:516).

Victims of bullying may experience a range of consequences, from physical, emotional, and social, to academic (Dake et al., 2003; Bauman & Del Rio, 2005; De Wet, 2007; Dyer & Teggart, 2007; Crothers & Kolbert, 2008). Some physical signs a victim may display are loss of appetite, headaches, digestive problems, nail biting and poor sleeping habits. Emotional consequences experienced by victims of bullying include depression, feeling moody and irritable, confusion, anxiety, anger and low self-esteem (Bauman & Del Rio, 2005:429).

The victim may show his/her frustration by lashing out at parents, friends and other family members (De Wet, 2007:192). The victim may also suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and may feel sad, unhappy or hurt. These feelings may develop into thoughts of suicide or revenge (Bauman & Del Rio, 2005:429).

Social consequences experienced by victims include loneliness, isolation and rejection by peers. As far as educational wellbeing is concerned, the victim may be reluctant to participate in certain school activities such as group and sporting activities because of the fear of being ostracised (Mishna, 2003:515). Victims of bullying may produce poor academic results even if they were high achievers previously. They may be absent from school more often, and may have poor concentration in class (Bullock, 2002; De Wet, 2005; De Wet, 2007; Ferguson et al., 2007). Bullying may result in the victim's viewing school as a threatening environment and he or she may begin to experience adjustment difficulties (Bullock, 2002).

While bullying may provide the perpetrator with some kind of pleasure, it also has a negative effect on him/her. Perpetrators of bullying may experience depression and mental health disorders such as attention deficit, and may have suicidal thoughts. This behaviour may continue into adolescence (Mishna, 2003; De Wet, 2005; Crothers & Kolbert, 2008). Perpetrators of bullying may end up in juvenile court, commit crimes, or have children who will display this same type of behaviour (Crothers & Kolbert, 2008; Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008). This may result from the fact that, as children, bullies are condoned to acts of low-level violence, but when older perpetrate more serious crimes. As adults, they may exhibit aggressive behaviour within their homes. Perpetrators of bullying are likely to make friends with other children who are bullies (De Wet, 2007).

Many of these perpetrators will produce poor academic results with the likelihood of dropping out of school. The bully is often unable to develop and maintain social relationships with others (Bullock, 2002; De Wet, 2005). No studies could be found on the effects bullying has on the teacher as observer.

2.4.4 The extent of bullying

Bullying occurs in schools throughout the world. A study conducted by Olafsen and Viemerö (2000) in Finland on 510 learners revealed that 4.1% of the learners identified themselves as bullies. A study conducted in the Republic of Ireland by O'Moore, Kirkham and Smith in 1998¹ with 20 442 learners, revealed that 16% of the learners were victims of bullying, 15% were bullies and 4% were both bullies and victims of bullying (cited in Dyer & Teggart, 2007:352). A similar study conducted a few years later by Collins, McAleavy and Adamson in 2002² in Northern Ireland revealed higher figures: 30% of learners identified as victims, 29% as bullies and 12% as both bullies and victims (cited in Dyer & Teggart, 2007:352).

A study conducted by Bradshaw et al. (2007: 368), which involved 15 185 learners in Grade 4 to 12 in the USA, revealed that 49% of the learners had been bullied at least once that previous month, while 30% indicated that they had bullied someone else. In the same study, 23.2% of the learners indicated that they had been bullied more than twice in the previous month, while 8% indicated that they were bullies and 9.4% of learners contended that they were both victims and bullies.

In a study conducted by Baldry (2004:348) with 661 Italian children aged between 11 and 15 years, 56% of respondents indicated that they had been victimised the previous year, while 49% admitted to bullying others. Furthermore, 63% of the respondents who identified themselves as victims also admitted to bullying others, while 72% who admitted to bullying also identified themselves as victims.

¹ O'Moore, A.M. Kirkham, C. & Smith, M. 1997. Bullying behaviour in Irish schools: a nationwide study. *Irish Journal of Psychology*, 18:141-169.

² Collins, K., McAleavy, G. & Adamson, G. 2002. Briefing report: bullying in schools: a Northern Ireland study. Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI). Bangor: DENI. 11 pp. [Research Report Series no. 30].

In the South African context, Greeff and Grobler (2008:131) state that while “literature on bullying has grown significantly over the last decade, limited research has been published in this area from a South African perspective”. South African research on bullying has primarily concentrated on the type and extent of bullying in schools (De Wet, 2006:61). In a study conducted in the 1990s in South Africa on 1 073 Grade 1 and 2 learners, 38% of learners reported that they had been bullied (Richter et al.³ cited in Greeff & Grobler, 2008:127). A study conducted in Gauteng in 2003 revealed that 60.9% of 207 respondents had been bullied in the year 2002 (Neser et al.⁴ cited in De Wet, 2007:195).

Another study conducted by Corene De Wet in 2005 among secondary learners in the Free State revealed that 54.3% of the participants had been bullied during their school career. A survey conducted by the Department of Health in the Free State in 2002 indicated that 49.3% of secondary learners had been bullied. Yet another study conducted by Greeff and Grobler (2008) on 360 learners in the Intermediate Phase in the Free State revealed that 56.4% had been bullied. These statistics show that bullying in South African schools is rife. Action to address the problem of bullying within South African schools should be taken by all role players involved in education.

2.5 Background to the theoretical framework

The theoretical foundation of this study combines elements of systems theory with the work of Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist whose work involves human interaction. Bourdieu developed three important concepts (i.e. capital, field and habitus) to support his theory of human development. An outline of the three concepts is illustrated in Figure 2.1 overleaf:

³ Richter, M., Bowles, D., Melzer, W. & Hurrelmann, K. 2007. Bullying, psychosocial health and risk behaviour in adolescence. *Gesundheitswesen*, 69:475-482.

⁴ Neser, J., Ovens, M., Van der Merwe, E., Morodi, R. & Ladikos, A. 2003. Bullying in schools: a general overview. *Acta Criminologica*, 16(1):127-157.

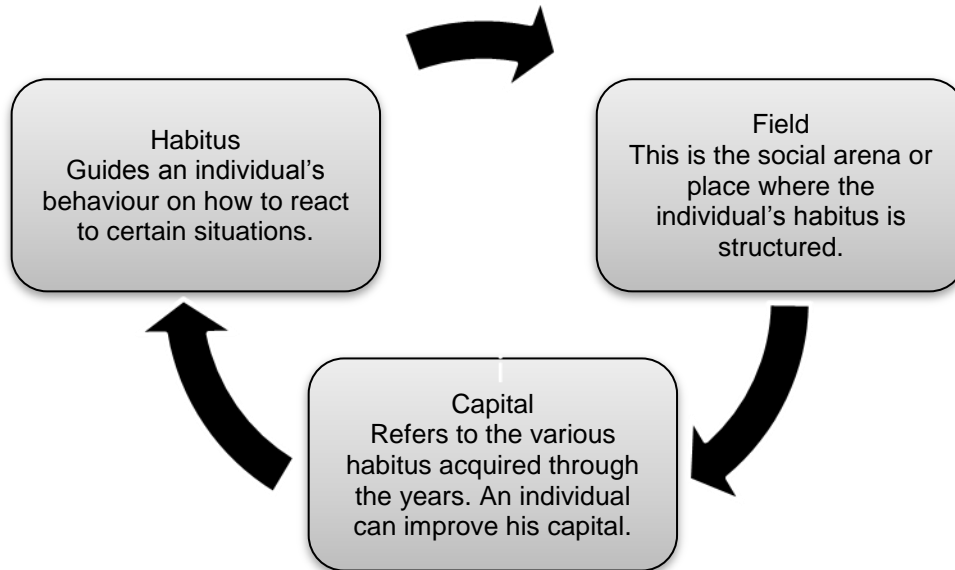


Figure 2.1: The cyclic conceptual formulation by Bourdieu

For this particular study emphasis will be placed on the concepts of field and habitus, and to a lesser extent on capital. This field or system may have a strong influence on how teachers may regard bullying. The habitus is acquired through one's lifetime and constantly guides our behaviour. Swartz (2002:S63) posits that "habitus generates perceptions, expectations, and practices that correspond to the structuring properties of earlier socialization". The habitus may comprise of knowledge or personal experiences gained within one's lifetime and may strongly influence our actions. Capital is an accumulation of habitus that has been acquired over the years.

Based on the reviewed literature, the researcher felt that the theoretical framework developed by Pierre Bourdieu was best suited to support the study. In previous studies conducted on bullying, the theoretical framework was supported by the systems theory, and more specifically, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. In 1979 Bronfenbrenner⁵ stated that "ecological-systems theory purports that all individuals are part of interrelated systems that locate the individual at the center and move out from the center to include all systems that affect the individual" (cited in Swearer & Espelage, 2004:3). In this framework, researchers suggest that individuals interact with one another in different settings known as systems.

Bullying is a phenomenon that does not occur in isolation. Rather, it is "encouraged and/or inhibited as a result of the complex relationships between the individual, families, peer group, school, community, and culture" (Swearer & Espelage, 2004:3). Beran (2006:122) contends

⁵ Bronfenbrenner, U. 1979. *The ecology of human development: experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

that “teachers intervene in 4% of bullying episodes, [therefore] children who bully may interpret this action as passive approval or tolerance of aggressive behaviours”. Hence it appears that bullying occurs within a system that tends to promote more bullying on account of how teachers, bullies and victims interact.

The analysis by Espelage and Swearer (2004) above dovetails with Pierre Bourdieu’s three concepts of human development and this study looks at how these concepts may influence the way teachers perceive bullying. In this study, the ‘field’ will also be referred to as the ‘system’, in line with the conceptual formulation by Bronfenbrenner above. The field or system is the place where socialisation of the individual takes place. It is also known as the social arena.

The field, capital and habitus are interconnected in complex ways to form the social system which defines the psychosocial profiles of bullies, their victims and their teachers, and how these categories of people interact with, understand and respond to one another. This study investigates the responses of teachers to bullying behaviour, with an understanding of behaviour as shaped by the socio-cultural, psychological and economic contexts within which individuals are positioned and position themselves.

The complex interactions characterising the relationships between bullies, victims and teachers will be explored to shed some light on the question of how some teachers understand and respond to bullying. The response of teachers to bullying will be framed in the systems approach, which views teacher behaviour as shaped by the interaction of several different variables which cannot be reduced to a simplistic examination of the teachers only, but which should also be directed at the context within which learners and teachers’ identities are continuously being shaped and re-shaped.

The social arena, or field, is where the individual acquires his/her behaviours and attitudes towards certain situations he/she may find him/herself in. This social arena may be the school, community, peer group, church or family. Mishna (2003:513) states that “bullying unfolds in the social context of the peer group, the classroom, the school, the family and the broader community”. This field is also the place where individuals develop or structure their habitus. The field for the teacher is thus his/her home and school environment. These areas are where teachers have acquired knowledge about and had experience of bullying. Webb et al. (2006:36) state: “Bourdieu refers to the partly unconscious taking in of rules, values and dispositions as the habitus.” According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Current English*

(1993:249), a disposition is a 'natural tendency; temperament'. An individual's behaviour, thinking, understanding and reaction to situations are regulated through the habitus.

The habitus is acquired throughout one's life and constantly guides our behaviour. Swartz (2002:S63) notes that "habitus generates perceptions, expectations, and practices that correspond to the structuring properties of earlier socialization". The habitus helps to structure an individual's self identity. The habitus contains our past, how we use our past in circumstances and how the past helps us to make decisions. Teachers' reactions to bullying could be based on their personal experiences as a child and they may call upon these experiences to help them make decisions on how to react towards bullying. A teacher, who had been bullied as a child at school, may appear to be more sympathetic towards a child that has been bullied, as opposed to a teacher who as a child was a bully at school (Mishna et al., 2005:726). Thus the habitus of the teacher in these cases would affect the way in which he/she responds to bullying.

2.6 Factors that may affect teachers' perspectives on bullying

Through reviewing a range of literature, the researcher has found that there are various factors that may affect teachers' perspectives on bullying. Teachers may regard episodes of bullying as play fighting because of the similarities that exist between bullying and play fighting (Hazler et al., 2001; Beran, 2006). In the milieu in which a teacher grew up, play fighting might have been accepted as normal behaviour of children. This may result in a teacher's thinking that it is normal for children to behave in such a manner. This may affect a teacher's perspective of what bullying is, and this in turn may affect his/her attitude and reaction towards bullying.

Mishna et al. (2005:725) state that "the meaning teachers ascribed to incidents seemed to influence whether they viewed an incident as normal or problematic". The teacher's ability or inability to identify and clearly define what bullying is may affect the way he/she responds. In a study conducted by Mishna et al. (2005:724), teachers were requested to give an explanation of what they thought bullying was. In their analyses of the responses, it was found that respondents indicated that a power imbalance existed and that bullying occurred intentionally.

Teachers are sometimes unable to identify the behavioural patterns of bullies and of learners who are being bullied. This is evident in some quantitative studies which revealed that some teachers viewed physical assault (such as hitting, kicking, and smacking) and verbal threats

as bullying, but did not consider social exclusion or name-calling as bullying (Mishna et al., 2005:720; Bradshaw et al., 2007:362). The above reactions of teachers could be a direct result of their past experiences having become part of their habitus.

The habitus can remain the same over time or can change considerably over the years. A study conducted by Craig et al. (2000) on 116 Canadian student teachers' attitudes towards the various forms of bullying revealed that these student teachers viewed physical and verbal attacks more seriously than social exclusion. They preferred to react to instances of bullying which they themselves had observed. The teacher may unconsciously develop an understanding of what they think bullying is. If learners' behaviour does not correspond to their own understanding of bullying, they may choose to ignore the behaviour.

Teachers' attitudes towards or perceptions on bullying may be affected by the fact that they are not aware of the extent of bullying within the school at which they teach. A reason for this is that learners might not report to them that they have been bullied. This may result in teachers demonstrating a passive attitude or displaying a lack of intervention (Craig et al., 2000; Bauman & Del Rio, 2005). Studies conducted among learners and teachers to determine the extent of bullying revealed that there was a huge difference in opinion. Teachers' perceptions and those of learners differed considerably (Craig et al., 2000; Yoon & Kerber, 2003). Learners indicated that bullying at their schools was rife, while teachers appeared to have very little knowledge of the extent of bullying at their schools.

Some teachers may acknowledge bullying, but may choose to ignore it. Squelch⁶ (cited in De Wet, 2006:61) states that bullying "is something people prefer to ignore and simply pass off as nasty children picking on others". Teachers who believe in the myths that "boys will be boys", and "bullying is normal behaviour and it is part of growing up", inadvertently encourage bad behaviour among children. Bauman and Del Rio (2005:431) reveal that "one study found that 25% of the teachers believed that doing nothing about bullying was a good strategy". This type of reaction may be attributed to the fact that they themselves were told as children that bullying was a normal part of growing up. The level of violence that may be involved in the bullying situation may result in teachers' being too afraid to intervene or feeling that it is not their responsibility (Ellis & Shute, 2007:650).

The social fields in which boys are reared, compared with those of girls, are often different. Boys are often taught to be brave and girls to be compassionate. Thus another possible

⁶ Squelch, J.M. 2000. *Discipline*. Pretoria: CELP.

factor that may affect teachers' attitudes towards bullying is the gender of the teacher. Male teachers appeared to be more tolerant to bullying behaviour as opposed to their female counterparts (Craig et al., 2000:8).

Boys are generally brought up to be tough and are told that a little name-calling or a shove is harmless. A study conducted by Ellis and Shute in 2007 to determine male and female responses to given scenarios revealed that male teachers took bullying less seriously than female teachers. Literature seems to indicate that male teachers tend to brush off bullying and see it as normal childhood behaviour. Mishna (2003:514) states that "bullying was either not acknowledged or merely seen as a normal part of the childhood experience, one that may even contribute to forming character".

Mishna et al. (2006:257) note that "some research has found an association between personal experience with bullying and how one responds and intervenes". A study conducted by Bradshaw et al. (2007) on 1 547 school staff to determine their personal experiences with bullying revealed that 53% of the respondents indicated that they had been bullied as children. In addition, 13% of the respondents agreed with the statement: "Bullying is part of life that everyone has to go through."

A study conducted by Mishna and colleagues in 2005 revealed that teachers who were bullied as children were more sensitive to children that were bullied. The seriousness of the situation often determines whether a teacher will intervene or not. Direct bullying often receives more attention as opposed to indirect bullying (Bradshaw et al., 2007; Ellis & Shute 2007).

Other factors that may affect teachers' perspectives on bullying are school policies on bullying and the type of intervention programmes used at school to address the issue. Teachers may feel, because of the lack of policy regarding bullying, they are unable to assist.

A teacher's lack of skills, experience and confidence to deal with bullying may affect the teacher's response to bullying. The teacher might not know how to react or what to do during a bullying episode. Beran (2005:47) states that "the lack of confidence may be due to the lack of training they received that specifically addresses bullying". Because of the dynamics involved in bullying, teachers may be unable to determine whether a learner is the victim or the bully. Nicolaidis et al. (2002:107) observe that "teachers felt responsibility for dealing with bullying on the school premises, but confidence in dealing with bullying was rather low and 87% reported that they would like more training on the issue".

A teacher's view of bullying may be affected by his/her consideration of the social and environmental context the child finds himself/herself in. Some teachers may use a child's social and environmental context as an excuse to ignore bullying, not take it seriously or to deal with bullying inadequately. That environment may constitute the home, school, peers or neighbourhood. The environment plays an important role in developing the child's social skills. According to Rigby (2002:153), there is "a link between what parents and families do in the home and the behaviour of their children at school with their peers, and that includes being a bully and/or being a victim in encounters with other children".

It is therefore important to note that the habitus of the teacher plays an important role in how the teacher perceives bullying and thus reacts to it. A teacher's habitus contains his/her knowledge and values he/she has of bullying. However, these values and knowledge can change over the years. This study attempts to link all these conceptual and theoretical insights to construct an understanding of how teachers in a particular context understand and respond to bullying.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter began with an introduction that briefly reviewed Chapter 1 as well as provided an overview of Chapter 2. Chapter 2 dealt with the effects of bullying, and the extent of bullying throughout the world, as well as the factors that might affect teachers' perspectives on bullying. The chapter also outlined various definitions of bullying developed by various social science researchers over the years. It interrogated literature relevant to the research questions, and integrated this with the theoretical framework which supports the study. A brief review of various worldwide studies was also presented in this chapter.

The next chapter outlines the research methodology and research design used for the study. It provides reasons for the choice of research methodology, sampling techniques used, and a discussion of the research tools employed for the study. The chapter also discusses the ethical considerations of the research.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the literature review and the theoretical framework that informs and supports the research. The researcher examined previous studies of bullying, noting that these had largely been directed at the learner, with a paucity of studies involving the teacher. The chapter dealt with the development of the concept of bullying by social science researchers around the world. It outlined the types of bullying, the effects of bullying, and the extent of bullying worldwide.

In this chapter, the research design and methodological aspects of the research are described. This particular research utilised a mixed- or multi-method research approach. The researcher also provides a rationale for the selection of this method. Information about the following elements of the research is provided: its setting, the sample from which the data was collected, the instruments for data collection, data collection and analysis, and ethical issues. A brief description of the three research methodologies is given below.

3.2 Brief description of qualitative and quantitative methodologies

A clear distinction can be made between the two research methodologies in terms of obtaining and presenting of data. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:15) explain that “quantitative research presents statistical results represented with numbers; qualitative research presents data as a narration with words”.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:31), qualitative research methodology can be classified into two modes: the interactive mode and the non-interactive mode. The interactive qualitative research approach can be sub-divided further into five different research designs. They are: the ethnographic design, the case study, the phenomenological design, grounded theory design, and the content analysis approach (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:15; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:144). However, the non-interactive qualitative research methodology can only be sub-divided into two categories: the concept analysis and the historical analysis approach. The quantitative research methodology comprises two modes of enquiry, the one known as the experimental mode and the other the non-experimental mode.

The quantitative research methodology involves the gathering of data with regard to a research question, and generalising that data obtained for the identified population. This methodology allows for a large number of people to participate in the study.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:395) state that “interactive qualitative research is inquiry in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings”. Qualitative research therefore requires the researcher to adopt an in-depth mode of enquiry. Wiersma and Jurs (2000:13) define qualitative research as “following the natural paradigm”, and add that “research should be conducted in the natural setting and that meanings derived from research are specific to that setting and its conditions”. It is therefore important that the research takes place in its natural setting, rather than in an artificial environment or an environment that was created for research purposes.

During this research a combination of the two methodologies was used. Within this particular research, data is presented to the reader numerically and narratively, and inference will be made based on this data.

3.2.1 Brief discussion of the mixed-method design

Mixed-method design employs both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Researchers have identified four types of mixed-method designs. They are explanatory design, exploratory design, triangulation design, and embedded design. In explanatory design, the researcher uses qualitative data to explain the quantitative results. The data is therefore collected in two phases. The researcher first analyses the quantitative data to develop questions for his/her qualitative phase. Using the exploratory design, the researcher explores a specific topic by analysing qualitative data and generating theories. The researcher then pursues the topic further by using quantitative instruments (Ivankova et al., 2007). When using triangulation design, the researcher simultaneously collects data using both qualitative and quantitative instruments.

Embedded design uses primarily either quantitative or qualitative methodology, and relies upon the one not used to enhance the study. Ivankova et al. (2007:269) describe the embedded design as “when a researcher needs to answer a secondary research question that is different from, but related to the primary research question”.

3.3 Research approach and design used in the current study

According to Uys and Basson (1985), and McMillan and Schumacher (1993), a research design is a plan or a structural framework followed by the researcher while collecting data. In other words, the research design describes the research methodology and the procedures followed during the study. The purpose of the research design is to assist the researcher to obtain accurate, valid and reliable answers to his/her research questions. The research design selected helps determine how the data will be analysed.

For this particular study, that is, insight into teachers' attitudes, behaviours, understanding and responses towards bullying, a mixed-method research design was chosen. The researcher relied upon both quantitative and qualitative data-collection instruments.

An explanatory design was followed during the study as the quantitative data was first collected in order to develop the questions for the qualitative data collection. The qualitative data was therefore used to explain and elaborate on the quantitative findings. The researcher felt that if he had employed only qualitative research or quantitative research, the data gathered would have been insufficient and inadequate in response to his research questions.

3.3.1 Importance of the mixed-method research design

Jessica Hearn⁷ explains that “using both approaches allows the researcher to incorporate the strengths of each method” (in McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:396). The research design used in this study is the sequential explanatory design. This methodology provided the researcher with the opportunity to first collect the quantitative data and then gain deeper insight into the respondents' attitudes towards the topic using a qualitative tool to generate data. Hearn further states that “an explanatory design is generally used when quantitative data collection is clearly warranted but follow-up analysis – specifically, using qualitative methods – is necessary to elucidate the quantitative findings” (in McMillan & Schumacher 2001:401).

This method allowed the researcher to obtain various kinds of data on the same topic and compare them. Denscombe (1998:84) states that the data obtained “allow the researcher to see the thing from different perspectives and to understand the topic in a more rounded fashion than would be the case had the data been drawn from just one method”.

⁷ Mixed Method Designs with Jessica Hearn. Chapter 16 in McMillan and Schumacher (2001).

The quantitative data collection instrument used in the first phase of the study is a questionnaire in the form of a Likert scale. The second phase of study, the qualitative approach, is a series of in-depth interviews with teachers. A more detailed discussion of these two instruments will be given later in the chapter.

3.4 Sample site

The researcher identified two schools as sample sites, from a total of four schools in the suburb of Steenberg. Three of the schools in Steenberg are primary schools, while the fourth is a high school. One of the reasons for selecting primary schools and not the high school was that, as a primary school teacher himself, the researcher felt he would have easier access to the sample schools. In addition, the daily programme and routine of the high school are more complicated and busier than those of primary schools and the teachers would not have been able to accommodate the researcher with the necessary time to conduct the interviews. A further reason is that the primary schools in the surrounding area have a healthy working relationship with one another and would not object to a researcher from a local and familiar school. The third primary school is the school at which the researcher teaches; however, he felt that if were to select his own school as a sample site, the data obtained might be biased.

Furthermore, various studies on bullying have revealed that bullying is more prominent in primary school, with a steady decrease in secondary school (Rigby, 2005). Another reason for choosing these schools is that they are within a radius of three kilometres from one another and are situated in the area where the researcher works. This made it easier for the researcher to visit them if the need arose and to hand deliver rather than post questionnaires.

As mentioned earlier, two schools were selected as the sample site schools in which the study took place. Both these schools are dual medium (English and Afrikaans) and have approximately 600 learners each on their rolls. These totals were given to the researcher by the school principals.

Many of the children who attend these schools live in the surrounding areas of Capricorn, Coniston Park, Lavender Hill and Retreat. As these neighbourhoods struggle with the multiple effects of poverty, teachers are confronted with many other challenges besides bullying, including gangs, drugs, unemployment, broken homes, and single parents. As a teacher in this area, the researcher is also confronted with these problems.

3.4.1 Sample

In this study, the target population, or universe, refers to the primary school teachers in the Steenberg area. This area contains approximately 20 schools to which the results of this research will be generalised. However, the survey population or the sampling frame only comprises primary school teachers from two primary schools in this area. To maintain the anonymity of the schools and for confidentiality, the schools will be referred to as school A and school B in this research report.

These two schools produced a small sample of 35 primary school teachers from whom the data was collected. As these schools were primary schools, the majority of the respondents/participants were female. This total was made up of six men and 29 women. However, only 31 teachers completed the questionnaire. This created a gender imbalance which could affect the outcome of the study. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993), Uys and Basson (1985), and Townsend and De la Rey (2007), a sample is a representative group of the population on which the study is based. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:401) state that “samples are chosen because they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena the researcher is investigating”.

During this study, a non-probability sampling procedure was followed. What this means in this case is that the sample selected (i.e. the primary school teachers) was easily accessible to the researcher and the teachers were likely to have had some experiences with bullying. The sampling technique used during the study was convenience sampling, also commonly known as available sampling. Maree and Pietersen (2007:177) state: “This method refers to situations when population elements are selected based on the fact that they are easily and conveniently available.” This technique was selected owing to the geographic location of the sample sites.

3.5 Data collection instruments

An in-depth discussion of the two data-collection instruments as well as the process carried out during the study follows. An explanation of the data analysis and procedure involved in the study is further explained in this chapter.

3.5.1 Discussion of questionnaire

According to Mahlangu (1987) and Behr (1973), questionnaires can be divided into two types, open-ended or unstructured questionnaires, and closed or structured questionnaires. In open-ended questionnaires, respondents are given the opportunity to express themselves and can give their opinions on a question. Analysis of the open-ended questionnaire is more difficult and time consuming, as there is a huge variety of types of answers to analyse (Behr, 1973).

However, in closed or structured questionnaires, respondents are required to select one of a number of predetermined answers to a question or a statement. This allows the researcher to classify and code the responses more easily (Behr, 1973). The closed questionnaire is less time consuming for the respondent to complete and it keeps the respondent focused on the subject matter. Misconceptions by the respondent are also limited as respondents are required to select a response from a given list. Closed questionnaires therefore direct the respondents' thinking, removing the option to elaborate on a particular question or statement.

3.5.2 Likert-scale questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study followed a closed-form Likert-scale structure. Respondents were therefore required to select one of a number of predetermined responses.

The questionnaire consisted of 20 statements (see Appendix E) developed by the researcher, based on the literature reviewed. Respondents were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed with each of the statements on a five-point response scale, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. As a requirement, respondents had to indicate their gender as well as age range, for statistical purposes. The respondents were requested not to write their names on the questionnaire to ensure anonymity. In order to guard against bias on the part of the respondents, the researcher included negative statements. This was done by placing the word 'not' within the statement (see Appendix E). This technique is employed to encourage the respondents to think about the statement before selecting their response.

The primary aim of the questionnaire was to establish an understanding of how teachers feel about bullying, to gauge their reaction to bullying incidents, and establish their overall attitude towards bullying in the school. Their answers to the questionnaire directed and assisted the researcher in developing the interview schedule.

3.5.2.1 Likert-scale process

Before respondents were given the questionnaire, the researcher briefly addressed teachers to explain the research. This gave teachers the opportunity to ask any questions they had about the research. In this particular meeting the researcher gave verbal instructions to the respondents on how to complete the questionnaire. A few days later the questionnaires were hand delivered by the researcher to the sample sites.

Once the questionnaires had been delivered, the researcher requested that the principals of the respective schools distribute the questionnaires among the respondents. This limited the personal interaction the researcher had with the respondents. To support the researcher's verbal instruction, a short letter accompanied the questionnaire in which the researcher reiterated the need for the study and reminded the respondents of the instructions on how to complete the questionnaire (see Appendix D). The letter also stressed that it was important for the respondents to complete the entire questionnaire. The questionnaire was given in expectation that the respondents would answer the questions with complete honesty (Lowe, 2007). A timeframe of one week was given to the respondents to complete the questionnaires.

3.5.3 Face-to-face interviews

Face-to-face interviews were used so that the researcher could learn more about each individual's perspective on the topic. According to Denscombe (1998:114), an advantage of the interview is that "the opinions and views expressed throughout the interview stem from one source: the interviewee". Moser and Kalton⁸ cited in Lowe (2007:78), describe an interview as "a conversation between the researcher and the respondent with the aim of gaining certain information from the respondent". Questions for the interview were predetermined open-ended questions that appeared on the interview schedule. Participants were encouraged to elaborate on their answers. Participants in the interviews were given a copy of the interview schedule so that they could feel more at ease.

The researcher decided against telephonic interviews for this research, since these are less personal than face-to-face interviews. Some questions asked in the interviews were of a personal nature and the researcher felt that the telephone was not the appropriate channel to use to ask these questions. Telephonic interviews are also more expensive and more time

⁸ Moser, C.A. & Kalton, G. 1971. *Survey methods in social investigation*. 2nd ed. London: Heinemann.

consuming. Telephonic interviews would have required the researcher to make special arrangements for the interview to take place. It also would have been more difficult to record the interviews.

The researcher felt if he used any other method than face-to-face interviews (such as a focus-group interview), some of the participants might not feel comfortable in sharing personal information or experiences with their colleagues. Thus the interview method gave the researcher the opportunity to ask more probing and more personal questions. The interview method also allowed for interaction with the participants in their own environment, making the interview session less intimidating. The face-to-face interviews provided an opportunity for the researcher to explore teachers' personal experiences, knowledge, understanding, attitudes and behaviours related to bullying in greater depth than other methods would have allowed.

3.5.3.1 Interview process

The researcher approached all the teachers who participated in the questionnaire to invite them to participate in the interview sessions. The researcher made it clear to the questionnaire respondents that the primary research instrument would be in-depth interviews and that he would require teachers to volunteer their participation. The researcher did not want teachers to feel that they were forced to participate against their will. If teachers were reluctant to participate, their co-operation in answering the questions as well as their actual responses could have negatively affected the entire data-collection process.

Teachers who wanted to participate in the interviews forwarded their names to their school principal. Only five of the 31 teachers who participated in the questionnaire were willing to participate in the interview sessions. The remainder were unenthusiastic about participating in the interviews as they felt that they had other important school matters that needed to be addressed. Many of these teachers had to attend workshops or were involved in extra-mural activities (i.e. sport) and therefore did not have the time.

The school principals provided the researcher with the names and contact details of the participating teachers. This allowed the researcher to contact the teachers to make arrangements for the date, time and venue for the interview. A short letter confirming the interview was hand delivered to the participants. This letter indicated the time, venue and date (see Appendix F), once the researcher had personally spoken to participants. To ensure

the success of the interviews, the participants were contacted the day before the interview to confirm their attendance.

The researcher thanked each participant before the interview for being part of the study. He explained that responses would be used for research purposes only and assured them that whatever they said would be treated with complete confidentiality. The anonymity of the participants would be maintained and their names would not appear in the final draft of the research. Semi-structured questions were used during the interview to allow the participant to explain himself/herself further. During each interview the researcher made use of an interview schedule and participants were asked the identical 19 questions in the same order (see Appendix H). The interview schedule comprising the questions was drawn up in advance and provided to the participants before the interview started. These questions covered various topics such as the teachers' background, the teachers' knowledge and understanding of bullying, the teachers' behaviour and attitudes, and the teachers' personal experiences, and how these could have a direct influence on how they dealt with bullying episodes.

Each interview was recorded on a recording device. The use of the recording device was to ensure that everything was accurately captured for transcription. Participants were required to sign a consent form giving the researcher permission to record the conversation and acknowledging they had been informed that they could withdraw from the interview at any time (see Appendix G).

The advantages of the interview method, for this research, are:

- It allows the interviewer to be face-to-face with the participants.
- Since the research is concerned with ascertaining the understanding and perspectives teachers hold (how they deal with bullying, with bullies, and with the child that is bullied), the interview is the most appropriate instrument.
- It provides the interviewer with an opportunity to clarify questions of which the participant is uncertain.
- It also provides the participant an opportunity to clarify his responses.

3.6 Data collection procedures

Before requesting permission from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) to do the research, the researcher met with the school principals to ask them whether they would be amenable to his selecting their schools for the research. These principals amicably agreed and allowed the researcher to proceed with the study at their schools. A verbal agreement was made between the researcher and the principals of the respective schools.

Once this was done, a letter (see Appendix A) via email was sent to the Director: WCED Research Services, requesting permission for the researcher to conduct the research at the identified schools. The WCED responded by requesting that the researcher complete an official letter which stated who the respondents would be, the title of the study and the names of the schools in which the researcher intended to conduct the research.

A letter of permission for the study was later granted by the WCED, which contained information about the timeframe for the study (see Appendix B). This letter contained the date, the procedures to be followed while conducting the research, as well as specific conditions pertinent to the research.

To support the verbal agreement between the researcher and the principals, a letter was sent to them with a formal request to conduct the study. The principals signed, dated and stamped the letter (see Appendix C) to make it official. A copy of the WCED letter of permission was given to the principals of the respective schools to inform them that the research was legitimate and had been approved.

A letter (see Appendix D) accompanying the questionnaire explained its purpose and how to complete the questionnaire. In this letter the researcher also explained to participants that there was no known risk associated with participation in the study.

3.7 Data analysis

The researcher collated the raw data from the Likert-scale questionnaire and placed this information on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. With the assistance of a data analyst, the raw data was organised and summarised in a more meaningful manner. This data was then organised in cross-tables to aid comprehension of the information collected (see Chapter 4).

A summary of the participants' answers to each question can be found in Chapter 4. Discussion and findings will therefore revolve around the data obtained from the instruments used during the study. The qualitative data is used to elaborate and enhance the discussion of the quantitative data.

The data analysis of the interview questions were categorised and placed under predetermined categories. The responses of the participants of the interview were therefore placed under these categories. Placing the questions in the predetermined category enabled the researcher to identify and discuss issues that appeared to be common and related to the reviewed literature.

3.8 Ethical considerations

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:196), ethics deals with "beliefs about what is right or wrong, proper or improper, good or bad". To ensure complete transparency of the research process, the researcher informed all the relevant stakeholders of the *modus operandi* of the research and who his respondents and participants would be. Permission to conduct the study at the schools was obtained from the WCED Research Services Department (see Appendix B). The application was renewed on numerous occasions as the researcher experienced a number of obstacles. The first obstacle was the proposal's late acceptance by the Higher Degrees Committee of the university, while the second obstacle was that many teachers were on strike in 2010 and the researcher felt that it would be unfair to these teachers to request their participation in the study.

The principals of the two schools were approached by the researcher to request permission to conduct the research at their schools. Teachers were informed of the study and made aware that they were not obliged to participate in the study. Participants were also informed that whatever they said would be treated with confidentiality. The participants were requested to provide convenient times and dates for the interviews, to ensure that their rights were not infringed.

The researcher also informed the respondents that their responses would be recorded only if they granted permission for this. Teachers who volunteered to participate in the interviews were requested to sign a consent form in which they agreed to be part of the research (see Appendix G).

Both participants and school principals were informed that the research project was legitimate and that their identities would not be revealed in the study.

3.9 Trustworthiness

To enhance the trustworthiness of this study the researcher employed two data-collection instruments: Likert-scale questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. The use of multiple data collection instruments enabled triangulation. “Triangulation is critical in facilitating interpretive validity and establishing data trustworthiness” (Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2007:39). Through triangulation, data obtained using the questionnaire was corroborated by the interviews. According to Niewenhuis (2007:180), “Triangulation is a traditional strategy for improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation of findings.” During the data analysis, the researcher highlights common themes in order to discuss them later.

Anderson (1998:13) describes validity as “the complement to reliability and [it] refers to the extent to which what we measure reflects what we expected to measure”. The aim of the research was to establish how teachers felt about and conceptualised bullying. Two forms of validity exist: internal validity and external validity. External validity refers to the generalisation of the results for the target population, while internal validity tries to establish the truth based on the evidence collected during the study. The researcher tried to achieve internal validity by encouraging participants during the interview to be as truthful as possible with their responses.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:407) state that “validity rests on the data collection and analysis techniques”. To ensure the validity of the participants’ responses, the researcher allowed the participants to read their responses after transcription to ensure what they had said was correct. This process is commonly known as ‘member checking’ and it was used to enhance the process of trustworthiness.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter described the research design and methods used during the research. It explained the mixed-method research approach and the researcher’s reasons for its selection. The chapter also described the data-collection instruments, sample site, sample, and data collection and data analysis procedures.

The next chapter includes the presentation, discussion and analysis of the data. Data obtained both from the first phase of the study (the questionnaire), and from the second phase (the interviews) will be discussed together under identified themes.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION, DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained using the two research instruments. Data obtained from the Likert-scale questionnaire is presented in cross-tables and these tables are followed by a short description of the data. The chapter presents the information in two phases; the first phase provides the findings obtained through the Likert-scale questionnaire, while the second phase presents the collective response of the participants to a particular question during the face-to-face interviews.

4.2 Phase One: quantitative research instrument

A quantitative research instrument in the form of a Likert-scale questionnaire which consisted of 20 statements was developed to determine teachers' personal opinions related to bullying at school, their knowledge with regard to their understanding of what bullying entails, personal experiences and confidence in dealing with bullying (see Appendix E). Using this instrument, the respondents were required to rate their responses on a five-point response scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. This rating scale ranged from 1 to 5.

Statements 3, 5, 9 and 19 on the questionnaire (see Appendix E) were stated in the negative with the goal of preventing bias from the respondents, enabling them to think about the statement before making a decision. With the assistance of a data analyst at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), the accumulated data obtained from the Likert-scale questionnaire is presented in cross-tables.

Respondents were instructed not to write their names on the questionnaire. This guaranteed the respondents anonymity and they were therefore free to respond honestly. Respondents were given a week to complete the questionnaire. For the purpose of the study, the two schools will be referred to as school A and school B.

Table 0.1: A statistical break-down of the sample

School		Frequency	Percent
Valid	A	14	45.2
	B	17	54.8
	Total	31	100.0

A sample of 35 teachers was identified for the study, but only 31 completed the questionnaire. School A had 16 teachers and school B 19 teachers in their teaching establishment. The above frequency table shows that 14 of 16 teachers from school A and 17 of 19 teachers at school B completed the questionnaire. The percentages shown in these findings are based on the total number of teachers who participated in the study.

Table 0.2: A statistical break-down of the sample by gender

Gender		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Female	26	83.9
	Male	5	16.1
	Total	31	100.0

The above table indicates of the total of 31 respondents, 5 were male and 26 female. The sample consisted mostly of female respondents which may have had an influence on the data and its findings.

Table 0.3: A statistical break-down of the sample by age range

Age range	Frequency	Percent
21 – 30	1	3.2
31 – 40	10	32.3
41 – 50	8	25.8
51 – 60	11	35.5
61 – 70	1	3.2
Total	31	100.0

Table 4.3 shows the respondents' age range. The age profile clearly indicates that the age range of the respondents is quite diverse. The statements posed in the questionnaire were not directed at a particular age group. The inclusion of biographical data (gender and age frequency) was intended to provide the reader with a general view of the respondents that participated in the questionnaire.

4.3 Reading the data tables

The data collected from respondents was placed in the tables below and analysed. The column representing the frequency refers to the number of teachers who selected a particular rating. This frequency is also translated into a percentage, which is shown in the percentage column.

These tables present the statements and responses obtained from the respondents at each sample school. The respondents were given a five-point rating scale; however, for ease of representation, the scale was collapsed into a three-point rating scale of 'agree', 'disagree' and 'not sure'.

4.4 The recording of the responses to the questionnaire

Below is a statistical breakdown of the responses to the statements as they appear on the questionnaire (see Appendix E).

Table 0.4: Bullying is a problem at school

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	0	0	2	14.3	12	85.7	14
B	3	17.6	2	11.8	12	70.6	17
Total	3	9.7	4	12.9	24	77.4	31

The data clearly indicates that the majority of the teachers at both schools felt that bullying was a problem. A collective sum of 24 (77.4%) respondents agreed with the statement.

Table 0.5: A fight between two learners of the same age and equal strength is bullying

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	5	35.7	6	42.9	3	21.4	14
B	8	47.1	4	23.5	5	29.4	17
Total	13	41.9	10	32.3	8	25.8	31

The responses to this question were divided. Thirteen (41.9%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement, while ten (32.3%) respondents were not sure about the statement and eight (25.8%) respondents agreed with the statement. This is an interesting statistic as it shows that the majority of the teachers hold the same view as Reid et al. (2004), that bullying should not be confused with a fight between two learners of equal strength. For an episode

to be considered bullying, a power imbalance must be present (i.e. strength or size, for physical bullying). The respondents who felt that a fight between two learners of equal age and strength was bullying, could imply that they did not have a clear understanding of the definition of bullying.

Table 0.6: Verbal abuse (name-calling) is not bullying

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	11	78.6	0	0	3	21.4	14
B	12	70.6	0	0	5	29.4	17
Total	23	74.2	0	0	8	25.8	31

Most of the respondents, 23 (74.2%), agreed that name-calling was a form of bullying, with a minority (25.8%) of respondents disagreeing with the statement.

Table 0.7: Spreading of rumours is a form of bullying

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	3	21.4	0	0	11	78.6	14
B	2	11.8	3	17.6	12	70.6	17
Total	5	16.1	3	9.6	23	74.2	31

Twenty-three (74.2%) respondents agreed that spreading rumours was a form of bullying, while eight (25.8%) participants either disagreed or were unsure about the statement.

Table 0.8: Social exclusion is not a form of bullying

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	10	71.4	3	21.4	1	7.2	14
B	10	58.8	2	11.8	5	29.4	17
Total	20	64.5	5	16.1	6	19.4	31

A large number of respondents, 20 (64.5%), agreed that social exclusion was a form of bullying, while five (16.1%) were unsure and six (19.4%) disagreed with the statement.

Table 0.9: Bullying and teasing are a normal part of childhood behaviour

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	12	85.7	0	0	2	14.3	14
B	11	64.7	2	11.8	4	23.5	17
Total	23	74.1	2	6.5	6	19.4	31

Twenty-three (74.1%) respondents felt that bullying and teasing were not a normal part of childhood behaviour. However a small percentage of respondents agreed with the statement.

Table 0.10: I am confident in identifying episodes of bullying

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	1	7.1	7	50	6	42.9	14
B	1	5.8	6	35.3	10	58.9	17
Total	2	6.5	13	41.9	16	51.6	31

Table 4.10 refers to the respondents' confidence in identifying bullying at school. The breakdown of confident versus unconfident teachers was quite even. Sixteen (51.6%) respondents felt that they were confident enough to identify bullying, while 15 (48.3%) respondents did not.

Table 0.11: I am confident in managing bullying

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	2	14.3	9	64.3	3	21.4	14
B	0	0	7	10.2	10	58.8	17
Total	2	6.5	16	51.6	13	41.9	31

Managing bullying yielded a slightly different response from the sample. Thirteen (41.9%) respondents indicated that they were confident enough to manage bullying. However 16 (51.6%) indicated that they were not sure if they could manage bullying, and two (6.5%) respondents indicated that they were not confident enough to manage bullying.

Table 0.12: My teacher education has not prepared me to deal with bullying incidents

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	6	42.9	1	7.1	7	50	14
B	2	11.8	0	0	15	88.2	17
Total	8	25.8	1	3.2	22	71	31

Twenty-two (71%) respondents felt that they had not received adequate training in their teacher education to prepare them to deal with bullying incidents.

Table 0.13: Professional development is needed to help to manage bullying

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	0	0	0	0	14	100	14
B	0	0	1	5.9	16	94.1	17
Total	0	0	1	3.2	30	96.7	31

Almost all the respondents, 30 (96.7%), felt that professional development was needed to build skills and provide guidance for teachers to deal with bullying.

Table 0.14: I want to learn more about bullying

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	1	7.1	1	7.1	12	85.8	14
B	1	5.9	1	5.9	15	88.2	17
Total	2	6.5	2	6.5	27	87	31

Twenty-seven (87%) respondents indicated that they would like to learn more about bullying.

Table 0.15: A survey at school is needed to determine the extent of bullying

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	0	0	1	7.1	13	92.9	14
B	3	17.6	0	0	14	82.4	17
Total	3	9.7	1	3.2	27	87.1	31

This statement yielded a very high positive response, as 13 (92.9%) at school A and 14 (82.4%) at school B felt that a survey at their school was necessary to determine the extent of bullying.

Table 0.16: Policies are required at school to address this issue of bullying

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	0	0	1	7.1	13	92.9	14
B	1	5.9	0	0	16	94.1	17
Total	1	3.2	1	3.2	29	93.6	31

Most of the respondents felt that policies addressing bullying were necessary.

Table 0.17: Bullying issues need to be included in the curriculum

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	0	0	3	21.4	11	78.6	14
B	1	5.9	1	5.9	15	88.2	17
Total	1	3.2	4	12.9	26	83.9	31

Twenty-six (83.9%) respondents felt that bullying issues needed to be implemented in the curriculum, while 4 (12.9%) were not sure.

Table 0.18: Boys bully more than girls

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	10	71.4	1	7.2	3	21.4	14
B	4	23.5	2	11.8	11	64.7	17
Total	14	45.1	3	9.8	14	45.1	31

In response to the above statement, the respondents were evenly split, as 14 (45.1%) disagreed with the statement, while 14 (45.1%) respondents agreed with the statement. A small number of respondents, 3 (9.8%), were uncertain about the statement.

Table 0.19: Male teachers are less sensitive to children that are bullied

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	5	35.7	3	21.4	6	42.9	14
B	10	58.8	3	17.6	4	23.6	17
Total	15	48.4	6	19.4	10	32.3	31

Respondents were divided on this particular statement: 15 (48.4%) disagreed that male teachers were less sensitive to victims of bullying, 10 (32.3%) agreed and 6 (19.4%) were unsure.

Table 0.20: Teachers' personal experience with bullying may affect the way they respond

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	2	14.3	4	28.6	8	57.1	14
B	2	11.8	6	35.3	9	52.9	17
Total	4	12.9	10	32.3	17	54.8	31

Seventeen (54.8%) of the respondents agreed with this statement, while 10 (32.3%) of the respondents could not decide whether teachers allowed their personal experiences to affect the way they handled bullying.

Table 0.21: Bullying-intervention programmes can reduce bullying

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	0	0	0	0	14	100	14
B	1	5.9	0	0	16	94.1	17
Total	1	3.2	0	0	30	96.8	31

Thirty (96.8%) respondents strongly agreed that intervention programmes could reduce bullying.

Table 0.22: Bullying cannot be categorised as a single incident

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	0	0	0	0	14	100	14
B	0	0	1	5.9	16	94.1	17
Total	0	0	1	3.2	30	96.8	31

Based on the high number of respondents, 30 (96.8%) agreeing with the statement, it is clear that the majority of the respondents were aware that bullying is something that occurs over a long period of time.

Table 0.23: The child's social and environmental context affects the child's behaviour

School	Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
A	0	0	0	0	14	92.9	14
B	0	0	1	5.9	16	94.1	17
Total	0	0	1	3.2	30	96.8	31

Thirty (96.8%) respondents agreed that the child's social and environmental context affected the child's behaviour.

4.5 Categorising themes

To discuss the findings based on the Likert-scale questionnaire, the statements were categorised into four themes.

4.5.1 Theme One: opinions on bullying

Theme One relates to statements about the teacher's opinion on bullying at the school.

- Bullying is a problem at school.
- A survey at school is needed to determine the extent of bullying.
- Policies are required at school to address this issue of bullying.
- Bullying issues need to be included in the curriculum.
- Bullying-intervention programmes can reduce bullying.

4.5.2 Theme Two: knowledge of bullying

This theme includes the statements regarding the teachers' knowledge of what bullying entails.

- A fight between two learners of the same age and equal strength is bullying.
- Verbal abuse (name-calling) is not bullying.
- Spreading of rumours is a form of bullying.
- Social exclusion is not a form of bullying.
- Boys bully more than girls.
- Bullying cannot be categorised as a single incident.

4.5.3 Theme Three: dealing with bullying

Theme Three includes the statements relating to the teacher's confidence in dealing with bullying incidents.

- I am confident in identifying episodes of bullying.
- I am confident in managing bullying.
- My teacher education has not prepared me to deal with bullying incidents.
- Professional development is needed to help to manage bullying.
- I want to learn more about bullying.

4.5.4 Theme Four: experiences regarding bullying

The statements in this theme are related to the teachers' personal experiences regarding bullying.

- Bullying and teasing are a normal part of childhood behaviour.
- Male teachers are less sensitive to children that are bullied.
- Teachers' personal experience with bullying may affect the way they respond.
- The child's social and environmental context affects the child's behaviour.

4.6 Findings relating to teachers' personal opinions of bullying at school

Teachers' opinions of bullying at their schools may affect the way they react to incidents of bullying. Twenty-four (77.4%) of the respondents reported that bullying took place at their respective schools. Overall, the sample group felt that issues of bullying at school level should be included in the curriculum. Twenty-nine (93.6%) of the respondents seemed to agree with the statement that policies with regard to issues dealing with bullying are needed at schools. Teachers also felt that intervention programmes to address bullying could help to reduce bullying at school.

4.7 Findings relating to teachers' knowledge of bullying

Theme Two dealt with the respondents' knowledge of what bullying entails. This was with the intention of, firstly, determining if the respondents were able to distinguish behavioural patterns of bullying, and secondly, gaining insight into what the respondents viewed as bullying.

Some of the respondents described what is commonly defined as a fight, a physical altercation between two children of roughly equal strength, as bullying. Literature, on the other hand, indicates that bullying often occurs between two or more learners, where the bully is often bigger and stronger than his/her victim.

On the other hand, 23 (74.2%) of the respondents agreed that name-calling and the spreading of rumours could be defined as bullying. Sixty-four percent of the respondents agreed that social exclusion was a form of bullying. According to the literature, social exclusion, which is a form of bullying, is more difficult for teachers to identify. This is because

social exclusion does not involve visible or audible contact but exclusion from a group, and is thus carried out more discreetly.

Fourteen respondents (45.1%) thought that boys bullied more than girls, and fourteen (45.1%) did not. Thirty (96.8%) of the respondents understood that bullying could not be defined as a single incident but was something carried out over a period of time. This view is supported by Bullock (2002:130), who defines bullying as “repeated, unprovoked, harmful actions”.

4.8 Findings relating to the teachers’ confidence in dealing with bullying incidents

Theme Three relates to respondents’ confidence in dealing with bullying incidents. Overall, the confidence of respondents in identifying bullying episodes was not high. Only 16 (51.6%) respondents indicated that they felt able to identify bullying incidents. The statement relating to the respondents’ confidence in managing bullying was even lower, with only 41.9% reporting confidence in managing bullying.

Most respondents (96.7%) felt that professional development to help teachers manage bullying should be put in place. Most respondents (87%) also felt that they wanted to know more about bullying. This is where the concept of habitus may have a strong influence on the teachers’ confidence in dealing with bullying incidents. Bourdieu refers to the habitus of an individual as the unconscious taking in of rules, knowledge and values. A lack of knowledge about bullying and how to deal with it forms part of the individual’s habitus. Altering the habitus with education on these issues may improve a teacher’s confidence in dealing with bullying.

4.9 Findings relating to the teachers’ experiences of bullying

Statements in this category relate to respondents’ experiences that they have acquired over the years. Twenty-three (74.1%) of the respondents felt that bullying was not part of normal childhood behaviour. Responses to the statement that male teachers were less sensitive to children being bullied were split. Fifteen (48.4%) respondents disagreed with the statement while 10 (32.3%) agreed.

The majority of the respondents felt that a child’s social and environmental context affects the child’s behaviour. The schools from which the samples were selected are situated in impoverished, drug-ridden and gang-infested areas. Learners often emulate the behaviour

that they see on the streets. As children they are impressionable and develop a habitus that strongly influences who they become.

4.10 Phase Two: the interview

Phase Two of the data-collection process was the interview. Participants were asked a series of questions during the session. They were provided with an interview schedule (see Appendix H). The answers to the questions were recorded on a recording device and later transcribed by the researcher and sorted into themes (see Appendix I).

Teachers were asked to volunteer to participate in the process and five teachers were willing to participate in the interviews. The interview participants' teaching experience ranged from three years to 38 years. The age range of these participants was 25 – 60 years.

4.10.1 Background questions

The aim of these questions was to give the researcher a general idea of the background and circumstances the participants grew up in.

- Could you please indicate your age range for record purposes?
- For how long have you been teaching?
- Could you please provide me with some family as well as community background about yourself as a child? (e.g. schools attended, position in the family, number of siblings, religion, type of community you grew up in).
- What type of views did the family and community have about violence?
- As a child growing up, was it acceptable for children to bully their peers? Do you think this type of behaviour may have influenced the way you react to bullying today?

All five participants indicated that they had experienced bullying as children, but not as severely as some bullying experienced by children today. They indicated that they were occasionally called names (verbal abuse) and may have been picked on a few times at school (physical abuse). They did not consider bullying to be a serious issue in the communities they grew up in, and the schools that they attended as children did not make much fuss about it. This may have been because there was a lack of factual literature regarding bullying. Four teachers indicated that their teacher training did not cover issues of school violence and bullying.

The interviewees noted that the communities in which they grew up cared a great deal for one another. This type of support provided the individuals with a sound habitus and safe field (social area) for them as children. The interviewed participants therefore felt the need to share the values they learned and experienced growing up in these caring communities with the children in their care.

Bourdieu's theory of habitus argues that we become who we are because of past experiences. We acquire knowledge over time and we call upon this knowledge and these experiences to guide our behaviour. All the participants acknowledged that the influence of bullying on their own lives as children played a role in how they dealt with it today as teachers. They therefore provided similar responses to a number of questions.

4.10.2 Categorisation of questions

The questions to the interview were categorised as:

- The participants' personal opinion of and their confidence in dealing with bullying.
- The behaviour of the participants towards bullying.
- Knowledge and understanding of bullying.

The responses to the questions were placed under these categories and from this a collective response was developed in order to summarise the participants' responses. Questions to the interview were therefore designed with the intention to elicit responses with regard to the identified category (see Appendix I). These categories were predetermined, based on the reviewed literature.

4.10.3 Summary of personal opinion responses

When the participants were asked what effects bullying might have on the victim, a range of answers were given. These responses were based on the participants' observations of children in their care. Thus the habitus of the teachers allowed them to make the following statements. The participants thought the child would become anxious and fearful. Participants felt that this anxiety and fear might be because the victim was scared of what might happen to him/her during interval or after school. These sentiments are echoed by Mishna (2003); Bauman and Del Rio (2005); De Wet (2005); Mishna et al. (2005); and Ferguson et al. (2007). Participants also mentioned that victims of bullying were unable to

concentrate in class, and that victims became withdrawn. They thought that bullying tended to affect the overall classroom atmosphere. One participant mentioned that a victim would want to protect him/herself by retaliating and fighting back.

Participants were asked to share their thoughts on whether they thought physical bullying was more serious than verbal bullying. All the participants indicated that one could not rate one form of bullying worse than another. Both these forms should be viewed with equal seriousness. The fact that the participants mentioned that one cannot separate the two is a clear indication that they are aware that bullying is not only made up of one component, that is, a physical one. Studies conducted by Craig et al. (2000); Bullock (2002); Eisenberg and Aalsma (2005); Beran (2006); De Wet (2006) and De Wet (2007) clearly define direct bullying as having both physical and verbal forms, and view them both very seriously.

When participants were asked to reflect on the clichés, “boys will be boys,” and, “bullying is normal behaviour and is part of growing up”, they reacted variously. One participant mentioned that he thought that boys would always do what boys do, while another mentioned that she thought bullying was part of growing up. The other three participants noted that they did not believe in the clichés and that these clichés had never affected the way they reacted towards bullying. These participants strongly felt that these clichés were more of an expression handed down from generation to generation. Being a boy is still no excuse to behave in a manner that may be unacceptable.

Participants were asked whether they thought male teachers were less sensitive to bullying than female teachers. The opinions on this were split. Two participants agreed with the statement. One thought it depended on the individual. Another participant mentioned that she thought men would be sterner but did not mention whether she thought male teachers would be less sensitive. A male participant’s response was that just because men are considered to be tough, the view cannot be taken that male teachers are less sensitive towards children that are bullied.

Participants were asked if they thought that their own experiences as a child had shaped the way they reacted to bullying incidents. All the participants mentioned that what they experienced as children helped to mould the way they dealt with bullying at school. Bourdieu argues that acquired knowledge can change. This knowledge is incorporated in the habitus that regulates our thinking and behaviour. In the background questions, participants were asked if they were ever bullied at school. All five participants mentioned that at some time they had been picked on (e.g. called names or beaten up). A participant indicated that when

he/she had brought this to the attention of her teacher, very little was done. Others felt that the teachers chose to ignore the reports of bullying. The participants agreed that this had shaped the way they reacted to a child that had been bullied. Based on their experiences of being bullied as children, they felt that they were in a position to empathise with the victim.

4.10.4 Summary of behaviour responses

Teachers' behaviour towards bullying may be affected by their attitude as well as their confidence in dealing with it. Participants were asked how they determined the seriousness of a bullying situation. One participant indicated that one should not try to identify how serious it was, because bullying was bullying, no matter in which form. The others indicated that they viewed the seriousness of the situation by observing the reaction of the victim. Teachers' confidence in dealing with bullying incidents was not very high. Teachers were asked to rate themselves during the interview on a scale from one to four. Three of the five participants indicated that they regarded themselves as satisfactory. One participant felt that he/she had very little confidence in dealing with bullying.

Four of the five participants indicated that issues of bullying had not been included in their training. The reason could possibly be that these four teachers had been in the teaching profession for more than 28 years and bullying had not been covered as part of the teaching curriculum at the time of their training. Another teacher mentioned that aspects of bullying had been covered in his teacher training; however, this teacher had completed his training only three years previously. The habitus in this particular situation is a direct result of how well the teachers are prepared to deal with bullying.

Teachers also felt a lack of policy at school to guide them on how to deal with bullying. During the interview, participants indicated that generally they felt that at school, teachers did not discuss bullying on a regular basis – it was only discussed when an incident arose. Although the participants interviewed did not receive any formal training on bullying, it seemed that they all dealt with bullying incidents in a fairly serious fashion.

4.10.5 Summary of knowledge and understanding of responses

During the interview, participants were asked to provide the researcher with a definition of what bullying meant to them. Participants gave various answers to this question. One said that he thought that it involved some form of violence normally executed by a stronger person on a weaker one. Two participants thought it was where one child forced others to do

things against their will, and was normally perpetrated by bigger children on smaller children. Participant Three said that she thought that it was not only physical but also emotional. Another participant mentioned that she thought bullying was about belittling another in order to gain power.

Teachers who participated in Phase Two of the research were aware that various forms of bullying were taking place at their schools. These participants mentioned that direct bullying in the form of physical contact and threatening victims was more prominent than verbal bullying in the form of teasing and name-calling at their schools. The participants felt that they had an important role in eradicating bullying at school. They felt that bullying had a negative influence on society and on the child, the school and the classroom. The participants saw themselves as caregivers with the responsibility to lead by example in a society they saw as characterised by negativity.

4.11 Key findings

The qualitative data gathered from the face-to-face interviews, together with the quantitative data from the Likert-scale questionnaire, will be used to identify similarities and differences with regard to the identified themes. The data was gathered from the various statements and questions are placed under the selected themes. While collecting the data it became evident that certain statements and questions produced similar answers, while questions relating to more personal views about bullying differed. One of these was the teachers' own opinions on issues of bullying. This reaction may have been a result of the teachers' capital, field and habitus that they have acquired over the years.

4.11.1 Personal opinions

These statements and questions were used to determine if teachers' personal views about bullying were similar in nature. One of the most important features of the study revealed that the majority of the teachers who participated in the study were of the opinion that bullying was a problem at their schools. This is supported by the quantitative data with regard to this question. This argument is further supported by the data obtained through the face-to-face interviews where all respondents revealed that they had observed various forms of bullying taking place at school in the form of direct bullying that is, physical and verbal bullying, and stealing from other children.

Teachers participating in the study also observed children displaying indirect bullying in the form of emotional and relational bullying. Although they were able to observe this type of behaviour, the teachers did not know how severe the problem was and felt that a survey was required to determine the extent of bullying at their schools. This survey would provide them with more insight on types of bullying that were taking place rather than basing their opinions on their observation and speculation.

Respondents in the interview felt a sense of frustration owing to a lack of intervention programmes, since they were not equipped to set up programmes that could reduce bullying at school. This feeling of frustration is echoed by the data obtained from the Likert-scale questionnaire that revealed the participants strongly felt that specific policies were needed to guide the school on how to deal with bullying.

During the interview, teachers were able to describe what they thought the effects of bullying might be on the victim. They conjectured that the victim might feel a sense of anxiety, might be unable to concentrate fully in class or be unable to express him or herself, which could ultimately affect the character of the child. Victims of bullying may experience a range of consequences, from physical, emotional, and social to academic (Dake et al., 2003; Bauman & Del Rio, 2005; De Wet, 2007; Dyer & Teggart, 2007; Crothers & Kolbert, 2008). The literature on pre-service teachers indicates that they believed in the clichés, “boys will be boys” and “bullying is normal behaviour and is part of growing up”. This, however, is not evident in the current study. All of the interview participants made it quite clear that they did not believe in those sayings and that those sayings had no effect on how they viewed bullying.

Craig et al. (2000), in their study, contended that male teachers appeared to be more tolerant of bullying behaviour than their female counterparts. The participants produced a biased reaction to this – the women said that they thought men were more tolerant and did not take bullying as seriously as female teachers. The men, on the other hand, defended their gender by saying that they thought that males viewed bullying in a very serious light. This feeling of uncertainty is strongly echoed by similar data that was obtained from the Likert-scale questionnaire, where female teachers thought male teachers were less sensitive to bullying episodes.

4.11.2 Knowledge and understanding

Information gathered from the teachers with regard to knowledge and understanding revealed that they had a vast spectrum of knowledge on the subject of bullying. Questions and statements referring to this theme provided the researcher with rich information. Teachers were also able to provide the researcher with their own definitions of what bullying meant to them. Their concept of bullying was not far off from the definitions provided in the previous chapters of this research report. They were able to clearly define that bullying occurs in three forms: physical, emotional and verbal. Teachers were also able to identify that name-calling was a form of verbal abuse, that spreading of rumours and social exclusion should be classified as bullying, and that physical bullying was perpetrated by a stronger person on a weaker person.

Teachers indicated that they had witnessed children fighting in the playground and some saw this kind of behaviour as bullying. However, the Likert-scale questionnaire revealed that teachers strongly felt that bullying needed to be repetitive. In the interview, participants failed to mention the fact that bullying is carried out over time.

The position afforded to teachers by the parents and the DoE made teachers feel that they had a responsibility to protect the child from harm. During the interview, participants described themselves as caregivers and felt that it was their responsibility to protect the child. The DoE of South Africa (DoE, 1998:6) states that every learner has the right to “non-violence and the freedom and security of a person”.

4.11.3 Behaviour and attitude

The two themes of behaviour and attitude will be discussed together. To determine the type of attitude or behaviour teachers had towards bullying, questions were asked regarding their confidence in dealing with bullying.

The Likert-scale questionnaire contained statements with regard to teachers' confidence in dealing with bullying. Overall, teachers did not indicate a high degree of confidence. Results showed that teachers were neither confident in identifying bullying situations, nor in managing bullying at school, despite teachers' knowledge and understanding of the concept of bullying being sound. This lack of confidence may be exacerbated, or even caused by the fact that they did not receive training on how to deal with bullying. Teachers felt that their confidence would be improved if professional development on dealing with bullying were

offered. Teachers showed a positive attitude towards improving their skills to deal with bullying as, over all, they indicated that they were willing to learn more about bullying in order to deal with it more effectively.

The behaviour of the teacher or the way he/she address bullying may be partly attributed to his/her own personal experiences with bullying as a child. Teachers indicated that they were sensitive to the issue of bullying because as children they had experienced it at first hand and their teachers had not been very proactive in dealing with it. Their teachers' reactions motivated the participants to be more sensitive to victims of bullying when they had the opportunity to be the teacher. Mishna et al. (2006:257) contend "some research has found an association between personal experience with bullying and how one responds and intervenes". Teachers felt that it was their obligation to become actively involved, as they had indicated in the interview that they had been victims of bullying.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter presented, described and analysed the data obtained in the research. The data obtained from the Likert scale (see Appendix E) was presented in tables together with a description of the data, while the participants' answers to the questions were summarised according to predetermined categories.

The next chapter provides some general conclusions based on the analysed data, as well as a reflection, based on the study, by the researcher. The chapter also makes recommendations and comments on the shortcomings of the research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter offers the conclusions drawn from the findings of the analysed data. Recommendations on how to address issues of bullying within the school environment are also presented in this chapter. Possible factors or limitations that may have affected the success of the study are highlighted.

5.1.1 Overview of previous chapters

Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the study and stated the researcher's reasons for wanting to pursue this particular study. The chapter also gave a brief description of the respondents and participants who participated in the study.

Chapter 2 dealt with the literature that was reviewed in the study. Aspects that were discussed in this chapter were types of bullying, the effect such bullying may have on a child, and factors that may affect a teacher's perspective of bullying. The theoretical framework that supported the contextual aspects of the study was also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 3 dealt with the research methodology employed during the study. In this chapter, the sample, data-collection instruments and data-collection procedures were discussed. The chapter also covered aspects such as ethical considerations and the credibility of the data used while conducting the study.

In Chapter 4, the presentation, description and analysis of the data obtained during the study are described. Data obtained from the Likert-scale questionnaire (see Appendix H) was presented in cross-tables, thus representing every statement that appeared on the Likert-scale questionnaire. This chapter also provides the reader with a summary of the responses of the interview participants with regard to the questions. The full responses to a particular question can be viewed in the appendices (see Appendix H).

5.2 Conclusions based on the findings

The title of this study is, “Teachers’ perspectives on school bullying: insights from two primary schools in Cape Town”. The research therefore deals with how teachers construct an understanding of and response to school bullying in primary schools.

The study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the factors that might affect a teacher’s perspective on bullying?
2. Do teachers allow these factors that influence their perspective to affect how they respond to bullying?

Before I commenced this study, I was sceptical, since I did not know what to expect. One of the major reasons for this was that the topic of ‘bullying’ appeared to have been exhausted, as there were many studies that had been conducted on it previously. I was not sure if the data instruments that I decided to use would yield the necessary information on the topic. While engrossed in the study, I soon realised that although the participants had some knowledge of bullying, their knowledge and understanding of the topic varied. All participants were able to provide me with a clear definition of what bullying meant to them. These definitions were relatively close to the definitions that various social science researchers had developed over the years.

This study enabled me to identify a number of factors that affect a teacher’s perspective on bullying, allowing me to successfully answer the first research question. It emerged that the teachers who had a clear understanding of the definition of bullying and the processes involved in bullying tended to display a more positive attitude to dealing with it.

From the data gathered I soon realised that the participants collectively had sound knowledge of what constituted bullying. The participants all seemed to agree that ‘school bullying’ was an area of concern as it was a form of violence that children experienced. This study also made it clear that teachers were not happy with the support structures currently in place.

The study revealed that factors such as personal experience of bullying, as well as confidence, knowledge and understanding of bullying strongly influenced teachers’ perspectives on bullying and how they address bullying incidents. The evidence seems to suggest that the habitus (unconscious world view) that teachers have acquired over the

years on this particular topic evolves and is consistently adjusted. Data indicated that participants could easily identify physical bullying, while they had more difficulty identifying relational bullying.

It can be concluded that the individuals who participated in the study all had something of value to contribute. They all had different experiences and were willing to share these experiences with me. I found that the teachers' perspectives on bullying were influenced by the factors identified in Chapter 4. These factors are the teacher's behaviour and attitude, personal opinions and their knowledge and understanding of bullying. The negative experiences encountered by some of the teachers as children have helped those teachers to develop a sound base on how to deal with bullying empathetically.

Although this study was conducted with only a small sample, I feel the recommendations are of value to all teachers.

5.3 Recommendations

This study focuses on the perspectives of teachers with regard to bullying at school. The issue of bullying is seen through the eyes of teachers. The perspectives of the individuals involved in this study differ from one another. It is not possible to change how an individual acquires knowledge about bullying in his/her early years of development. However it is important for all role players to develop strategies and plans on how to address bullying at school, thereby providing teachers with a sound platform to deal with this vexed issue more effectively.

In the interviews, participants were asked if their colleagues spoke about bullying. The participants indicated that this was generally not a topic of conversation. To address bullying issues, it would be important for schools as well as the DoE⁹ to arrange professional development workshops and seminars, and to provide training so that teachers feel equipped to deal with bullying.

⁹ The Department of Basic Education was formed in 2009 when the former National Department of Education was split into two: the DBE and the Department of Higher Education and Training. The DBE deals with all schools from Grade R to Grade 12, and adult literacy programmes.

Conversations on issues of bullying should take place in staff rooms, allowing teachers to engage in the topic. Additional reading material with regard to the nature and effects of bullying should be made available to teachers, exposing them to ways of dealing with the problem. Such reading material can be published in teacher resource magazines, allowing teachers to write about issues that concern them on this particular topic.

It is important that the DoE takes the lead in addressing bullying. This can only be achieved if the department develops literature and assists schools in developing policies on how to deal with bullying at school. The teacher-training curriculum should cover issues on bullying in order to prepare young teachers entering the profession. This training would better equip teachers on how to identify bullying episodes, allow them to recognise the types of behaviour associated with bullying, and provide skills in dealing with bullying, bullies and victims. All this would help enrich teachers' knowledge, and this, in turn, would change their mindsets.

Teachers indicated that their own experiences of bullying as children influenced the way they reacted to bullying. Those who were bullied at school reacted more sympathetically towards children bullied under their care, than those teachers who were not bullied. Training on bullying must also provide the new teacher with a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying.

If a school identifies bullying as a problem, it is important to first determine how serious the problem is and to have a clear understanding of what type of bullying is occurring before any plans are made to address the issue. As teachers, it is important for us to recognise all forms of bullying as serious. Therefore emphasis should not be placed on any one particular kind of bullying. In the words of one participant, "Bullying is bullying, no matter how serious the offence."

In conclusion, it may be difficult to change teachers' perspectives on bullying whether negative or positive, but teachers should become more proactive in tackling and talking about issues of bullying. To be able to do this, teachers require the support of the various role players in education and government.

5.4 Limitations of the study

One of the limitations of this study was the reluctance of the participants to participate in the interview section of the study. Teachers were eager to complete the Likert-scale questionnaire; however, when they were requested to participate in the interviews, the

response from the teachers was poor. Time was another factor that affected the study. The Likert-scale questionnaire provided the respondents with an opportunity to complete the questionnaire in their leisure time and it did not take time out of their busy school schedules. However, interviews had to be arranged after school, as the school day could not be interrupted. Many of the participants who agreed to be interviewed had other commitments after school and these included extra-mural activities, attending meetings or attending workshops organised by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED).

While conducting the study, the title went through a few changes. The original title was: *Examining teachers' perspectives of bullying*. Later it changed to: *An examination of teachers' perspectives of bullying* and, finally, with the guidance and assistance of my supervisor, the title became: *Teachers' perspectives on school bullying: insights from two primary schools in Cape Town*.

The main reason for the title changes was that the study's sample size was small and the results of the study were reflective of only the two schools that participated in the study.

5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, based on the complexity of the topic and the fact that this study involved a small sample, the topic requires further investigation. More studies, employing larger samples drawn from more diverse school contexts (public schools, former Model C schools, private schools, rural multigrade schools) could be conducted to explore further the extent to which teachers' perspectives on bullying affect their attitude towards, and responses to, bullying in schools.

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APPENDIX A: FORMAL LETTER OF APPLICATION

88 Albermarle Street
Hazendal
Athlone
7764
10 June 2009

The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000

Dear Dr Cornelissen

Application for Research in MEd

My name is Gerarde Osman and I am an educator at Steenberg Primary School. I am currently a master's student (Student no. :.....) at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology in Mowbray. I hereby would like to make a formal request from the WCED to allow me to carry out my research at the following two schools, viz. Sullivan Primary and Floreat Primary. Both these schools are situated in Steenberg.

The title of my thesis is: **Examining teachers` perspectives of bullying.**

My research question are: **1. What are the factors that might affect the teacher`s perspective of bullying for this study?**

2. Do teachers allow these factors that influence their perspective to influence how they feel and respond towards bullying?

My respondents for the research would involve the teachers of the above respective schools within Intermediate Phase. My data collection instruments would be a questionnaire and in-depth interviews. For the questionnaire, respondents would be required to complete it anonymously. The interview will be conducted on a one-on-one basis. Questions that I intend using during the interview will cover the teachers` experiences they have of bullying at school, the type of interventions they employ, the effect bullying may have on their practices within the classroom and will determine how prepared they are to handle bullying.

I trust that my application meets with your approval.

Yours sincerely
Gerarde Osman

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER FROM WCED

Navrae
Enquiries **Dr RS Cornelissen**
IMibuzo

Telefoon
Telephone **(021) 467-2286**
IFoni

Faks
Fax **(021) 425-7445**
IFeksi

Verwysing
Reference **20090625-0038**
ISalathiso



Wes-Kaap Onderwysdepartement

Western Cape Education Department

ISEBE leMfundo leNtshona Koloni

Mr Gerarde Osman
88 Albermarle Street
Hazendal
ATHLONE
7764

Dear Mr G. Osman

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: EXAMINING TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES OF BULLYING.

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **20th July 2009 to 30th September 2011.**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr R. Cornelissen at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Ronald S. Cornelissen
for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**
DATE: 20th July 2009

MELD ASSEBLIEF VERWYSINGSNOMMERS IN ALLE KORRESPONDENSIE / PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE NUMBERS IN ALL CORRESPONDENCE /
NCEDA UBHALE IINOMBOLO ZESALATHISO KUYO YONKE IMBALELWANO

GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS, LAER-PARLEMENTSTRAAT, PRIVAATSAK X9114, KAAPSTAD 8000
GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS, LOWER PARLIAMENT STREET, PRIVATE BAG X9114, CAPE TOWN 8000

WEB: <http://wced.wcape.gov.za>

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APPENDIX C: LETTER TO PRINCIPAL

88 Albermarle Street
Hazendal
7764
26 July 2010

The Principal
..... Primary School
Steenberg
7795

Dear Sir

Re: Application to carry out research

My name is Gerarde Osman and I am an educator at Steenberg Primary. This letter serves as a follow up to the meeting we had on the 15 May 2009. I indicated to you that I was a part time student, who was engaged in a Masters Degree, in Education at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) at the Mowbray campus.

My research focuses on school bullying, with the emphasis on the teachers` perspectives of bullying. The title of my thesis is: **An examination of teachers' perspectives of bullying**. I hereby formally seek your permission to do a research study on the teachers' perspectives of bullying at your school.

The measuring instruments I intend to use to gather data are: A questionnaire (**Likert Scale**) for the teachers to determine their attitudes, behaviours, understanding and responses towards bullying (see attached copy). Once the questionnaires have been completed I would like to make further arrangements in order for me to conduct interviews.

Permission has been granted to me by the WCED to carry out the research. See accompanying letter. I can assure you that all information obtained will be treated with confidentiality and the research findings will be presented honestly. If you have any comments or concerns about the study, please contact me directly on

The supervisor of this project is Dr. Chimbiwiso Kwenda who is a lecturer at CPUT, Mowbray campus.

Yours faithfully

.....
Student Number

I, the principal hereby give the researcher permission for the questionnaires and interviews to be conducted at the above mentioned school.

Principal:

Date:

APPENDIX D: LETTER INFORMING PARTICIPANT OF THE STUDY

88 Albermarle Street
Hazendal
Athlone
7764
26 July 2010

Dear Educator

I am currently studying towards my Masters' Degree in Education at Cape Peninsula University of Technology in Mowbray. The title of my thesis is: **An examination of teachers' perspectives of bullying.**

To assist me in my research I am relying upon the following research instruments viz.

- (i) Questionnaire (Likert-Scale)
- (ii) Interviews

The aim of the questionnaire (Likert Scale) is to explore teachers' attitudes, behaviours, understanding and responses towards bullying. You are therefore requested to rate the given statements on a 5 point response scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. (See attachment)

I am interested in your opinions therefore I need you to answer all the questions. All responses will be treated with complete confidentiality. You are not obligated to complete the questionnaire, but your kind assistance to do so will be greatly appreciated. There are no known or anticipated risks associated with participation in this study. If you have any comments or concerns about the study, please contact me directly on

You may also be requested to participate in the interview however; I will contact you for further arrangements and to formally ask if you are willing to participate in the interview.

Thank you for your cooperation and participation.

Yours faithfully

APPENDIX E: LIKERT-SCALE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please place an 'x' in the appropriate box.

Male	Female
------	--------

Age range

21-30	31-40
41-50	51-60
61-70	

Code description

1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Not sure; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree

Please select only 1 option (ranging from 1 to 5) by making a cross(x) for every statement.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Bullying is a problem at school.					
2. A fight between 2 learners of the same age and equal strengths is bullying.					
3. Verbal abuse name-calling is not bullying.					
4. Spreading of rumours is a form of bullying.					
5. Social exclusion is not a form of bullying.					
6. Bullying and teasing is a normal part of childhood behaviour.					
7. I am confident in identifying episodes of bullying.					
8. I am confident in managing bullying.					
9. My teacher education has not prepared me to deal with bullying incidents.					
10. Professional development is needed to help to manage bullying.					
11. I want to learn more about bullying.					
12. A survey at school is needed to determine the extent of bullying.					
13. Policies are required at school to address this issue of bullying.					
14. Bullying issues need to be included in the curriculum.					
15. Boys bully more than girls.					
16. Male teachers are less sensitive to children that are bullied.					
17. Teachers' personal experience with bullying may affect the way they respond.					
18. Bullying-intervention programmes can reduce bullying.					
19. Bullying cannot be categorised as a single incident.					
20. The child's social and environmental context affects the child's behaviour.					

APPENDIX F: LETTER CONFIRMING THE INTERVIEW

88 Albermarle Street
Hazendal
7764
6 May 2011

Dear Educator

Title of thesis: **An examination of teachers' perspectives of bullying.**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the above research. As a participant in this study, you will be interviewed about your experiences of bullying.

The interview will take place at **(name) Primary School** in your classroom on **(state day and date and time)**. **The interview should last for approximately 25 to 30 minutes.**

Participation in this study is voluntary and will not last for more than 30 minutes. There are no personal benefits to participation, but it will be highly appreciated. You may decline to answer any questions presented during the interview if you wish to do so. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from the study at any time. All information you provide is completely confidential and your name will not be included, or in any other way associated, with the data collected in the study. All responses will however be recorded for the purpose of the study. There are no known or anticipated risks associated with participation in this study.

If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact me directly on

Yours faithfully

APPENDIX G: CONSENT FORM

The title of thesis: An examination of teachers' perspectives of bullying.

I agree to participate in a study being conducted by Gerarde Osman. I have made this decision based on the information provided to me by him. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw this consent at any time. I understand that the interview will be recorded.

Name of respondent:

Signature:

Date:

Name of researcher: G.Osman

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview.

The aim of the study is to examine teachers' perspectives of bullying.

The interview will be tape-recorded, with your kind permission in order for me to grasp accurately what was said.

This interview session consist of 19 questions and will not last for more than 30 minutes.

All the information you provide will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

If you require any clarity on any of the questions, please feel free to ask.

Questions

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 21-30 | 31-40 |
| 41-50 | 51-60 |
| 61-70 | |
1. Could you please indicate your age range for record purposes?
 2. For how long have you been teaching?
 3. Could you please provide me with some family as well as community background about yourself as a child? (eg. schools attended, position in the family, number of siblings, religion, type of community you grew up in).
 4. What type of views did the family and community have about violence?
 5. How would you define bullying?
 6. What type of bullying occurs within your school?
 7. As an educator in your opinion what do you think are the effects bullying has on the child that is bullied?
 8. In your opinion which one of these would you consider more serious forms of bullying? (a) A child hitting another repeatedly over a period of time or (b) a child who is verbally abused repeatedly over a period of time? Could you please give a reason for your answer?
 9. As an educator, do you think you have a responsibility to prevent bullying at school? (Explain)
 10. Do you believe in the following clichés: (a) “boys will be boys” and (b) “bullying is normal behaviour and is part of growing up?”Has any of these sayings influence the way you may view bullying?
 11. Before intervening in cases of bullying do you look at the seriousness of the situation? If so, how do you determine the seriousness of the case of bullying?

12. Have you received any formal training on how to deal with bullying at your school? (Initial teacher training or in-service professional development). How does this make you feel?
13. As a school do you have any policies in place to guide you on how to deal with bullying? Do you think these policies may affect the way you react to bullying? (Please explain)
14. On a scale from 1 to 4 how would you rate your confidence in dealing with bullying? 1=poor, 2=satisfactory, 3= good, 4=excellent
15. Do you think male teachers are less sensitive to bullying episodes? Please explain.
16. As a child, have you ever been bullied at school, bullied another child or witnessed bullying? How did the teacher react? Did this type of reaction influence you in anyway as far as your reaction or feelings are concerned with regards to bullying today?
17. Do your colleagues speak freely about bullying or is it something that they shy away from discussing? Why do you think they do so?
18. As a child growing up was it acceptable for children to bully their peers? Do you think this type of behaviour may have influenced the way you react today?
19. Describe how you react when a child reports that he/she is being bullied?

Once again thank you for your time and participation.

APPENDIX I: INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES (VERBATIM)

4.8.1 Personal opinions regarding bullying

The following statements were used to determine the participants' personal opinion as well as confidence in dealing with bullying.

- As an educator in your opinion what are the effects of bullying has on the child that is bullied?

Participant 1: I think bullying leaves learners anxious they can't concentrate in class because they are fearful of what is going to happen to them during interval or when they have to go home. Is this bully going to wait for me by the gate? It really has an impact on the behaviour of the learner in the class.

Participant 2: It does have a big impact on the child because these children cannot express themselves. They hold back and it is quiet difficult to get them involved in class activities.

Participant 3: The learners are scared of the person that is bullying them, they feel threatened, they hardly talk out they become quiet the victims also sometimes feel that it is his/her fault.

Participant 4: It has an effect on the whole atmosphere of the class. I find the child's character change because they are not themselves and doing something that some else wants them to do, they stay absent, they become more introvert in their behaviour. Children that are bullied become quiet in class. It affects the child's work.

Participant 5: First of all the child becomes angry and leads to violence.

- In your opinion which one of these would you consider more serious forms of bullying? (a) A child hitting another child repeatedly over a period of time or (b) a child who is verbally abused repeatedly over a period of time? Could you please give a reason for your answer?

Participant 1: Both are fairly serious. No I don't think one can actually have levels as far as serious of bullying is concern because bullying is a no, no. But I would think that maybeverbal abuse because it has psychological scars or damage maybe in the long term. I would assume that it would probably affect the person more in the long run. Because I mean after the physical pain has maybe gone or forgotten I sure the hurtful words will remain for a longer time I think.

Participant 2: I would say equally. They are both really serious cases because in any way the child is going to be affected. If a child is repeatedly being hit by someone else it is

physically harming the child also by physical harm it affects the child emotionally.

Participant 3: I think both are equally serious. They put the fear in the children that they are bullying. In both ways because of the fear of what this person is going to call me today and the fear of hitting is going to be there.

Participant 4: I don't know whether one has more affect than the other. I would say verbal abuse over time. If I should hit now that is something you can curve better. Where as verbal abuse is thing that you will remember for ever. It is difficult to handle whereas with physical bullying you can see and with verbal abuse is my word against yours. How do you prove it?

Participant 5: I would say both. Verbal abuse is just as bad as physical abuse.

- Do you believe in the following clichés? (a) “Boys will be boys” and (b) “bullying is normal behaviour and is part of growing up?” Has any of these sayings influenced the way you may view bullying?

Participant 1: I don't actually believe it. Because not all boys are bullies and bullying is never part of normal growing up. These sayings have never affected the way I view bullying.

Participant 2: Yes it has, especially boys will be boys. There are certain things boys are always going do being the dominant gender. However I think that bullying would not fall in this category.

Participant 3: No. Boys will be boys, is nonsense. Not at all.

Participant 4: No I don't. This does not affect the way I view bullying.

Participant 5: I would say in the sense of bullying it is part of growing up because they want to be in good standing with their peers and I think that peer pressure has lots to do with bullying.

- Do you think male teachers are less sensitive to bullying episodes? Please explain.

Participant 1: I don't think male teachers are less sensitive to bullying episodes. Look I wouldn't want my children to be bullied so I treat the learners at the school as my own children. I am definitely not insensitive.

Participant 2: Yes I would say male teachers are less sensitive episodes of bullying. Like the saying boys will be boys.

Participant 3: I think males are less sensitive because they say fight your own battles. Female teachers are more sensitive to the child the victim, they act like mothers.

Participant 4: I think it is more the individual. It is not whether you a male or a female.

Participant 5: I think males will have a sterner reaction and female teachers will react more as a mother figure. A motherly reaction.

- As a child, have you ever been bullied at school, bullied another child or witnessed bullying? How did the teacher react? Did this type of reaction influence you in any way as far as your reaction or feelings are concerned with regards to bullying today?

Participant 1: I grew up in a fairly comfortable home environment and we were never aggressive children. I was actually bullied by the grade eleven's and twelve's when I started high school as part of my initiation. The teachers were not aware of this. The principal however took a no nonsense attitude with these culprits. It depended on the teacher. Some teachers would take it in a serious light and others would tell the child to stop complaining or would brush it off. Looking back I think those teachers who brushed it off made me realise that bullying is a serious offence and must be taken seriously.

Participant 2: I have been bullied mostly emotionally. Was reported however the teacher was not helpful. As teacher I am more sensitive the past experiences have made me able deal with it.

Participant 3: In a way I can say that have been bullied. Name calling. I never complained to my teachers. Until one day the children fought with me and my mother went to the principal to sort it out.”

Yes it did. Why must you be called another name other than your own? I will reprimand children if they call other children names.

Participant 4: I did not witness neither did I experience it. The schools that I attended did not tolerate such behaviour. I think it had a positive effect on me, because I do not tolerate such behaviour in my class.

Participant 5: I have experienced the above statements; however there was no intervention from my teachers. I think because I was bullied not in the sense of physical but emotional I am more sensitive to the child that is bullied.

4.8.2 Behaviour

The following set of questions was used to determine the teachers' behaviour towards bullying.

- Before intervening in cases of bullying do you look at the seriousness of the situation? If so, how do you determine the seriousness of the case of bullying?

Participant 1: Like I said whether it is physical violence being carried out by the bully or whether he is just taking a sweet from another child bullying is bullying. There is no seriousness regardless of how big or small the act is. Bullying is bullying to me.

Participant 2: Definitely I look at how serious it is by the response of the child. The bully appears to enjoy what he/she did. The victim cries and feels scared and nervous.

Participant 3: Definitely I look at the seriousness of it because as I said the person that is bullied the victim doesn't always speak out then again on the other hand you must investigate why the perpetrator bullies. I mean it is serious because some children hang themselves because they did not speak out.

Participant 4: I will let them see that the situation is not healthy and that it is wrong. If it is very serious I would refer it to the principal because I am very inexperienced with bullying. I would discuss it with other teachers.

Participant 5: Yes I do. I guess the reaction of the victim is a good indication how serious an incident is.

- On a scale from 1 to 4 how would you rate your confidence in dealing with bullying?
1=poor, 2=satisfactory, 3= good, 4=excellent

Participant 1: I think it would be excellent.

Participant 2: I give myself a 2-satisfactory.

Participant 3: I think I am a one. I can talk but do not know how to handle a bully.

Participant 4: I would go for two, satisfactory.

Participant 5: I would rate myself as a two, satisfactory.

- Describe how you react when a child reports that he/she is being bullied?

Participant 1: I actually feel the pain of the learners because like I said I treat them as my own. I would make it my business to go to find out exactly who the culprit is and why he or she, because it is not just boys that are the bullies you also find bullying amongst girls and I would make it my business to address the particular issue and if needs be take it to the principal and let them have a disciplinary hearing because in my opinion bullying at school is a very serious offence.

Participant 2: I listen to the situation or both sides not necessarily the same time to avoid further conflict. Try to find witnesses. Then working out and see where the problem lies.

Participant 3: I am upset I do not like it. I am more sympathetic to the victim and to be bullied is not pleasant and as a teacher you can more or less judge how the child feels.

Participant 4: First of all I would listen to them. I would try to establish the cause for such behaviour. I try to build my lessons around the theme of bullying. I would chat to the bully and the victim to establish the cause for such behaviour.

Participant 5: I speak about it, I tell the one who is doing the bullying how it makes the victim feel. I would put a stop to it. I make it clear to the bully that if it does not stop it will be taken further.

- Have you received any formal training on how to deal with bullying at your school? (Initial teacher training or in-service professional development). How does this make you feel?

Participant 1: I have not received any training in my teacher training. However I am fairly competent in dealing with bullying, because I taught at a school for boys awaiting trial for eighteen years.

Participant 2: I have not received any training at school but aspects of bullying were covered in my teacher training. This training has empowered me. I am able to use what I have learnt.

Participant 3: No I have not. This makes me feel that I am not equipped to intervene.

Participant 4: We had discipline workshops at school but did not refer to bullying. However we did discuss this in classroom management in a course that I completed about six years ago. That time I had very little input was more of an observer. Now that I am experiencing it the course has really helped. I can call upon this knowledge.

Participant 5: I have received no formal training and this makes me feel ill equipped to deal with bullying. We are not empowered to deal with it.

- As a school do you have any policies in place to guide you on how to deal with bullying? Do you think these policies may affect the way you react to bullying? (Please explain)

Participant 1: Look at the moment we don't really have any policies that I can remember or recall. Most of the incidences of bullying or violence in whatever form is mostly referred to the principal and he would deal with the disciplinary issues. I know that the parents of the learners involved are normally called in to discuss the unacceptable behaviour. As far as I know there are no real policies in place. I however speak under correction.

Participant 2: We do have, it falls under the discipline of the school. It does have an impact on solving aspects of bullying.

Participant 3: I don't think so. If we had it could guide us how to act.

Participant 4: I don't think there is a specific policy. We have one on school rules but nothing on bullying.

Participant 5: I think policies are important to guide you on how to deal with bullying. I am not sure whether the school that I am have any policies in place.

- Do your colleagues speak freely about bullying or is it something that they shy away from discussing? Why do you think they do so?

- Participant 1: Look we have regular chats and whenever there is an incidence of bullying everybody would know about it in order to be on the look out for any other incidences.
- Participant 2: It is discussed regularly. The reason for this as it is definitely an issue in the classes and school.
- Participant 3: I don't think we speak freely about bullying at school. I think the reason for this is that we pick it up late that a particular child is a bully.
- Participant 4: "It is not something that is discussed here. I think so because we seldom experience it at school.
- Participant 5: I think if a bullying situation come up it is something we speak freely about.

4.8.3 Knowledge and understanding

The following set of questions was used to determine the teachers' knowledge and understanding of bullying.

- How would you define bullying?

- Participant 1: I would regard bullying as a form of violence by a supposedly a stronger person on a weaker person.
- Participant 2: I see bullying as someone who wants to be control of another person. Where someone wants to put you in a situation where you have no leg to stand on or have asay in a certain matter. You are forced to do things against your will. This is normally carried out by children that are older.
- Participant 3: I always thought that it is about a bigger child hurting a smaller child. I also feel that bullying is just not fighting but emotional, you are breaking that person down emotionally, you breaking him down physically, you are scaring the person, you are demanding.
- Participant 4: Bullying is when one person forces their will onto another person.
- Participant 5: Belittling another child. I think it means of gaining power or maintaining power over the victim.

- What type of bullying occurs within your school?

- Participant 1: I witnessed bigger boys in the higher grades taking money from the younger learners at the tuck-shop. They would take there sweets and their bread. Sometimes they would just bully them physically for the fun of it.
- Participant 2: Emotional bullying, in my class I will find the older learners pick on the younger ones because they are bit more sensitive and they are not matured enough to deal

with them. Physical bullying the bigger boys on the smaller ones is more of an ego boast. It makes them that they are in control.

Participant 3: Fighting, threatening and verbal.

Participant 4: The most recent form that I have experienced was that I found the older boys taking things from the younger ones. These younger learners are afraid of reporting the incident.

Participant 5: I find that the type of bullying I experience in my class is that children look down at the peers. Making fun of their friends, be it their school clothing or hair styles. I find it to be bullying it might not be physical but it is definitely the emotional type.

- As an educator, do you think you have a responsibility to prevent bullying at school? (Explain)

Participant 1: Definitely we are not just educators but we are also caregivers.

Participant 2: Yes I do because it can be avoided not only target the bully but the victim.

Participant 3: Yes, definitely. Firstly nobody wants to be hurt both ways verbally or physically. And secondly why should we have bullies. It does affect the society we live in and as a child I would want to come to school to enjoy school.

Participant 4: Yes, I do. Especially in the community that they live in. These children do not have structures at home where there is a father or mother to set examples. So we as teachers need to set the example and the responsibility becomes our.

Participant 5: Yes, bullying does not give off a good vibe in the class or taste. You find that you want all the children to be treated equally. If they are constantly being victimised and bullied they are just not happy.

APPENDIX J: EDITOR'S LETTER

E S van Aswegen
BA (Bibl), BA (Hons), MA, DLitt, FSAILIS

Language and bibliographic consultant

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ACADEMIC WRITING

Linguistic proofreading and editing of:

Research proposals
Conference and journal papers
Theses, dissertations, technical reports

Bibliographies
Bibliographic citation
Literature searching

The MEd thesis by Mr Gerarde Osman

has been proofread and edited, and the candidate has been advised to make the recommended changes.

ES van Aswegen
4 December 2013