

**HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BULLYING BY
LEARNERS IN THE NAMAKGALE CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

by

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DECLARATION

I, declare that **HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BULLYING BY LEARNERS IN THE NAMAKGALE CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and that this work has not been submitted before for any other degree at any other institution.

Mangena Madie Collen

Date

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DEDICATION

This mini-dissertation is dedicated to my wife Masenyabu Rachel Mangena and our three sons, Matlou, Maroba and Pheagane Mangena, for being compassionate and supportive throughout this project, even when it seems impossible to complete. It is also dedicated to my parents, Lephai Tyson Mangena and Mothoka Salome Mametja, who unconditionally supported me throughout the project and celebrated this achievement as a family with me.

DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Bullying refers to a repeated and deliberate use of power in a relationship through verbal, physical and social behaviour that intends to cause harm (Baiden, Stewart & Fallon, 2017). In the context of this study, bullying refers to what teachers go through at schools when they are physically, emotionally and socially hurt by learners in Namakgale Circuit in Limpopo Province.

Experience refers to something that happens to a person and has an effect on how he or she feels or what he or she thinks (Collins English Dictionary, 2015). In the context of the study, experience refers to what happens to teachers when they are bullied by learners in Namakgale Circuit, in Limpopo Province.

High school refers to the organisation that provides secondary education, and the building where this takes place (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2017). In this study, high school refers to an institution that learners from grade 8 to 12 attend in Namakgale Circuit, in Limpopo Province.

Learner means any person receiving education or obliged to receive education (South Africa, 1996). In this study, a learner refers to a person who attends high school in Namakgale Circuit, in Limpopo Province.

Teacher means any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional therapy and educational psychology services at an institution (South Africa, 1996). In this study, a teacher refers to a person who is teaching in high school and is registered with the South Africa Council of Education in Namakgale Circuit, in Limpopo Province.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COVID-19:	Corona Virus Disease – 2019
GBV:	Gender Based Violence
KZN:	Kwa Zulu Natal
LTR:	Learner Teacher Ratio
PTSD:	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SACE:	South African Council of Education
SAPS:	South African Police Services
SGB:	School Governing Body
SRC:	Student Representative Council
TREC:	Turfloop Research Ethics Committee

ABSTRACT

Background: Bullying has been reported to be on the rise in the world. South Africa is no exception. In recent years bullying has been reported to impact severely, resulting in resignations by teachers from the teaching profession. The researcher looked at the school as the workplace for teachers who experienced bullying. The study was about occupational health and safety for teachers, which is an important public health issue. The employer is obliged to create a conducive workplace for teachers as employees working at schools.

Objectives: The objectives of the study were to explore and describe high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners in Limpopo Province.

Methods: The qualitative and descriptive phenomenological method was followed. Due to data saturation, ten teachers participated after being selected through purposive sampling from seven high schools. Research ethics were observed. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews using an interview guide. Interviews were audio-taped and field notes were taken. Voice recordings were transcribed verbatim and analysed using open coding thematic analysis. Findings were confirmed by an independent coder.

Results: The findings reveal that bullying is not a new phenomenon in schools in South Africa and globally. Most teachers perceive bullying differently. Some perceive acts of violence amongst learners as bullying. Some interpret noise in the classrooms as bullying, some view overcrowding in the classrooms contributing to bullying. Some perceive substances and drug abuse as causing bullying in schools. Most teachers experience feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness. They are sad, and feel small, embarrassed, intimidated, angry, disappointed etc. Some lack support from school management and governance, and others experience different forms of bullying. Some refrain from their style of teaching as it impacted on their teaching duties. The findings furthermore indicate that bullying affects both males and females but differently. Female teachers were more prone to bullying than male teachers.

Conclusion: The outcomes of the study have revealed that bullying is a reality. Teachers are being targeted by learners at schools. They seemed not to understand policies and procedures to intervene when addressing bullying at schools. Interventions were not effective due to lack of knowledge and poor policy

implementation. Bullying is not a new concept in the Department of Education. Unions, SGBs and SACE are aware of incidents that happen in schools. The Department of Education should ensure that teachers are protected when rendering their teaching services in schools.

Keywords: Bullying, Experiences, High school, Learner, Teacher

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The employer is obliged to create a conducive workplace for teachers as employees working at schools (South Africa, 1993). Bullying is not a new concept, and it is a public health problem. It is a widespread phenomenon in both public and private schools (De Vos & Kirsten, 2015). Bullying can be verbal, non-verbal, or physical in nature. Teachers experience bullying globally, and it has reached alarming rates both nationally and internationally. According to the United States of America Department of Education (2018), a study conducted with teachers from American schools found that 80% of them had been victims of bullying. The targeting of teachers for bullying behaviour by students at school is reported in universal studies, providing evidence about its overall extent (Hogh, Hoel & Carneiro, 2011). According to a study in the United Kingdom by Glambek, Skogstad and Einarsen (2015), bullying makes teachers to feel victims.

According to a study in South Africa by Matsela and Kirsten (2014), the negative experience of teachers due to learners' conduct has an effect on the number of teacher turnover intentions. In addition, teachers' experiences of bullying at work have a detrimental effect on their health and well-being (Fahie & Devine, 2014). Bullying, which is a form of violence, has destructive effects on the quality of work performance amongst teachers (McMahon, Martinez, Espelage, Reddy, Rose, Lane & Brown, 2014). Salin (2015) reported that workplace bullying is a severe social stressor, which reduces the psychological and physical health of teachers. Hauge, Skogstad and Einarsen (2010) as well as Dhār (2012) equally found that bullied teachers are more likely to suffer from depression, alcohol abuse, prolonged stress disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and even suicide.

According to a study from Turkey by Basar and Akan (2013), teachers do not want to be perceived as having failed to discipline learners. Teachers felt that following procedures is a normal rule that leads them to fail in maintaining order in the classroom. Learners are in control and there is nothing that teachers can do to stop the behaviour due to lack of support from seniors (De Wet, 2011). The disciplinary procedure that principals at schools use when learners bully teachers is not clear,

they are trapped without making an informed decision about the behaviour. Learners take advantage since teachers and heads of schools have nowhere to run to when they are bullied. Learners are able to falsely accuse teachers of spreading rumours about them. Learners sometimes utter very painful words, make sexual comments and ignore instructions from teachers (Nielsen, Indregard & Overland, 2016). It is further reported that 20% of public-school teachers have been victims of verbal bullying, and 10% of physical bullying. Bullying may involve many elements such as verbal or physical assaults, threats, jokes or language, and criticism. According to a study from the United States by Boswell (2016), bullying is considered a global problem that affects the emotional, social, and physical well-being of schoolteachers worldwide.

According to the Occupational Health and Safety Act (South African, 1993), teachers should have a safe and supportive working environment free from bullying, both emotionally and physically. They are entitled to the right to be safeguarded from any form of physical injuries and emotional distress, and to take teachers' self-worth, dignity and wellbeing into consideration. Teachers should work in an environment that promotes the health, spiritual, moral, sexual and social development of learners. They have to be treated with respect, free from discriminatory comments, labelling and stereotypes by learners. Teachers have the right to freedom of expression and involvement. Bullying causes humiliation, offence and distress, and may interfere with job performance, and or create an unpleasant working environment for teachers (Smith, 2014). In some South African high schools, half of teachers indicate that they have been victims of bullying by learners (De Wet, 2018).

In South Africa, researchers concur that learner-to-teacher bullying is a considerable problem for teachers (De Wet, 2019). According to a study by Daniel and Strauss (2010), teaching in South African schools is regarded as being highly traumatic due to a lack of resources, fear of bullying, congestion, and ever-increasing substance abuse among learners. In addition, some South African public schools are plagued by a shortage of capable personnel, high workload, limited elevation opportunities, lack of support, inadequate financial support, learner behaviour problems, and bullying of teachers by learners (Jackson & De Wet, 2015).

A study conducted in selected high schools in the Free State Province of South Africa found that 33% of teachers reported bullying by learners, with 33% bullying verbally and 24% bullying physically by being assaulted (De Wet & Jacobs, 2018). The study highlighted numerous learner-to-teacher bullying incidents, which occur regularly. Some teachers were teased, shown offensive signs or laughed at while others had objects thrown at them, were smacked or stabbed on their bodies. These acts of bullying are disempowering and degrading to teachers (De Wet, 2019).

The bullying of teachers at school is threatening for their mental health problems (De Wet, 2019). Moore, Rosana, Shuichi, Hannah, Peter and James (2017) reported that teachers experiencing bullying display behaviours such as emotional distress, low self-esteem, depression, social isolation, absenteeism and suicidal ideation. Smit (2014) described bullying as having a long term negative effect on the psychological wellbeing of teachers. As such, this study aims to explore and describe experiences of teachers who are bullied by learners in high schools. Rigby (2017) revealed that bullying of teachers is becoming more common, creating a hostile school environment that is not good for the teaching of learners. Bullying is a threat that tarnishes, taints, demeans or isolates teachers and makes them feel vulnerable in their places of work.

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The researcher, as a social worker providing preventative programmes at various schools, received complaints from some teachers about the uncontrollable behaviour of learners who bully them in Namakgale Circuit. Teachers reported the unruly behaviour displayed by some learners in the classroom and on the school premises. They reported that such learners refused to carry out instructions, used vulgar words, arrived late at class, argued with teachers and made noise in the presence of teachers. In addition, teachers reported that they were unable to stop learners when they fight in class. When planning for class activities, knowing that there are learners who do not respect them in the presence of other learners, it makes them feel incompetent and unable to manage learners who are often the same age as their children. Teachers feel vulnerable every time they are at school due to insecurity caused by bullying. Bullying is an occupational health problem as it affects teachers at their place of work.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to investigate high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners in Namakgale Circuit, Limpopo Province.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

What are high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners in Namakgale Circuit, Limpopo Province?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To explore high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners in Namakgale Circuit, Limpopo Province.
- To describe high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners in Namakgale Circuit, Limpopo Province.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Polit and Beck (2017), literature review means more than reporting what the researcher has read and understood. It substantiates the reason for doing research. Literature review can show that the researcher knows the field and allowed the researcher to identify gaps in the topic, and to establish the theoretical framework and methodological focus (Mathebane, 2017). The study reviewed literature on the following topics which are discussed in detail in Chapter 3: global experiences of bullying in high schools, African experiences of bullying in high schools, and consequences of bullying on teachers' health and safety.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted the qualitative, exploratory, descriptive and phenomenological design to explore high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners in Namakgale Circuit in Limpopo Province. Phenomenology is the most appropriate research design for this study as it emphasises description of human experiences. According to Polit and Beck (2017), phenomenologists insist on careful description of ordinary conscious experience of everyday life, a description of things as people experience them. The researcher used phenomenology as he wanted to explore experiences of high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners at schools. A detailed information will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Thematic analysis suggested by Chen, Xi, Wang, Li, He and Luo (2018) was used in the study. Trustworthiness was ensured through the principles of credibility, conformability, dependability and transferability. Ethical clearance was obtained from Turfloop Research Ethics Committee, and permission to conduct the study was obtained from the provincial Department of Basic Education. Informed consent was obtained from participants after explaining the study to them. More information on the research methodology is discussed in Chapter 3.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of the current study will assist in exploring health and safety in schools. The researcher built an argument to convince the reader that teachers are indeed bullied by learners on a daily basis at schools. Experiences of teachers will be pivotal in understanding experiences and health effects of the bullying that teachers experience on a daily basis. The study will contribute to more research and literature, social policy, effective practices or participants' interests. It will also make some recommendations to manage bullying based on experiences of participants.

1.9 OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 briefly discusses the overview of the study which includes the research problem, the purpose, objectives and the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 covers the literature review in the context of the research undertaken.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology and study design used.

Chapter 4 discusses the findings in relation to the literature control.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the results, limitations and recommendations.

1.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an overview of the study, which includes the introduction, research problem, literature review, purpose of the study, research question, objectives, methodology, ethical considerations and significance of the study. Chapter 2 reviews literature from different studies that have explored teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners at schools.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided an overview of the study, which includes the introduction, research problem, literature review, purpose of the study, research question, objectives, methodology, ethical considerations and significance of the study. The researcher reviewed literature from the global and African experiences of teachers who are bullied by learners in high schools. The researcher further reviewed literature on the consequences of bullying on teacher's health and feelings of safety. The biopsychosocial health effects of workplace bullying were also highlighted. These are psychological, physical and social health effects.

2.2 GLOBAL EXPERIENCES OF BULLYING IN HIGH SCHOOLS

Recent studies have shown that a large number of teachers worldwide are often bullied by their learners (Smit, 2014), who refuse to take instructions from them. This was identified as a source of stress amongst teachers (De Vos & Kirsten, 2015). Bullying by learners can be in the form of verbal insults or unwelcomed communication, such as obscene and mocking comments. A study from the United Kingdom by Glambek, Skogstad and Einarsen (2018) reported that teachers experience bullying in the form of nonverbal means such as insulting gestures, laughter directed at them and imitating their characteristic features in some way.

A study conducted in Australia shows that a high number of teachers that experienced some form of bullying during their workplace environment amounts to 99% (Riley, Duncan & Edwards, 2011). England has the second largest number of teachers bullied by learners at schools. A study conducted in the United Kingdom (Coyne, 2011) showed that 67% of teachers experienced workplace bullying in a twelve-month period. Furthermore, sixty-six percent (66%) of 101 teachers who participated in a study conducted by De Wet and Jacobs (2018) confirmed that students bullied them. A study conducted in Spain among five different working populations, including teachers, reported that one-fifth of participants regarded themselves as being victims of bullying. McMahon, Martinez, Espelage, Reddy, Rose, Lane and Brown (2014) found that almost half the teachers in the US indicated that they had experienced at least one form of bullying in the current or

previous year. In addition, a study conducted in Turkey by Ozkilic (2012) reported that 38% of teachers reported that they experience verbal bullying from learners. A further study conducted in Philippines by Asio (2019) revealed that teachers experience a moderate understanding of what bullying by student is all about. The research again further mentioned that the continuous bullying of teachers in schools was a concern as learners were not found guilty of their behaviour. A study conducted in Turkey by Ruchan and Hulya (2012) argued that teachers who had experienced bullying by learners are mostly those who teach in secondary and high schools. The study showed that most learners who bullied teachers are those who are in groups, or they have problems in their family lives. A study conducted in Estonia found that teachers experienced indirect bullying in the form of devaluation, intimidation and public humiliation from learners (Koiv, 2011). A study conducted by Lokmic, Opic and Bilic (2013) showed that school teachers mostly experience many forms of violence such as physical, verbal, or social bullying.

2.3 AFRICA'S EXPERIENCES OF BULLYING IN HIGH SCHOOLS

A study conducted in Algeria by Salmivali (2010) reported that bullying is a widespread problem. Figures released by the minister of education indicated that in 2001 to 2007, more than 59000 victims of bullying have been registered, with the majority of them teachers (Salmivalli, 2010). United State of American Commission on Civil Rights (2011) reported that teachers in Egypt and Moroco experience cyber-bullying from learners at schools as they more advanced in technology than any other african countries. A study conducted in South Africa by Masuku (2019) found that one in every five teachers were bullied through cyberbullying. A study conducted by De Wet (2020) revealed that some teachers were bullied as a result of the location of school. Most of the schools in South Africa are surrounded by shebbens and tarvens, which have a huge impact on the behaviour of learners who most of the time are under the influence of alcohol and drugs which made them to bully teachers. The study further indicated that teachers who were targeted for bullying emphasise demographic characteristics, such as the gender and age of the learner, as well as the age, gender and years of working experiences of the bullied teachers (De Wet, 2020). Woudstra, Janse van Rensburg, Visser and Jordaan (2018) added that 62% of teachers have been experiencing verbal bullying. Verbal bullying is the most common way of bullying teachers in schools. A study conducted in south Africa by Mhlongo (2017) argued that bullying represents unacceptable and

unethical behaviour within the education sector. Local teachings have taught that schools exist to instil good behaviour or morals in a person while preparing him or her to successfully meet the demands of the world. A study conducted in south Africa by Thill (2017) reveals that parental involvement in learning helps to improve learners' performance, reduce absenteeism and restore parents' confidence in their children's education. Nomahlubi (2018) reported that the Department of Education in Limpopo Province has 942 outstanding cases of learner-bullied teachers. Physical bullying is also supported by cyberbullying where video footage of teachers being attacked by Limpopo learners went viral on social media. Nic (2018) reported that two girls assaulted a teacher after the teacher had confiscated the cell phone of one of the learners in the classroom. The teacher was attacked and did not fight back. Teachers find it difficult to prepare for lessons and think about how they can defend themselves in the classroom at the same time.

2.4 CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING ON TEACHERS' HEALTH AND SAFETY

Workplace bullying may also result in low levels of motivation and morale of teachers, increased absenteeism, resignations and teachers becoming involved in counterproductive work behaviour (Dhār, 2012). Blosnich and Bossarte (2011) consider bullying as a common form of violence in school. It makes schools unsafe places for teaching and learning and contributes to the belief that some schools are becoming unsafe workplaces for teachers. It is complicated to determine the effectiveness of anti-bullying programmes because they often comprise multiple elements (Rigby, 2011). According to a study from England by Patton, Hong, Williams and Allen-Meares (2013), teachers who had experience of bullying by learners are suffering from depression, headaches, sleep deprivation, stress and burnout. Jacobs and De Wet (2015) described bullying as act intended to instil fear in the person identified as the target with the intention to cause harm, intimidation, destruction of the person's property and to tarnish the image of the person, all of which have a negative impact on teachers' health and safety.

A study conducted by Matsela and Kirsten (2014) showed that teachers who observe a potential threat, cognitive and psychological systems function in synchrony. Felix, Sharkey, Green, Furlong and Tanigawa (2011) applied this theory in the experience of workplace bullying. He further argued that the manner in which a teacher perceives his or her experiences will eventually affect his or her physical

health responses and social health effects. Several physical, psychological and social health effects were related with stress and trauma that stem from bullying. Felix et al. (2011) further highlighted that bullied teachers developed a history of psychopathology due to consistent, long term workplace bullying. Bullied teachers have been reported to display the following symptoms that may be indicative of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Garreth (2014) identified somatic health symptoms, including difficulty falling asleep and experiencing lack of sleep, nightmares, a lack of rest, fatigue, headaches, sexual problems, weight gain, musculoskeletal pains, gastro-intestinal problems, as well as cardiovascular-related problems, such as hypertension and a rapid heartbeat. According to a study from the United Kingdom by Berthelson, Skogstad, Lau and Einarsen (2011), research has demonstrated severe health effects of workplace bullying. Health outcomes are likely to affect the actual working ability of the targets. Furthermore, the researcher mentioned that psychological health symptoms were accompanied by an array of physical health symptoms, mainly severe stress and trauma. It was also noted that some of these health effects might be indicative of situational panic attacks (Park & Ono, 2016).

Schools as a workplace for teachers and where social relationship with learners took place are severely affected by bullied behaviours (Kauppi & Porhola, 2012). Teachers withdrew from professional relationships mostly due to feeling of exclusion and distrust (Fahie & Devine, 2014). Teachers also reported on the current effects of their health experiences on their children and marital health. The experience of bullying provoked uncharacteristic rage in teachers, and in some cases, projected onto children (Hogh, Hoel & Carneiro, 2011). The relationships of some teachers were affected (Salin, 2015). However, the study showed that teachers with support did not experience severe health effects as compared to those without support (Smith, 2016).

2.5 CONCLUSION

Chapter 2 discussed the literature review in order to increase insight on the results of other researchers on high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners at schools. Furthermore, the researcher reviewed literature that explores and described high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners, and

its consequences on teachers' health and safety. The reviewed literature also described the psychological health effects, physical health effects and the social health effects amongst bullied teachers. Chapter 3 will focus on the research methodology that has been used in the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter reviewed literature that explores high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners. The literature also describes the consequences of bullying on teachers' health and feelings of safety. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology used in the study. According to Polit and Beck (2017), methodology is defined as a way of obtaining, organising and analysing data. In this chapter, the research design, study site, population, sampling, data collection, data analysis, measures to ensure trustworthiness and ethical considerations are discussed in detail.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a system through which a researcher is able to collect, analyse and interpret data in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the study (Howell, 2013). The study used the qualitative research method.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Babbie (2010), research design refers to all decisions made about how a research study was conducted. The researcher needs to determine what he was going to observe and analyse. In this study, the researcher conducted a qualitative and contextual study using a phenomenological research design. Phenomenological research refers to a description of a phenomenon as seen through the eyes of participants who are experiencing it first-hand (Mathekga, 2017). Burns and Grove (2013) define phenomenological design as inductive, descriptive qualitative methodologies describing experiences as lived by teachers. The study revealed contextual lived experiences of teachers who were bullied by learners at schools in Namakgale Circuit of Limpopo Province. The focus on lived experiences of teachers who were bullied by learners was instrumental in assisting the researcher to uncover real life experiences from teachers' points of view instead of using external explanatory tools that looked at the situation from afar. The researcher studied the experiences of teachers regarding bullying at Namakgale Circuit, Limpopo Province. The contextual research design is concerned with

identifying what exists in the social world and the way it manifests itself (De Vos & Kirsten, 2015).

3.3.1 Study setting

Burns and Groove (2013) define a study setting as the location for conducting research. The research setting of this study was Namakgale Circuit, which is situated in Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality in Mopani District in Limpopo Province. The circuit is divided into different sections (zones A-E) and villages. There were seven high schools with 221 teachers in Namakgale Circuit. A Map of Ba-Phalaborwa local municipality showing Namakgale Circuit is attached as Figure 3.1

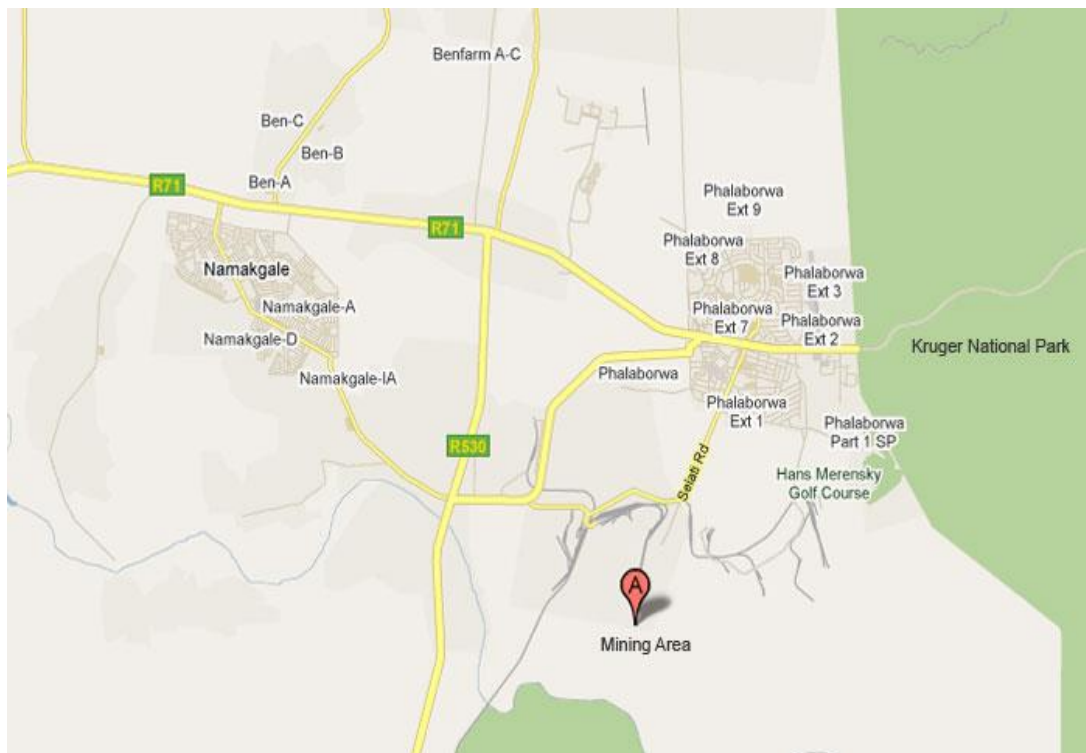


Figure 3.1: Map of Ba-Phalaborwa local municipality showing Namakgale Circuit.

3.3.2 Study population

Burns and Grove (2013) define population as individuals or elements who are focus of the research. In this study, the study population was male and female teachers who were bullied by learners. The researcher visited the seven high schools to set an appointment with the principals. The school principals were informed about the researcher's intention to conduct the study. The principal assisted the researcher in announcing to the teachers about the researcher's intention to conduct the study. After the principals' announcement to the teachers, those who volunteered to

participate arranged the venues, time and locations of interviews that was convenient them. The teachers who agreed to participate in the study were those who were bullied by learners at school. The population of this study was 221 teachers from seven high schools in Namakgale Circuit in Limpopo Province.

3.3.3 Sampling

Neuman (2011) defines sample as a small set of cases from a larger population. Cresswell (2012) adds that a sample is a subgroup of the targeted population the researcher intends to study. The sampling method used was purposive owing to the fact that the researcher was looking for specific attributes in participants. Purposive sampling assisted the researcher to select information-rich participants from the 221 teachers. In this study, the researcher visited the school principal and informed them about the study. The principals made announcement in the staff rooms to those teachers who had experience of being bullied by learners. They then volunteered to participate in the study. The researcher interviewed 10 participants one by one until data saturation was reached.

3.3.3.1 Inclusion criteria

Puemol (2018) defines inclusion criteria as key features of the target population that the researcher will answer their research question. Any teacher with more than two years of teaching experience and who experienced bullying at school was considered to participate in the study. The researcher regarded two years of teaching experience as sufficient for one to have experienced bullying and to have rich information to share.

3.3.3.2 Exclusion criteria

Puemol (2018) defines exclusion criteria as features of the potential study participants who meet the inclusion criteria but have additional characteristics that could interfere with the success of the study or increase the risk for an unfavourable outcome. Any teacher with less than two years of teaching experience but with experience of bullying at school was excluded as the researcher regarded them as not having rich information on bullying by learners. Furthermore, teachers who were bullied but who did not volunteer to participate in the study were excluded.

3.3.4 Data collection

Data collection is defined as a detailed, orderly gathering of evidence relevant to the study problem using approaches such as interviews, participant observation, focus group discussions, narratives and case histories (Felix, Sharkey, Green, Furlong & Tanigawa, 2011). Data collection methods are all the necessary steps that must be taken by the researcher in order to collect all the relevant information for the study (Centre for Research Quality, 2015).

The researcher chose semi-structured interviews as the most appropriate data collection method of the study. A semi-structured interview is a key method for collecting data from participants. Lead and Ormrod (2010) define semi-structured interviews as a verbal interchange where one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information from another person by asking questions. The central or main question that was asked to each participant was: “*Tell me about your experiences of being bullied by learners in your school.*” Follow-up questions depended on how the individual participant answered the central question. One of the advantages of semi-structured interview is flexibility, where the researcher can rephrase the question if the participant did not understand it. The interview guide is attached as Appendix A. All interviews were audio-recorded, and field notes were noted immediately after each interview.

3.3.5 Data analysis

Data analysis is a process that requires analytic techniques and the ability to understand the data (Henning, 2010). According to Lead and Ormrod (2010), thematic data analysis should not be done in a linear manner. Although there are steps that need to be followed, the process is flexible, allowing the researcher to take any direction they wish since they are only guidelines to assist the researcher. Transcripts were then written in a tabular form for easier coding (see Appendix B). The researcher played and replayed the audio recorder to listen to responses. The transcripts were read and re-read to get more understanding of the interview. The steps of thematic analysis as suggested by Chen, Xi, Wang, Li, He and Luo (2018) are discussed below:

- The researcher transcribed the recordings verbatim
- Thereafter the researcher familiarised himself with the transcribed data by reading and rereading while making notes.

- Each datum was coded or labelled with a term indicating the interpretation
- The researcher collated codes into potential themes
- The researcher reviewed the themes and checked the logic regarding the extracts and all data set
- The researcher defined and named the final themes

The researcher then developed themes and sub-themes as they emerged from data analysis. The transcripts were sent to an independent coder to analyse them independently. The coder is an expert in analysing qualitative research. A meeting with the independent coder was held to discuss and compare the themes and to reach consensus. A certificate from independent coder is attached as Appendix C.

3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Burns and Grove (2013), a sound study requires that the researcher be authentic to participants all the time. The following ethical standards were adhered to when conducting the study. The researcher avoided using real names of participants to avoid linking the data to them. The researcher used pseudonyms instead of real names to hide the individual's identity.

3.4.1 Ethical clearance

The research proposal was presented to the Department of Public Health for approval and it was approved. The approved proposal was sent to the School of Healthcare Sciences Research Committee for approval and it was approved. The approved proposal from School of Healthcare Sciences was sent to the Faculty of Health Sciences for approval and it was approved. The researcher then applied for ethical clearance from Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC), which was obtained (see Appendix D).

3.4.2 Permission to conduct the study

The approved research proposal, together with the TREC approval certificate, was submitted to Limpopo Department of Basic Education seeking permission to conduct the study. Letter requesting permission was written to Limpopo Department of Basic Education (see Appendix E). Letters granting permission were received from Limpopo Province Research Ethics Committee and Limpopo Department of Basic Education (see Appendix F and G). Letters granting permission from Limpopo

Department of Basic Education and Limpopo Province Research Ethics Committee were submitted to the Circuit Manager at Namakgale Circuit to get permission to go to schools.

3.4.3 Informed consent

It was important that the researcher ensures voluntary participation and informed consent. In adhering to this ethical principle, the researcher conducted information session with all potential participants. The researcher explained to participants the whole research process, its goals, objectives and their right to withdraw during any stage of the project. Those who agreed to participate were requested to sign consent form before the interview could commence. The consent form is attached as Appendix H.

3.4.4 Privacy and confidentiality

According Law (2015), privacy refers to the right to be free from unwarranted intrusion and to keep certain matters from public view. In this study, the researcher ensured the privacy of participants by allowing them the freedom to decide venues for the interview which were conducive to them and provided privacy. Confidentiality refers to the pledge that any information the participant provides will not be publicly reported or made accessible to parties not involved in the research (Polit & Beck, 2017). To maintain confidentiality, the researcher did not reveal the names of participants who took part in the study. Furthermore, the researcher did not report what the participants said in such a way that could identify them.

3.4.5 Anonymity

Anonymity refers to an ethical principle that involves modifying empirical data so that the research participants cannot be identified (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013). The researcher ensured the protection of data by using participant numbers instead of names, thereby ensuring that the shared data was not linked to any high school in Namakgale Circuit. The researcher used pseudonyms to ensure anonymity of participants.

3.4.6 Harm to participants

Avoidance of harm is about the researcher accepting the legal and moral responsibility of ensuring that participants are not exposed to any harm. As data

was collected during COVID-19, the researcher ensured that social distancing was maintained, hands were sanitised and face masks were worn. Due to the sensitivity of the topic under investigation, extra care was taken to ensure that participants were not identifiable from any published interview information. The researcher kept in mind that the interviews might be upsetting for participants with unresolved issues. Arrangement was made with a social worker working in Namakgale area to assist participants where necessary.

3.5 MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

Leedy and Ormrod (2010) state that data verification allows a researcher to test the validity of certain assumptions, claims, theories or generalisations within real-world contexts, which could also mean the extent to which a research design is scientifically sound or appropriately conducted. In order to verify the data collected, Guba's model of trustworthiness (Mathebane, 2017) was utilised. The model consists of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The approach assumes that qualitative research can be more credible as long as certain techniques, methods and strategies are employed during the study (Mathebane, 2017).

3.5.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the degree to which study results represent the meanings and various realities of participants (Mathebane, 2017). To ensure credibility, the researcher spent some time engaging with teachers who had experiences of bullying by learners at schools. The researcher spent twenty to thirty minutes with individual participants on the day of the interview. The researcher further explained to each individual participant the purpose of the study and procedures of interviews so that rapport could be established. After the interviews, the researcher sent the transcripts to an independent coder to verify and discuss, compare and agree on the findings.

3.5.2 Transferability

According to Mathebane (2017), transferability is the possibility that the study results have meanings for other researchers in a similar situation. To ensure transferability, the researcher provided a detailed description of the research methodology used in case where there is someone who would like to repeat the study. The researcher

ensured that in-depth and dense descriptions of participants and their experiences were presented, including details of contexts, processes and settings in order to enable transferability.

3.5.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to whether the results will be reliable if the study can be repeated with the same subjects or in a similar context (Mathebane, 2017). To ensure dependability, the researcher presented in detail how data was collected and analysed.

3.5.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is defined as freedom from bias in research procedures and findings (Mathebane, 2017). To ensure confirmability, the researcher recorded all the activities over the time taken to complete the research study so that other researchers can follow the same process and hopefully arrive at the same conclusions reached by the researcher. The researcher checked the transcripts to make sure that they did not contain obvious mistakes during transcription.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter detailed the research methodology followed when conducting the study about high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners. The site of the study, population, sampling, data collection and data analysis was discussed. Measures to ensure trustworthiness and ethical considerations were also discussed. Chapter 4 will discuss the findings of the study with literature control.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND LITERATURE CONTROL

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the research methodology followed when conducting this study, the site of the study, population, sampling, data collection, data analysis, measures to ensure trustworthiness and ethical considerations. This chapter discusses the findings with literature control to support the study findings. Polit and Beck (2017) describe literature control as a method of clarifying findings and putting them in context. These findings emerged during data analysis using thematic analysis suggested by Chen, Xi, Wang, Li, He and Luo (2018). The findings reveal the following themes and sub-themes from data analysis: teachers' incorrect interpretation of bullying versus an unsafe work environment, forms of perceived bullying, impact of perceived bullying, suggestion to address perceived bullying and perceived reasons contributing to bullying.

4.2 FINDINGS

The study revealed experiences of teachers who reported to have been bullied by learners at schools. This section discusses the demographic profile of participants, themes and sub-themes in detail.

4.2.1 Demographic profiles of participants

The study sample comprised 10 participants with two participants between 30 and 40 years, five between 41 and 50 years, and three aged 50 years and older. The participants comprised five male and five female teachers from seven different high schools in Namakgale Circuit.

4.2.2 Themes and sub-themes

Themes in qualitative data analysis are theoretical interactions that emerge after the researcher has spent extensive time examining data, categorising and sorting elements into groups to look for patterns (Burns & Grove, 2013). As summarised in Table 4.1, data analysis generated five themes and 14 sub-themes.

Table 4.1: Themes and sub-themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
1. Teachers' incorrect interpretation of bullying versus an unsafe work environment	1.1 Learner to learner attacks 1.2 Learners bringing dangerous weapons to school
2. Forms of perceived bullying	2.1 Encounters of physical bullying 2.2 Encounters of non-verbal bullying 2.4 Encounters of verbal bullying
3. Impact of perceived bullying	3.1 Emotional impact 3.2 Impact on performance of duties
4. Perceived reasons contributing to bullying	5.1 Substance abuse by learners 5.2 Lack of support by school management and governance 5.3 Lack of parental involvement 5.4 Poor learner conduct 5.5 Perceived prejudice
5. Recommendations towards addressing bullying	
6. Challenges in addressing bullying	

4.2.2.1 Theme 1: Teachers' incorrect interpretation of bullying versus an unsafe work environment

The findings reveal that some teachers interpret bullying incorrectly. It has been found that teachers perceive acts of violence as bullying since they are a threat to their lives. Baiden, Stewart and Fallon (2017) define bullying as a repeated and deliberate use of power in a relationship through verbal, physical and social behaviour that intends to cause harm. Some teachers had experiences of being disrespected by learners at school. Learner to learner attack and learners bringing dangerous weapons at schools emerged under this theme.

4.2.2.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Learner to learner attacks

Some teachers cited violence between learners as bullying since teachers were unable to prevent learners from fighting as they could be hurt. Ward, Van der Merwe and Dewes (2012) define violence as an intentional use of physical force or power to threaten another person. Violence has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, or psychological harm. Palm (2019) report that teachers' role is to provide a safe place, conducive to learning. But teachers themselves are facing dangerous and uncomfortable situations both inside and outside the classroom and school.

Some teachers report that learners fought in the classroom in their presence. Some report that those learners were not scared of them, they could do what teachers were not expecting them to do in a disrespectful manner. The following statements reveal teachers' experiences when learners attack each other.

Participant F said: *"...Ee, when I wanted to stabilise the situation by assisting teachers to report learners who were causing trouble in the class, learners started fighting in my present...and I spoke with them but in fear because I could be hurt when I tried to instil some discipline to learners"*.

Participant C added: *"On Mondays we used to have this groups which fought on weekend at the tavern or wherever outside the school, and when they came to school on Monday the argument started and they would attack each other and throwing chairs to one another. The teacher who was at the class during that day would be in trouble as he or she would be trapped in that incident while busy teaching"*.

Participant H supported: *"So, I went to them and I told them...they pushed me away with their butcher knives, and I was like jaa (wena) you are a learner and are you even allowed to do that to me..."*.

In support, Payet and Shaik (2013) argue that schools are becoming places for gang activities where violence was used to solve disputes. Some reveal that violence at schools was a serious problem because learners fight. Ncontsha and Shumba (2013) report that violence in South African schools was a reality and schools became places for violence. Some report that school violence destabilises learners and teachers' abilities to function in a healthy manner both within and outside the school context.

4.2.2.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Learners bringing dangerous weapon to school

The findings reveal that learners carry dangerous weapons to school, and some teachers perceive this as bullying. Mncube and Harber (2013) reveal that learners in South African school carry dangerous weapons to school. Some teachers reveal that these acts made them feel that they were not safe. Teachers report that when these learners fight, they used weapons. The KwaZulu Natal Department of Education (2012) reports that four learners were stabbed at KZN schools and three of them died. The report states that this was the result of the increase in the number

of learners who carry dangerous weapons in schools. Participants report that they fear for their lives at school due to bullying. Some teachers fear that if learners could use these weapons amongst themselves, they could also use them against teachers. The statements below reveal teachers' experiences.

Participant E said *"I remember one day solving a problem were a learner stabbed the other learner with a knife at school, those learners argued in class, then they fought outside the classroom...that's when I realised that learners carry weapons to school"*.

Participant C add *"As a teacher you know in government you don't bring guns and knives all this things, you go there unarmed in an environment that is not safe"*.

Participant F supported: *"Teachers tried to get report from learners about learners who caused trouble in class, then learners fight amongst themselves in the presence of the teacher, and those learners came to school carrying dangerous weapons such as knives, and we spoke with them but in fear because we could be hurt by instil some discipline to learners"*.

This findings of the study are supported by the Dangerous Weapons Act (South Africa, 2013), which defines a weapon as any object that is capable of causing death or inflicting serious bodily harm if used for an unlawful purpose. Participants reveal that learners were uncontrollable as they come to school carrying dangerous weapons. Due to the behaviour of these learners, some teachers were afraid to go to classrooms where learners fought. The findings further reveal that learners fought and injured each other at schools. Teachers would call the police to stop the fight as they were scared of those learners.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act (South Africa, 1993) reports that the employer should ensure that all employees are safe from any harm or threat. The findings reveal that teachers were exposed to bullying on a daily basis. The Employment of Educator Act (South Africa, 1998) reports that teachers should be protected as schools are workplaces for them, and should be a learning place free of violence. In spite of efforts to protect the interests of teachers through the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, some teachers were not feeling safe at schools.

4.2.2.2 Theme 2: Forms of perceived bullying

Some teachers perceived bullying in different forms. The findings reveal that some perceive acts of violence amongst learners as bullying. Some perceive non-verbal behaviour such as pointing the middle finger, giving nasty looks and facial expressions as bullying. Some teachers report that some learners pushed and touched them inappropriately, which show disrespect to them and is insulting to teachers. The following sub-themes emerged under this theme.

4.2.2.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Encounters of physical bullying

The findings reveal that some learners touched teachers inappropriately in the classroom. Some teachers report that they were physically pushed by some learners in the classroom and outside the classroom. The following statements reveal teachers' experiences when they were physically bullying at school.

Participant D said: *"Mm, eish, I remember one day a male learner touched my breast in class, and when I try to find out what was going on with the learner, the learner told me that I am nice and went out of the classroom....."*

Participant I added: *"I was physically like grabbing his schoolbag, and the learner pulled the schoolbag towards himself, and then there was like, I was pushing him in my attempt to take the schoolbag away from him and the learner refusing to give me the schoolbag, so there was some pulling and pushing".*

Participant J supported: *"The learner then holds the teacher with his tie and pulled the teacher towards himself, and the teacher wanted to adjust the tie because the learner wanted to suffocate him...."*

These findings are supported by Schmidt, Pierce and Stoddart (2016), who state that physical bullying occurs when a learner uses acts such as kicking, punching, hitting and other physical attacks. Hong and Espelage (2012) report that teachers become unspoken victims, given the emotional and psychological distress they experience from watching some horrific acts of bullying. Patchini and Hinduja (2011) report that physical bullying involves a physical force and serious or sometimes a permanent physical injury. Physical bullying in most cases creates a hostile school environment (Patchini et al., 2011). Furthermore, because of its nature of inflicting devastating long term physical, psychological and emotional effects on teachers, bullying requires continued and renewed intervention (Hymel & Swearer, 2015). Ndebele and Msiza (2014) added that physical bullying is a form of a physical act of

kicking. Volk, Farrel, Franklin, Mularczyk and Provenzano (2016) perceive physical bullying as an intention to cause grievously bodily harm or to tarnish the social status of teachers.

4.2.2.2.2 Sub-theme 2: Encounters of non-verbal bullying

The findings reveal that some teachers experience different forms of non-verbal bullying. They report that learners would bully them by expressing themselves facially, giving them a nasty look and pointing a middle finger at them. The following statements reveal teachers' experiences when they were bullied non-verbally at schools.

Participant A said: *"The learners laughed, after the lesson I went to staffroom, I then asked some of the learners who were in the classroom what were they laughing? Those learners told me that that learner when you look on the chalkboard, he pointed you the middle finger, that day I went out to look for the learner myself, I never tried to send a learner to go and call him, I personally went to search him myself"*.

Participant G added: *"What he was doing was to show me his facial expression that he was not ready to listen to me as his elder"*.

Participant C supported: *"Those learners after they treated you badly outside the classroom, in the classroom they gave me a nasty look, intimidate me and they wanted to show the other learners how unimportant I was"*.

These findings are supported by a study conducted in the United Kingdom by Glambek, Skogstad and Einarsen (2018), which states that teachers experience bullying in the form of non-verbal means such as insulting gestures, laughter directed at them and imitating their characteristic features in some way. Savvas and Schyns (2012) refer to non-verbal bullying as a conduct other than talking content. The study further reveals that non-verbal bullying includes eye gaze, facial expressions, bodily movement, postures and walking styles. Koiv (2011) states that teachers experience non-verbal bullying in the form of devaluation, intimidation and public humiliation from learners. Non-verbal bullying is an act of communication where learners at schools show some disrespect to teachers. Some teachers report that non-verbal bullying such as nasty looks, facial expressions and pointing of the middle finger at teachers are common forms of non-verbal bullying that teachers experienced in school environments.

4.2.2.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Encounters of verbal bullying

The findings reveal that some teachers experience some form of verbal bullying. The teachers state that verbal bullying displayed by learners was painful. Some report that learners could shout, insult, make noise and verbally exchange words with teachers in and outside the classroom. The following statements reveal teachers' perceptions of verbal bullying.

Participant D said: *"fuck you! Go to hell! What can you do to me? (O tla ndira eng?) ... , the learner started shouting me and told me that, 'I can't do that, I can't do that' ..." I didn't do that..."*

Participant E added: *"I went to other class, and in that class while I was busy teaching, another learner went out and when she came back and she said to me in front of other learners, standing face to face with me, disturbed my lesson, "what are you saying, you are saying I could not pass, I could not pass because I had this type of hairstyle, I could not go to grade eleven"*

Participant J supported: *"I remember there was this learner, he insulted teachers in classroom, every teacher who went to that classroom complained about him"*

These findings are supported by a study conducted in Turkey by Ozkille (2012), which states that teachers experience verbal attacks from learners. Teachers were sworn, shouted, and insulted in the public space where other learners and teachers witnessed the behaviour. De Wet (2010) adds that after being bullied through verbal means, teachers did not cope well and are afraid to go to the same class where the incident took place. Learners insult teachers in the classroom and the school yard. This study has not only indicated the level of bitter words from learners, but also the types of words that teachers experience. In some cases, participants report with bitterness how those learners insult them. Teachers experience emotional words such as fuck you, you can't do anything, useless, you are not my mum. These are teachers' experiences in schools where they are expected to impart knowledge to learners.

4.2.2.3 Theme: 3 Impact of perceived bullying

The findings reveal that some teachers were negatively affected by bullying. They perceive overcrowding as impacting on their day to day activities. Some reveal that in an overcrowded classroom, learners take advantage since teachers would not be able to identify the trouble learners. Some perceive smoking and refusal to take

instructions from teachers as bullying. Some report that learners who make noise and talk without permission as bullies. Some change the manner in which they teach which they report as led by perceived bullying. The following sub-themes emerged under this theme.

4.2.2.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Emotional impact

The findings reveal that some teachers had negative feelings about what they went through at schools. Some teachers report that they were not comfortable going to the same classroom where bullying took place. Some report to have experiences of fear, humiliation, anger, devaluation, degradation, and most of the time have feelings of hopelessness. The following statements reveal teachers' experiences when the bullying impacted on their lives emotionally.

Participant D said: *"It was very painful, very painful, when I went to classroom I felt discouraged, and when I was busy teaching...I would limit myself to say some of those words.... I was scared...."*

Participant C added: *"I felt embarrassed, useless and regretted to have been approached those learners, those learners after they treated me badly outside the classroom, in the class they would show a nasty look, intimidate...."*

Participant J supported: *"The learner would insult me in front of other learners....., it wss little bit humiliating, little bit embarrassing....."*

This findings of the study are supported by Burton and Leoschut (2012), who maintain that teachers who experience bullying at schools create an atmosphere of fear that would interfere with their ability to teach and learn. A study conducted by Glasner (2010) confirms that bullying becomes a serious problem in the education sector, and if it continues unattended, the whole school environment could be affected in many ways. Some teachers who had been targets of bullying suffer from long term emotional and behavioural problems which lead to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Iweus Bullying Prevention Program (2011) adds that bullied teachers may tend to dissociate themselves from the victim for fear of being the next targets. They feel powerless to act, and feel guilty of not acting to assist the teacher who is bullied by learners.

4.2.2.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Impact on performance of duties

The findings reveal that bullying impacts negatively in the performance of teaching duties by teachers. Some teachers report that bullying takes their time of teaching, since they spend the whole period trying to calm learners who cause trouble in the classroom. Some report that after bullying in the classroom, the performance and energy to go into that classroom, and the style of teaching declines. Some report that they refrain from sharing jokes in class, they were no longer laughing, and others even stopped organising educational trips. Some report that their morale was low; they were demotivated. Others experience negative health effects. The following statements reveal teachers' experiences during instruction in the classroom.

Participant J said: *"Sometimes when this learner was in class, he would be troublesome. As a teacher I went in class being energetic, I wanted to teach this and that, but you know what? He would just spoiled my lesson"*.

Participant F added: *"Jaa, it affected me as an individual, I would not talk to what others experienced because I don't smoke myself. But the minute I smell cigarettes, the smell of the cigarette become problem to my health"*.

Participant E supported: *"It hurt, I felt bad, I felt as if I could change the class and give it to other teacher, but as an adult I would make sure that the other learners do not suffer because of one learner. I didn't want to show learners that what was in me was painful, but my interaction could not be the same like before. I was no longer laughed, I was no longer cracked jokes, I just teach and go"*.

The findings of the study are supported by Skelton (2014), who states that Learner Teacher Ratio (LTR) had a great impact on the quality of education and some of the influential factors when considering increasing academic performance in the classroom. For some teachers, teaching and reprimanding learners was not their character. They reveal that it was difficult to discipline trouble learners who cause disturbances in the classroom. Some report that overcrowding and the smell of dagga in the classroom affect their health severely as they suffer from sinuses. Others reveal that learners' misbehaviour affects them and they just try to contain themselves, but feel hurt by those acts. Overcrowded classrooms contribute to poor learning conditions because of lack of space, fresh air and high noise level that could lead to lack of attention and even create stress to teachers (Ndebele & Msiza, 2014). Some teachers report that it is better these days as the country is facing the covid-

19 pandemic where learners would come to school on different dates. Teachers were now able to receive attention from learners who would hide behind others. Some reveal that smaller classrooms where the number of learners were below 20 are able to produce better academic performance.

4.2.2.4 Theme 4: Perceived reasons contributing to bullying

The findings reveal that some teachers perceive reasons contributing to bullying at schools. Substance abuse was perceived by some teachers as one of the causes of bullying at schools. Some teachers reveal that lack of support by school management and governance and lack of parental involvement also contribute as there is a vacuum between learner-teacher-parent to be filled. Some teachers reveal that some learners come from very disorganised families where violence seems like the norm to those learners. The following sub-themes emerge under this theme.

4.2.2.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Substance abuse among learners

The findings reveal that the use of substances amongst learners at school has become a public health problem. Some teachers report that learners come to school under the influence of alcohol and substances. Due to the influences of substances, these learners are uncontrollable and become a threat to the lives of teachers. Marula trees grow in numbers at the setting where the study was conducted and the government hosts a yearly festival called marula festival. The youth around the area have access to marula products. When they are manufactured, they become like alcohol where people come to drink. The youth in this area are trapped in this circle, which is difficult to break. The following statements reveal how the use of drugs contributes to bullying at schools.

Participant F said *“Actually, the justice department made a very serious blow when they legalised dagga, because those learners during break they went out to smoke and drink alcohol...when they came back, they were under the influence of drugs...they started to disturb lessons...they make noise and I could not do anything”*.

Participant A added: *“One other challenge in south African schools was alcohol and drugs. Remember someone who used drugs, automatically their lifestyle changed, the way they walk, the way they talk and everything”*.

Participant I supported: *“They came to school with weapons and some of those learners because they used drugs, and we didn’t know what we could expect, anything can happen...”*.

Ekpenyong (2012) defines a drug as any product other than food or water that affects the way people feel, think and see. Drugs can enter the body through chewing, inhaling, smoking, drinking, rubbing on the skin, or injection. It is a substance which, due to its chemical nature, affects the physical, mental and emotional functioning. Some teachers reveal that the voices of learners who use drugs change, their eye contact changes, their movement changes and some teachers did not know what to expect from these learners.

The findings of the current study are supported by Ramorola and Joyce (2014), who state that the problem of substance abuse in South African schools is alarming. The abuse of substances by learners is noticeable, and this behaviour contributes to the cause of bullying at schools. Some teachers mention that before break, few learners display some behaviour which shows levels of substance abuse. But immediately after the break, the behaviour becomes worse as it is influenced by substance abuse. These learners were uncontrollable in the classroom due to drug use. Some teachers reveal that learners told them that they could smoke dagga but not in a public space. Teachers further reveal that learners misinterpret the recent judgement by the constitutional court that people can have dagga in their yards, but they should smoke it in private spaces.

4.2.2.5.2 Sub-theme 2: Lack of support by school management and governance

The findings reveal that some teachers report that lack of support by school management and governance was a challenge in addressing bullying faced by teachers. Some teachers report that principals of schools seem not to understand the policy that regulates bullying at schools. Some reveal that some principals opt to call parents of learners, even when the conduct committed by the learner warrants dismissal. The school governing body lacks understanding of the roles and responsibilities of learners and those of teachers. As much as the disciplinary procedure must be fair, some teachers reveal that even when it is evident that the learner was wrong, the principal would come to some compromising findings to save the learner from dismissal. Some teachers reveal that school management and

governance were weak to deal with issues affecting teachers. The statements below reveal how teachers lack support from structures at schools.

Participant D said *“The main thing that they could do, was that the SRC and the school management and the educators must support each other, if the teacher experienced any problem from those learners, the SRC took side of the learner. The SRC were there but they didn’t support teachers, but supported learners”*.

Participant F added: *“Those issues whereby a learner or a child would be disciplined for doing something wrong, and then the child went to police station to report the parent or the teacher was not good, and the police would come to arrest the parent or the teacher before engaged the teacher and the parent to found out what happened”*.

Participant F supported: *“One other painful issue was that the department was only focused on the teacher when he or she has done something wrong, for example, if the teacher used corporal punishment, the teacher would be taken to the disciplinary committee where he or she could be suspended or even be dismissed...”*

Mncube and Harber (2013) argue that it is the responsibility of the school management and the SGB to address day to day issues at schools. Some teachers reveal that the SGB and school management lack understanding of how the school should be run. SGBs are parents from the community who failed in their lives, but they are given responsibility to manage the school. Some parents become tribalists, others simple hate the teacher because he or she was not from the same community. Some mention that because school governing bodies are parents from the same community where the learner came from, they tend to take sides and defend the learner, indicating that the teacher or the principal hates the learner. Some teachers report that schools are inappropriately managed to reduce bullying. Others reveal that the school governing body comes to school when the principal invites them if there was a learner who causes some problems.

Kwa Zulu Natal Department of Education (2012) recommends that to curb or control weapons at schools can be achieved by inviting SAPS to do random search. Parents must be involved when conducting disciplinary hearings when learners were found in possession of weapons. Some teachers reveal that parents relegated their responsibilities to teachers. The findings further reveal that those parents are scared of their own children.

4.2.2.5.3 Sub-theme 3: Lack of parental involvement

The findings reveal that lack of parental involvement at schools give learners a chance to do as they please. Some teachers report that some parents did not honour their invitations to schools. Some teachers reveal that learners have more rights but they do not take responsibility. This has led to uncontrollable learners and lack of management of learners by teachers. The statement below reveals teachers' experiences when parents distance themselves from schools.

Participant C said *"If I were to be allowed (a kere) by the way, I would go further, get the learner, may be institute punishment. The departmental guidelines are a very long process, so I might even have spent the whole year waiting for the same respond from the same problem. Normally I don't follow, I just leave it"*.

Participant G added: *"Parents turn to forget that they were parents, but they just behave like boys and girls. So most of parents were not working, and those learners when they looked at those parents, they just think that was the way of life"*.

Participant J supported: *"If you found that the learner was bullying, was either the learner used drugs, or was either had some problem at home, sometimes as teachers we tried to found out from the local teacher that how was the situation where the learner stays? The local teacher would have explained (gore) that hey horrible in that family, maybe the learner stayed with the stepfather, maybe he stayed with step-mother, so that anger would not go away easily because it was how he was brought up...."*

Clinton and Hattie (2013) refer to parental involvement as a situation where parents are directly involved in the education of their children. In this study, findings reveal that parents were not actively involved in the education of their children. Some teachers reveal that this could be because most learners were staying with their step-parents, step-fathers or step-mothers. Others stayed alone as both parents passed on. Some parents fail to attend to the education of their children due economic crises that they face as they had to make sure that they put bread on the table for their kids to eat.

Some parents report to have been passive in the learning of their children. They did not fulfil their duties as parents and did not ensure that the learner is assisted in the process of learning as much as they possible could. A study conducted by Liamas and Tuazon (2016) adds that some parents would call teachers to find out if their

children attend classes, something that annoy learners, and feel that they were not trusted by their parents.

4.2.2.5.4 Sub-theme 4: Poor learner conduct

The findings reveal that learners' misbehaviour at school were a nightmare for teachers to manage. Some teachers report that lack of learners' discipline at school was a public outcry. Some report that learners could verbally bully teachers in the classrooms. Some learners group themselves as gangsters with the intention to disturb teachers' lessons in the classroom. Some teachers report that outside the classroom, they were afraid to confront those learners who were in groups because they could be violent towards them. The following statements reveal teachers' experiences of disciplinary problem from learners at schools.

Participant H said *"I remember there were two boys. Those boys what they did, they bullied me by made me to sat down while pointed me with a butcher knife"*.

Participant F added: *"I entered the classroom, it was so quiet and I even scared as to what was going on. I greeted those learners and suddenly one learner stood up and went at the back and smacked one learner on the face. When I wanted to understood what happened, the learner who was beaten, he fought back and they exchanged fist, learners started to make noise, mind you I was still in the mist of that classroom"*.

Participant I *"One other thing was that when I was in classroom I tried to reprimanded those learners, this learner would just answer me in an embarrassing way..."*.

De Vos and Kirsten (2015) state that some learners in the classroom refuse to take instructions from teachers. This was identified as a source of stress amongst teachers. The findings show that most learners who bullied teachers do so in groups, they have problems in their family lives, they smoke dagga, or they drink alcohol. Some teachers reveal that learners would fight in the classroom in their presence. Some report that it was evident when the teacher witnesses learners who fight and the teacher is trapped in that classroom. Nic (2018) adds that two girls assaulted a teacher after the teacher had confiscated a cell phone of one of the learners in the classroom. The teacher was attacked and did not fight back. Teachers find it difficult to prepare for lessons and think about how they could defend themselves in the classroom at the same time.

4.2.2.5.5 Sub-theme 5: Perceived prejudice

The findings reveal that some teachers identify some features that made them to be susceptible to bullying. Prejudicial bullying is a form of perceived stereotypical views amongst learners and teachers at schools. Some teachers report that their body posture made them more prone to bullying. Some because they are short, others because they are women. Then there were those who were bullied because of their appearance or the way they dress in that day. The statements below reveal how teachers coped when they were bullied as a result of their perceived prejudicial appearance.

Participant B said *“I was very angry and the learner’s stature was too big and because he was old... By the look he was a big boy not suitable to be in that grade... The fact that I am a woman, and I could not fought or discipline him, it made me feel useless”*.

Participant A added: *“Just that bullying to male teachers was not much... May be amongst female teachers it might be much... Male and female teachers experienced bullying differently... Bullying depend on the type of the learner I would had faced at that moment”*.

Participant G supported: *“There was this learner who wanted to show the other learners that he had the authority, because he is over the age, he could bully anyone who came to teach in the class”*.

Chabalala (2011) further confirms that the physical appearance of some learners becomes a threat to teachers as most of them were kicked, pushed, punched and others physically attacked by learners. Hlophe, Morojele and Motsa (2017) support that learners whose shared identities were seen to exemplify dominant characteristics and values such as age, gender and stature instil some fear amongst teachers as those features threaten them. Some teachers revealed the physical appearance of those learners. Others revealed the gender of the teacher which made them vulnerable and prone to bullying. Some teachers reveal that learners bully them because of their physical appearance, how short they were and because some were women. Some indicated that bullying between male and female teachers is not the same.

4.2.2.5 Theme 5: Recommendations towards addressing bullying

The findings reveal that some teachers recommend that to address bullying, some measures need to be put in place. Others recommend that parental cooperation was a need. Some recommend the searching of learners when entering the school premises. Some recommend that there should be police visibility. Some recommend that the security must be tighter. The statements below reveal teachers' recommendations to deal with bullying.

Participant G said: *"I think the department could try to alleviate the problem of overcrowding, like what has been done with the covid-19 classes, where we were able to get cooperation from those learners..."*.

Participant E added: *"In our case when those learners misbehave we would call the police forum, and they would come and assist us because they could beat those learners who were troublesome. The police supported those actions of the police forum because they would be tired to come and looked for the learner who would have stabbed the other learner..."*.

Participant H supported: *"So usually what happens I don't grab learners, I would go to the principal, and the principal would help to solve the problem, so if we want to stop bullying as teachers, we must be disciplined ourselves"*.

Hornby and Blackwell (2018) state that the link between parental involvement and student achievement assist in addressing bullying at schools. A strong parental involvement builds the confidence of learners to perform well at school. Some teachers suggest that teachers should be trained on discipline. The security should be trained on how to manage violence at schools. Some suggest that the police must be visible in school premises to ensure safety. Some suggest that the justice department should revise the dagga police as learners interpret it incorrectly. The department of social development should provide anti-bullying campaigns through social workers. Puccioni (2018) concurs with the findings of this study and said that involving parents could make a positive impact on children and their school.

Marais (2016) adds that overcrowded classrooms lead to increased problematic behaviour and lack of discipline in the classrooms. The United States of America Department of Education (2018) reports that the national average Learner to Teacher Ratio (LTR) for government schools was one teacher per 35,2 learners at primary level and 27,7 learners at a high school level. The findings of the study

reveal that one teacher is equal to 93,3 learners in high school, which triple the national average ratio. To manage the problem, some teachers recommended that the class size should be reduced, and that additional classrooms should be constructed to accommodate the number of learners who flock into high schools.

4.2.2.6 Theme 6: Challenges in addressing bullying

The findings reveal that some teachers report that the department takes time to respond to issues affecting them. Some teachers reveal that the department is not supportive and lack passion to implement their own policies. Some report that overcrowding is also contributing to bullying in school. Some mention lack of support from parents as a challenge in addressing bullying. Some report that parents themselves were unable to manage their own children. Some report that older learners who stay long in the system contribute to the problem of bullying. The seniors (principal) at schools were not supportive to juniors who experienced bullying. The statements below reveal how teachers experience challenges to address bullying.

Participant B said: *“The Student Governing Body always defended those learners and false found from the teacher. The SGB are parents from the same community where those learners came from... So when I reported the problem the learner caused, they treated me as an outsider...”*

Participant H added: *“I called the SGB and reported the matter to them...the SGB called the police...The police came and then we wanted to open a case...The police did not want to open a case regarded to the incident. They said it was not the school problem, it was my individual problem...this incident happened inside the school premises, and I am a teacher and I was also teaching school children....”*

Participant J supported: *“It was difficult to accessed social worker and our police station was little bit far from our school, and sometimes the police were not available...”*

Section 8(1) of the South African School Act (South Africa, 1996) provides that school governing bodies should adopt a code of conduct for learners after consultations with parents and teachers together with those learners. Some teachers reveal that parents or SGBs lack knowledge on how to handle cases of misconduct by learners at schools. Some reveal that their interest as teachers are

not recognised when decisions are made, but much attention is given to the interest of learners. Section 8(2) of the South African School Act report that the primary aim of the code of conduct is to establish a disciplinary and purposeful school environment, dedicated to improving and maintaining the quality of the learning process. The findings reveal that it was difficult for the school to access a social worker to learners who have problems at home but display uncontrollable behaviour at school. Some teachers report that school principals lack training on how to institute code of conduct to instil some discipline to those learners. Some learners come to school with weapons, drugs, and under the influence of alcohol and nothing has been done to remedy the situation.

4.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on research findings and literature control. The findings were categorised according to the main themes and sub-themes, namely: the triggers of bullying, types of bullying, forms of bullying, gender, bullying in school environments, the impact of bullying on teachers, how teachers cope with bullying and their feelings after they have been bullied. Chapter 5 focuses on summary, limitations, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the research findings and literature control. The findings were categorised according to six main themes and twelve sub-themes. The themes include teachers' incorrect interpretation of bullying versus an unsafe work environment, forms of perceived bullying, the impact of perceived bullying, perceived reasons contributing to bullying, recommendations towards addressing bullying and challenges in addressing bullying. The lived experiences of high school teachers as well as perceptions, impact, recommendations and challenges were discussed from the themes that emerged. Fears of teachers to discipline learners, intimidations, shouting, swearing, humiliation, inappropriate touching, making noise and embarrassment by learners were presented and discussed in the findings of the study. In this chapter, the summary of the study, conclusions, limitations of the study and recommendations based on the research objectives were made. The main aim of the study was to investigate high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners in Namakgale Circuit of Limpopo Province. The qualitative research method, which employed phenomenology, was used.

5.2 SUMMARY

The study outlined the process that was followed in the accomplishment of the results. The study used a descriptive and phenomenological design which assisted in understanding high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners at schools. Semi-structured interviews were used throughout the data collection process. The Atlas.ti9 was used to analyse the data, and assisted in extracting themes and sub-themes from the data.

The study was important in revealing teachers' incorrect interpretations of bullying versus unsafe work environment. The teachers presented different perceptions of what they viewed as bullying. Some teachers perceived learner to learner attack which had the element of violence as bullying. The use of weapons by learners at school was perceived by some teachers as a threat to their lives. This was highlighted by some teachers that if learners could use these weapons amongst

themselves, they could also use them against teachers. Literature suggests that a school is a place of work for teachers and a place of learning for learners. If any person suspects that there are unwanted weapons, drugs and alcohol in school premises, he or she can search and confiscate them from learners. However, in practice, this is not the case as teachers are scared of learners.

The qualitative approach was followed in the study. The research design, study setting, population, sampling method, data collection, data analysis, measures to ensure trustworthiness, and ethical considerations were discussed in chapter 3. Chapter 4 focused on the research findings and literature control where several themes and sub-themes were discussed. The first theme focused on teachers' incorrect interpretations of bullying versus unsafe work environment. Under this theme, the following sub-themes emerged: learner to learner attack and learners bringing dangerous weapons to schools.

The second theme focused on forms of perceived bullying where the following sub-themes were discussed: encounters of physical bullying, encounters of non-verbal bullying and encounters of verbal bullying. The third theme involved the impact of perceived bullying. Under this theme, the following sub-themes were discussed: emotional impact and impact on performance of duties. The fourth theme involved perceived reasons contributing to bullying. Under this theme, the following sub-themes were discussed: substance abuse by learners, lack of school support by school management and governance, lack of parental involvement, poor learner conduct and perceived prejudice. The fifth theme focused on the recommendations towards addressing bullying and the last theme focused on challenges in addressing bullying.

The study was aimed at exploring and describing high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners in the selected high schools in Limpopo Province.

The objectives of the study were:

- To explore high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners in Namakgale Circuit of Limpopo Province.

- To describe high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners in Namakgale Circuit of Limpopo Province.

The objectives of the study were met since all teachers were able to explain their experiences on how they were bullied by learners in high schools (see chapter 4). The researcher asked the main question and probing questions. Teachers were able to answer both sets of questions. To meet the objective of describing high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners, teachers were able to describe their experiences in the findings, themes and sub-themes as indicated in chapter 4. The study generated six themes from the data. The themes were discussed through literature control.

Teachers described the forms of perceived bullying, where they encountered physical, non-verbal and verbal bullying by learners at schools. The teachers described the emotional impact of perceived bullying where they feared for their lives when going to classrooms, and the impact on their performance of duties. Teachers' performance is based on the number of learners who pass in the classroom. This has a huge impact on their performance as bullying affected them severely. Teachers described their perceptions of what contributes to bullying, where they cited substance abuse by learners, which had a huge impact, and lack of support by school management and governance. Some teachers revealed that SGBs and DOBEs were not supportive in dealing with bullying at schools and lack of parental involvement. Some teachers cited that parents relegated their responsibility to teachers. Parents were scared of their own children. Some teachers attribute poor learner conduct to dysfunctional families where learners were brought up. Perceived prejudice was identified by some teachers where features such dress code, physical appearance and gender stereotypes were mentioned as some of the elements that caused bullying at schools. Some teachers made recommendations on how to address bullying. They suggested the routine search of learners, the appointment of social workers and psychologists, the training of security personnel at the gate, and lastly challenges in addressing bullying where some teachers indicated the issue of overcrowding, substance and drug abuse, and ineffective SGBs.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

From this study, the following recommendations are made:

Practice

- There is a need for health promotions and school campaigns that should curb bullying behaviour and foster empathy and caring amongst learners and teachers.
- Health awareness campaigns should be conducted at a community level to conscientise members of the community about Gender Based Violence (GBV) as the cause of bullying at schools.
- Provide psychosocial support to learners and teachers in the Department of Basic Education and other related stakeholders.
- There must be an improved staff attitude: teachers must treat all learners well regardless of whether they bully teachers or not.

Education

- More capacitation should be conducted to develop teachers' skills to better manage bullying by learners at schools.
- Public Health Practitioners, who have better ideas about the occupational and environmental health system management, especially in schools may assist in enlightening policymakers in the development of policy on how to manage bullying at schools.

Research

- More future public health research studies should be conducted using the qualitative approach by focusing on bullying of both male and female teachers in both rural and urban areas.

5.4 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- **Strength of the study**

Interviews were conducted in English where all teachers were able to communicate. Therefore, all teachers were able to present their views. The study has unearthed different dynamics and perceptions which are involved in the process of addressing bullying, which may help in enlightening future scholars in respect of experiences of teachers at schools. It was a dynamic interaction between the male researcher and male and female teachers who shared experiences and reasons contributing to

bullying. Teachers were open to speak freely with the researcher because the researcher is a qualified social worker with whom teachers could confide their deepest, darkest and painful experiences without being judged or rejected. Some teachers were interviewed in their own homes as per agreement. Some were interviewed in the researcher's office as per agreement. The study was conducted in seven high schools. During the process, data saturation was reached.

- **Limitations of the study**

Some teachers withdrew from participating in the study without mentioning reasons for their withdrawal. Some after agreement they could not respond their phones when the researcher made follow-up.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This study discussed the literature that supports the title, findings that were supported by literature control, summary, conclusions, limitations and recommendations of the study. It further presented key findings on high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners at schools as it emerged from the study. Recommendations highlighted by the researcher will have an implication on the contribution towards measures of addressing the bullying of teachers by learners at schools.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Participant number:

Date .../...../.....

SECTION A

1. Gender

Male	
Female	

2. Age of participants

30 years or younger	
31 to 40 years	
41 to 50 years	
Older than 50 years	

SECTION B

Central Question: *Tell me about your experiences of being bullied by learners in your school.*

Follow-up questions:

- What is bullying in your understanding?
- How can you explain bullying in your experience as a teacher?
- How has your experiences of bullying impacted you, with regard to your health and psychosocial wellbeing?
- Considering your experiences of bullying, kindly share with me what you found to be stressing to you as a teacher that hampers you from rendering teaching services to your learners?

APPENDIX B: TRANSCRIPT OF HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES BULLYING BY LEARNERS IN MOPANI DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE.

TRANSCRIPT OF SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR PARTICIPANT: C	
Researcher	My first question is tell me about your experiences of being bullied by learners at school
Participant:	Jaa, I remember it was outside but withat schools premises, where I confronted a group of learners who where smoking, then I ask them why are you smoking at schools yard? They would utter very painful words, like, what is your problem when we are smoking.
Researcher	What did you do then?
Participant:	Sometimes I can't do anything, (a kere) by the way, this learner is hiding is only the words that comes out. I left the situation where they were because I don't know what this learner is thinking.
Researcher	How did you feel when these group of learners disrespected you?
Participant:	I felt embarrassed, useless and regretted to have been approached them. Those learners after they treated me badly, in the class they give me a nasty look. then intimidate I and they want to show the other learners how unimportant I am.
Researcher	Did you ever report this kind of behavior to your seniors?
Participant:	Jaa, I did report, but (le bona) also them with the law is difficult to deal with, especially when I don't know learners' intentions.
Researcher	With the law, what do you mean?
Participant:	No (a kere) by the way, we are not allowed to go extra mile to punish and all this things, I discover (gore ngwana yoo o na le problem) that the learner has got a problems, but I limited myself in terms of what I could do.
Researcher	What is limiting you?
Participant:	No I, for instances if I were to be allowed (a kere) by the way, I would go further get the learner, may be institute punishment, ee even if I were to follow departmental guidelines, was a very long process, mm so I might even spent the whole year waiting for reply from the same problem, so normally I don't follow it up, I just leave it, ee so you normally don't follow it.
Researcher	How do you feel going to that class were learners cannot take your instructions?
Participant:	I develop a thick skin, as a teacher I am there to stay, learners are progressing to another grade and ultimately exit through grade 12. I become week, but my weaknesses end up made me the strong person because I have to go to that class and teach, is something that I am used to it. It does not do any harm to me, I quickly adjust myself to this situation.
Researcher	Are you not any way affected by this behavior?
Participant:	By the way (a kere) is a stage, is a stage you know it will pass, but it does angered me a lot, and I control yourself, I control my emotions, because if I have to act under situation that I am angry, I might even cause more harm (a kere) by the way,

	<p>when I am angry I might even use ee, I might even be physical, and which is not allowed, actually (ke gore) I always act within the boundaries of the law even if I am angry. Mm so there instances where I can find a learner that he or she misbehaved and I may be invite the parents, I had such incident, talk to the learner, may be punish the learner but not corporal, so such things may be talked to the parents, may be refer the matter to the principal, and mm, if I deal with the matter successfully is a blessing because it brings me closer to the learner, sometimes it brings other things.</p>
Researcher	Like what?
Participant:	<p>It happen that I come to know that this learner is an orphan for example, now I go deeper, this behavior started because of one, two, three, sometimes a learner might have reacted in a negative way, sometimes I discover (gore) that this learners' family background is not good, maybe he or she was brought up in an environment where, which is violent and as such he or she learned to be violent, every time he or she confronted with a problem, the learner became violent, that is why I say there are more positives.</p>
Researcher	What do you suggest should be done to manage this situation?
Participant:	<p>You see in the olden days, we used to have a psychologist who were assigned to the school from the circuit offices, such matters where brought to their attention and they would assist, I think if we could have some intervention, ee professional intervention, may be yourself as social workers, you find that you are deployed at schools, because any school problems touches the family environment, you get my point.</p>
Researcher	With your experience of been bullied, do you feel safe?
Participant:	<p>No no, not at all, not very safe, most of our learners don't wear uniform, and there are people who just enter the school premises looking for a learner or a teacher who is not part of the staff, sometimes somebody would come, this thugs (a kere) by the way you have got gangsters from this school to that school. This gangsters would encroached into our school beat up one learner and run away, so safety is not at all, we are just living by the messy of God. On Mondays we used to have this groups who fought on weekend at the tarven or wherever outside the school, and when they come to school on Monday the argument start and they will throw chairs at each other injure other student, the teacher who was at the class during that day will be pity, and while you teach, you don't teach this learners and stay at the corner at the back in the class, because if some start an unnecessary argument, you will be trapped and the principal or whoever who see the incident will call the police, when learners start fighting we run to our offices and call the police because you cannot stop that fight. So it is not safe at school at all.</p>
Research	What do you suggest the school or the department should do to ensure your safety at school?
Participant:	<p>No they should hire well trained security that will search this learners when they enter the school premises, in other schools they have got security people who are well trained, who are uniformed, who can control access, (a kere) by the way with our own security, we do have but this are people that handpicked from our communities and they have no authority that much, mm thugs would just come in and out and they would overpower them and when they tell them that you are not allowed, they will ask them who are you to tell me that, so but well, sometimes would just talk to this thugs in a nice way, sometimes would meet them in the yard,</p>

	we ask them what are you looking for, and they will say I am looking for this person, if you are looking for that person can we call that person for you and whatever you want to say can you say it in our present, and many of them will say yes.
Researcher	Then when you call that person, did they say something in your present?
Participant:	We normally don't allow that to happen, you see sometimes, our fear is that if I, by the way I don't know their relationship, if I go that route sometimes it might backfire, we go to that learner and say there is Mr. so and so this site, do you know Mr. so and so very well, and if that learner consent to say he know Mr. so and so we then let them talk, but if that learner say I don't want to talk to that person, then we go back to the person, you know we got the learner and he indicating the different stories, so can you please leave, in an event where he does not want to leave then we call the police
Researcher	Outside the school in the community, do you also feeling the same, not safe?
Participant:	No no (mina) myself personally, I don't because remember as a public figure you normally don't go to a public places, if not, is like yourself with the cases that you handle, you can't go to public places jaa so, personally that is what I do, I don't, to find me in a public spaces is very rare.
Researcher	Anything that you feel like you did not share so far that is off concern may be?
Participant:	Ee, well is just that, (a kere) by the way the department, they know about this things, we read about this things, but the department is toothless, mmm (ke gore) is just that they act like a crises committee sort off, they would act when there is something that happened in particular school, that is where you will see the department, so you can't, you work in a department where you are like, you cannot, you know in government you don't bring guns and knives all this things, I go there unarmed in an environment that is not safe.
Researcher	Mr. C, thank very much for welcoming me in your house and also with this richful information, once again thank you
Participant:	You are welcome

APPENDIX C: CERTIFICATE FROM INDEPENDENT CODER



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

04 July 2021

RE: Confirmation of independent coding

This letter serves to confirm that I conducted extensive independent coding for the primary qualitative data collected by Collen Madie Mangena on teachers' lived experiences of bullying. The data was analysed using Atlas.ti. 9.

The independent coder (myself) and Collen met to agree on the themes, sub themes and codes.

As proof of independent analysis, a report with codes and quotations created from Atlas.ti9 was provided.

Yours sincerely

Linda Shuro

Independent coder, MPH, PHD Candidate

Director: Roundsaddle

ROUNDSADDLE
11 BOSBOK AVENUE, FAUNA PARK POLOKWANE
TEL: 078 744 1989; EMAIL:
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APPENDIX D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: anastasia.ngobe@ul.ac.za

TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 21 October 2020

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/302/2020: PG

PROJECT:

Title: High School Teachers' Lived Experiences of Bullying by Learners in The Namakgale Circuit, Limpopo Province
Researcher: MC Mangena
Supervisor: Prof SF Matlala
Co-Supervisor/s: N/A
School: Health Care Sciences
Degree: Master of Public Health

PROF P MASOKO

CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

Note:

- i) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
- ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
- iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

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**APPENDIX E: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FROM
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: LIMPOPO**

P.O.BOX 1052
Shiluvane
0873

THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
Department of Education
Private Bag x 9489
Polokwane
0700

Sir/ Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY

I am a student at the University of Limpopo, currently registered for Master of Public Health. I hereby request permission to conduct a research study.

The title of the research is: *High school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners in the Namakgale Circuit, Limpopo Province.*

The research proposal and ethical clearance certificate from the University of Limpopo are included.

Regards:

Mangena Madie Collen

Date

**APPENDIX F: LETTER GRANTING PERMISSION FROM LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

CONFIDENTIAL



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

TO: MAKOLA MC
FROM: DR T MABILA
CHAIRPERSON: LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (LPREC)
DATE: NOVEMBER 2020
**SUBJECT: HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BULLYING BY
LEARNERS IN THE NAMAKGALE CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

RESEARCHER: MANGENA MC

Dear Colleague

The above researcher's research proposal served at the Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC). The committee is satisfied with the ethical soundness of the research proposal

Decision: The research proposal is granted full ethical clearance

Regards

Chairperson: Dr T Mabila

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'T Mabila'.

Secretary: Ms J Mckebi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J Mckebi'.

Date: 03/11/2020

APPENDIX G: LETTER GRANTING PERMISSION FROM LIMPOPO
DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION: LIMPOPO



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref: 2/2/2 Enq: Mabogo MG Tel No: 015 290 9365 E-mail: MabogoMG@edu.limpopo.gov.za

Mangena MC
P O Box 1052
Shiluvane
0873

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1. The above bears reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved. Topic of the research proposal: **“HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BULLTING BY LEARNERS IN THE NAMAKGALE CIRCUIT LIMPOPO PROVINCE”**
3. The following conditions should be considered:
 - 3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.
 - 3.2 Arrangements should be made with the Circuit Office and the School concerned.
 - 3.3 The conduct of research should not in anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.
 - 3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the fourth term.
 - 3.5 During the study, applicable research ethics should be adhered to; in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: MANGENA MC

Cnr. 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700
Tel: 015 290 7600, Fax: 015 297 6920/4220/4494

The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!

APPENDIX H: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BULLYING BY LEARNERS IN THE NAMAKGALE CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE.

PART A: Informed consent

Participant consent form

(For each participant/caregiver, please read and understand the document before signing)

Research title

High school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners in the Namakgale Circuit, Limpopo Province

Introduction

This is an invitation to participate in the study as a volunteer. This is to help you decide if you would like to participate and should there be any questions please feel free to ask the researcher.

The purpose of the study

➤ **AIM:**

To investigate lived experiences of learner-teacher bullying in high schools at Namakgale Circuit in Limpopo Province.

➤ **OBJECTIVES**

To explore high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners in Namakgale Circuit, Limpopo Province.

To describe high school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners in Namakgale Circuit, Limpopo Province.

Sample of this study

➤ **Population size**

Namakgale Circuit has 221 teachers in the high schools who provide teaching lessons to learners from grade 8 to 12.

The number of Teachers was found after the researcher visited Namakgale Circuit and was referred to admin clerk office to get those numbers.

The sample size of this study was 14 participants' teachers from different school in Mopani District of Limpopo Province. The researcher interviewed available participant' one by one until data saturation was reached.

Before the study you will need to complete:

- This consent form and
- Short biographical information request

During the study you are free to withdraw from the study without giving a reason, and that participation is voluntary.

The aim of the study is to investigate lived experiences of learner-teacher bullying in high schools.

The study will take one months to complete

Has the study received ethical approval?

This study will commence upon approval from the Turf loop Research Ethics Committee.

Rights of participants of the study

Participation is voluntary and you have a right to refuse participation in the study. Refusal to participate will not in any way influence any future relationships with the school or the interviewer.

Are there any risks

There are no risks attached.

Discontinuation of participants in the study

No pressure will be exerted on the participant to consent to participate in the study and the participant may withdraw at any stage without penalization.

Any financial arrangements

There are no financial resources that participants can benefit from the study, and the researcher is not going to receive any incentives.

Confidentiality

All information provided to the research team will be treated as confidential.

PART B:

Informed consent form to be signed by the participants/caregiver

I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the investigator, MANGENA MADIE COLLEN about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study. I have also read the above information regarding this study.

I may withdraw my consent as well as my participation in the study and declare that I had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and therefore declare myself prepared to participate in the study.

Participant Name _____

Participant signature _____

Date _____

Investigator's name _____

Investigator's signature _____

Date _____

I, MANGENA MADIE COLLEN herewith confirm that the above participant has been informed fully about the nature of the study.

Witness name _____

Witness signature _____ **Date** _____

APPENDIX I: EDITORIAL CERTIFICATE



University of Limpopo
School of Languages and Communication Studies
Department of Linguistics, Translation and Interpreting
Private Bag x1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3707, Fax: (015) 268 2868, email:kubayij@yahoo.com

04 August 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

SUBJECT: EDITING OF DISSERTATION

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled 'High school teachers' lived experiences of bullying by learners in the Namakgale Circuit, Limpopo Province' by Mangena Madie Collen has been copy-edited, and that unless further tampered with, I am content with the quality of the dissertation in terms of its adherence to editorial principles of consistency, cohesion, clarity of thought and precision.

Kind regards



Prof. S.J. Kubayi (DLitt et Phil - Unisa)
Associate Professor
SATI Membership No. 1002606

Finding solutions for Africa